

Furbearer Management Report and Plan, Game Management Unit 2:

Report Period 1 July 2012–30 June 2017, and
Plan Period 1 July 2017–30 June 2022

Ross Dorendorf



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Plan Period 1 July 2017–30 June 2022

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Species management reports and plans provide information about species that are hunted or trapped and management actions, goals, recommendations for those species, and plans for data collection. Detailed information is prepared for each species every 5 years by the area management biologist for game management units in their areas, who also develops a plan for data collection and species management for the next 5 years. This type of report is not produced for species that are not managed for hunting or trapping or for areas where there is no current or anticipated activity. Unit reports are reviewed and approved for publication by regional management coordinators and are available to the public via the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's public website.

This species management report and plan was reviewed and approved for publication by Stephen Bethune, Acting Management Coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Conservation.

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Purpose of this Report

This report provides a record of survey and inventory management activities for furbearers in Unit 2 for the previous 5 regulatory years and plans for survey and inventory management activities in the 5 years following the end of that period. A regulatory year (RY) begins 1 July and ends 30 June (e.g., RY10 = 1 July 2010–30 June 2011). This report is produced primarily to provide agency staff with data and analysis to help guide and record its own efforts but is also provided to the public to inform them of wildlife management activities. In 2016 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game’s Division of Wildlife Conservation launched this 5-year report to more efficiently report on trends and describe potential changes in data collection activities over the next 5 years. It replaces the furbearer management reports of survey and inventory activities that were previously produced every three years.

I. RY12–RY16 Management Report

Management Area

Unit 2 is 3,600 mi² encompassing Prince of Wales Island (POW) and all islands west of the center lines of Clarence Strait and Kashevarof Passage, south and east of the center lines of Sumner Strait, and east of the longitude of the eastern most point of Warren Island and all seaward waters and lands within three miles of these coastlines (Fig. 1). Mean temperatures range from a low of 33°F (1°C) in December to a high of 64°F (18°C) in August (Weather Spark 2019). Major communities include Craig (population estimated at 1,275), Klawock (population estimated at 822), and Thorne Bay (population estimated at 487). The dominant habitat type in Unit 2 below approximately 600m elevation is temperate rain forest consisting of Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*), western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), red cedar (*Thuja plicata*), and Alaska yellow cedar (*Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*). Other lower elevation habitats include muskegs and stands of red alder (*Alnus rubra*) and black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera trichocarpa*) along major rivers and riparian areas. Old-growth forests are interspersed with a patchwork of even-aged forest stands at different successional stages resulting from extensive clear-cut logging and a few natural windthrow events. The combined archipelago contains an abundance of sheltered waters that provide relatively safe boat access along many miles of shoreline. POW and associated islands have approximately 2,000 miles of logging roads accessible by motor vehicle. Thus, access to furbearer habitat is exceptional and trappers can operate long traplines with relative ease. However, traplines in southeast Alaska are shorter compared to other areas of the state (Parr 2018). Clear-cut logging has fragmented the landscape reducing suitable habitat to narrow wildlife travel corridors, especially for American marten (*Martes Americana*; hereafter referred to as marten). By using these concentrated travel corridors, trappers may increase their success. Most (78%) land in Unit 2 is administered by the U. S. Forest Service. There are also state lands, Alaska Mental Health Trust lands, private lands, and Alaska Native corporation inholdings.

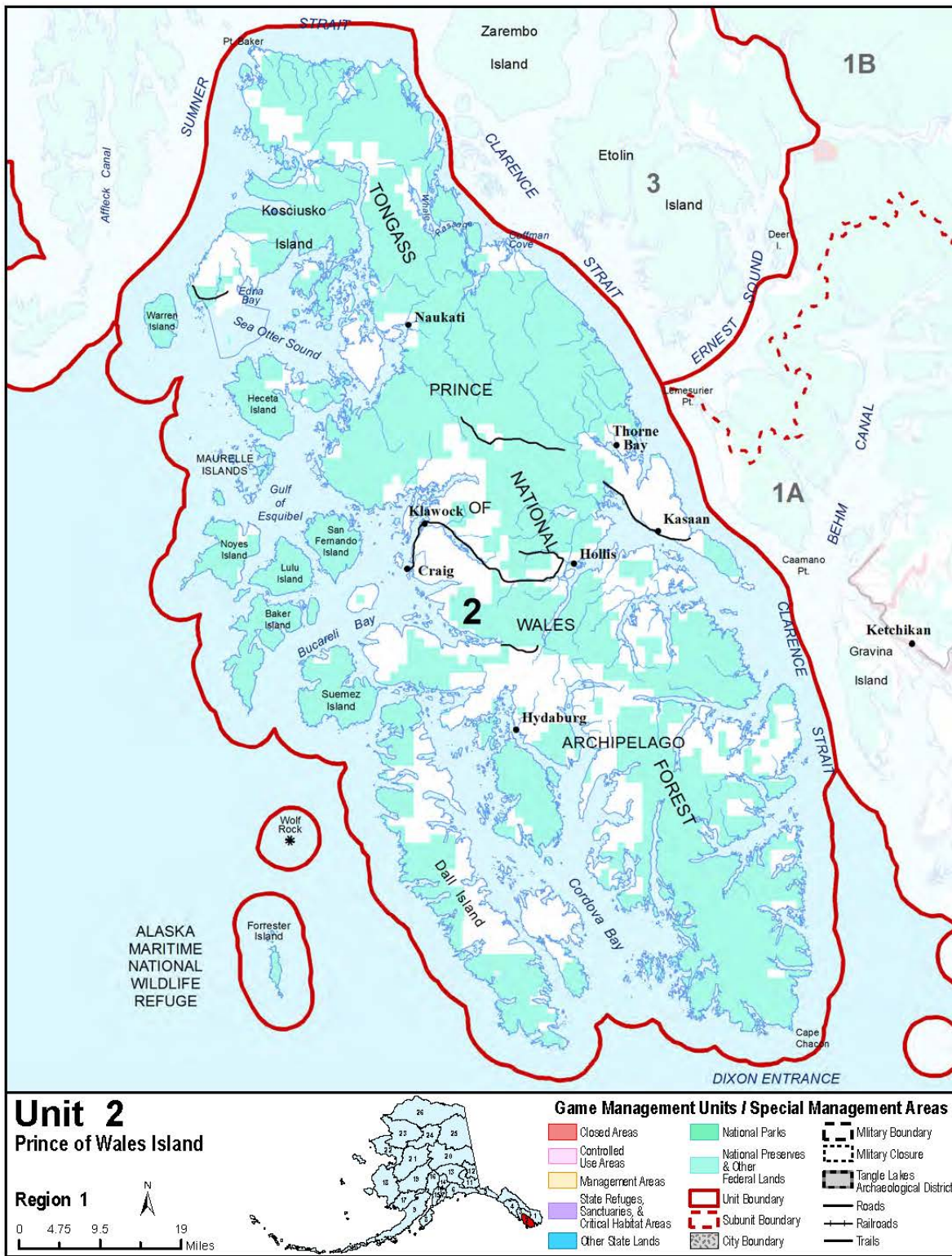


Figure 1. Map of Game Management Unit 2 boundaries, Prince of Wales Island, Southeast Alaska.

Summary of Status, Trend, Management Activities, and History of Furbearers in Unit 2

Trapping effort is influenced by multiple social and external factors. Social factors include human conflict, difficulty accessing land, and low trapper recruitment (Gese, 2001; Siemer et al., 1994; Zwick et al. 2002). Furbearer abundance, fur prices, fuel prices, and weather conditions are external factors that influence trapping effort annually (Parr 2017, DeVink et al. 2011, Yom-Tov et al. 2007, Gosselink et al. 2003). These factors along with life history traits, difficulty of catch, density and distribution of the species, among other factors, influence trapping effort.

Marten are the most sought-after species for trapping in Southeast Alaska. Marten are abundant, easy to trap, their pelts are easy to process, and are valuable in the fur market. Marten research in southern Southeast Alaska has demonstrated the importance of old-growth stands for foraging, travel corridors, and shelter (Schumacher 1999). Marten also preferred larger diameter timber structures for dens and resting sites (Hauptman 1979, Simon 1980, Hargis and McCullough 1984, Wynne and Sherburne 1984, Flynn and Schumacher 1997, Schumacher 1999).

Conversations with trappers validate preference by marten for old-growth stands and their avoidance of clear-cuts. Logging in Unit 2 continues to remove uneven-aged old-growth habitat required by marten. The POW Landscape Level Analysis aims to maximize old-growth timber harvest for the next 10–15 years (USFS 2018). As a result, we believe the area's capacity to support current marten populations will decline over time. However, respondents to the trapper questionnaire described marten as “common” or “abundant” throughout the reporting period (Schumacher 2013a, Schumacher 2013b, Parr 2016, Parr 2017, Parr 2018).

Southeast Alaska provides excellent habitat for river otters (*Lutra canadensis*) and a variety of forage that supports plentiful harvest (Larsen 1984). Because river otters are difficult to trap, and pelt preparation is time consuming, prices must be high to substantially influence harvest levels. Prices were high in 2012 which likely increased total trapping effort, compared to the low prices observed in 2016. Trappers described river otters as “common” or “abundant” throughout the reporting period (Schumacher 2013a, Schumacher 2013b, Parr 2016, Parr 2017, Parr 2018).

Beaver (*Castor canadensis*) prices for this reporting period were low, likely contributing to low harvests. Beavers are relatively easy to trap but the amount of work needed to prepare a pelt and low prices will continue trends of minimal harvest unless there is a substantial increase in pelt price. Beavers are commonly trapped for use as bait for trapping marten and wolves which helps to maintain a steady, albeit low harvest independent of fur prices. Trappers described beavers as “common” from RY12–RY14, then when the survey changed from only Units 1A and 2 to all of Region I in RY15–16, trappers described beavers as “scarce” (Schumacher 2013a, Schumacher 2013b, Parr 2016, Parr 2017, Parr 2018). However, populations of beaver in Unit 2 appear stable as the number of beavers caught per trapper remains relatively stable. RY16 saw a drop in catch per successful trapper, however, when key trappers don't trap for a season, this drop in catch per trapper is not unusual. These few key trappers can exude much more trapping effort than their fellow trappers (Dorendorf et al. 2016).

Mink (*Mustela vison*) pelt prices have remained low and stable over the past decade. Ample opportunity exists to trap mink in Unit 2 with an expanse of suitable coastline and riverine

habitat. They consistently ranked as the second most important species for trapping in Southeast Alaska during the reporting period (Schumacher 2013a, Schumacher 2013b, Parr 2016, Parr 2017, Parr 2018). Trappers that participate in trapping regardless of prices continue to trap mink while those who wait for higher prices do not. Trappers reported mink as “common” or “abundant” during the reporting period (Schumacher 2013a, Schumacher 2013b, Parr 2016, Parr 2017, Parr 2018).

Short-tailed weasel (*Mustela erminea*) populations fluctuate annually primarily due to variation in prey availability (Erlinge 1983, Sittler 1995). Harvest continues to be mainly limited to incidental take while targeting other furbearers, primarily marten. Fur prices remained steady and low with a 10-year average of \$4.54. Trappers reported short-tailed weasels as “common” from RY12–14, then as “scarce” when reporting changed from Units 1A and 2 to all of Region I for RY15–16 (Schumacher 2013a, Schumacher 2013b, Parr 2016, Parr 2017, Parr 2018). Short-tailed weasels typically live close to bodies of water in riparian habitat and are distributed throughout the region (MacDonald and Cook 2008). We do not currently have information to determine why short-tailed weasels were determined as “scarce”, despite their region-wide occupancy.

Similar to short-tailed weasels, flying squirrels (*Glaucomys sabrinus griseifrons*; hereafter referred to as squirrel) are rarely targeted by trappers and most commonly caught incidentally in marten sets. Fur prices remain steady and low with a 10-year average of \$1.00. Trappers reported squirrels as “common” throughout the reporting period (Schumacher 2013a, Schumacher 2013b, Parr 2016, Parr 2017, Parr 2018).

Coyotes (*Canis latrans*), lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), muskrats (*Ondatra zibethicus*), Red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), red squirrels (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*), and wolverine (*Gulo gulo*) are absent from Unit 2.

Management Direction

EXISTING WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PLANS

Greater Alaska Furbearer Management Plan in 1976 Species Management Plan (ADF&G 1976).

GOALS

To provide the following:

1. An optimum harvest of furbearers.
2. The greatest opportunity to participate in hunting and trapping furbearers.

CODIFIED OBJECTIVES

Amounts Reasonably Necessary for Subsistence Uses

The Alaska Board of Game (BOG) has made a positive subsistence finding for furbearers in all units, including Unit 2, with a harvestable surplus to be 90% of the harvestable portion (5 AAC 99.025(13)).

Intensive Management

Not applicable.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

- Regulate seasons and bag limits to maintain viewable and harvestable populations of beaver, marten, mink, river otters, short-tailed weasel, and squirrel.
- Seal harvested beaver, marten, and river otter pelts as they are presented for sealing.
- Contact reliable observers for general information about the status and trends of furbearer populations, including the use of an annual trapper survey.
- Necropsy beaver, marten, mink, river otters, short-tailed weasels, and squirrel carcasses as needed to determine disease, parasites, pregnancies, record morphometric data, and collect tissue samples.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Population Status and Trend

ACTIVITY 1.1

Contact reliable sources for information on furbearer distribution and abundance and record occupancy during other survey efforts.

Data Needs

Observations from reliable members of the public provide insight into local trends in abundance. For example, fur trappers that have trapped the same trapline for many years can provide valuable insight into trends in abundance. Incidental sightings of furbearers while conducting surveys or travelling to work locations help with presence-absence information on all species of furbearers.

Methods

Observations from the public are incorporated into furbearer management reports. Members of the public contact our area office via phone, e-mail, or in person to provide details on their observations. Agency sightings are recorded and reported when considered significant. The

Annual Trapper Questionnaire provides valuable information on harvest, trapping methods, and other information on trapping in the region.

Results and Discussion

No major events to report, however we noted that wolves (*Canis lupus ligoni*) seem to have a lack of parasites compared to several beaver and marten that had external parasites.

Recommendations for Activity 1.1 Continue

Actively seek information from trappers and others that observe furbearers. Continue recording locations of furbearer sightings by agency staff.

2. Mortality/Harvest Monitoring and Regulations

ACTIVITY 2.1

Data Needs

Harvest data must be assessed to understand impacts of harvest and trends in abundance.

Methods

The Department collected harvest data by sealing hides of beaver, marten, and river otter taken by trappers and hunters. We recorded location and date of harvest, method of take, mode of transportation, and sex. In the case of river otter and beaver, hides were measured. Sealing must occur by ADF&G staff or a State appointed sealer within 30 days of the close of the season. These data are entered into an ADF&G's Wildlife Information Network database (Winfonet). Harvest data were summarized by regulatory year (RY), which begins 1 July and ends 30 June (e.g., RY15 = 1 July 2015–30 June 2016).

Hunting Seasons and Bag Limits RY12– RY16

Species	Season	Bag Limit
Beaver	No open season	
Coyote	1 Sept–30 Apr	2 coyotes
Fox, Red	No open season	
Lynx	No open season	
Squirrel and Marmot	No closed season	No limit
Wolverine	1 Sep–1 Feb	1 wolverine

Trapping Seasons and Bag Limits RY12

Species	Season	Bag Limit
Beaver	10 Nov–30 Apr	No limit
Coyote	1 Dec–15 Feb	No limit
Fox, Red	1 Dec–15 Feb	No limit
Lynx	1 Dec–15 Feb	No limit
Marten	1 Dec–15 Feb	No limit
Mink and Weasel	1 Dec–15 Feb	No limit
Muskrat	1 Dec–15 Feb	No limit
River Otter	1 Dec–15 Feb	No limit
Squirrel and Marmot	No closed season	No limit
Wolverine	10 Nov–15 Feb	No limit

Trapping Seasons and Bag Limits RY13, RY14, RY15

Species	Season	Bag Limit
Beaver	10 Nov–30 Apr	No limit
Coyote ^a	1 Nov–30 Apr	No limit
Fox, Red	1 Dec–15 Feb	No limit
Lynx	1 Dec–15 Feb	No limit
Marten	1 Dec–15 Feb	No limit
Mink and Weasel	1 Dec–15 Feb	No limit
Muskrat	1 Dec–15 Feb	No limit
River Otter	1 Dec–15 Feb	No limit
Squirrel and Marmot	No closed season	No limit
Wolverine	10 Nov–15 Feb	No limit

^a Coyote season extended

Trapping Seasons and Bag Limits RY16

Species	Season	Bag Limit
Beaver	10 Nov–30 Apr	No limit
Coyote	1 Nov–30 Apr	No limit
Fox, Red	1 Dec–15 Feb	No limit
Lynx	1 Dec–15 Feb	No limit
Marten	1 Dec–15 Feb	No limit
Mink and Weasel	1 Dec–15 Feb	No limit
Muskrat	1 Dec–15 Feb	No limit
River Otter	1 Dec–15 Feb	No limit
Squirrel and Marmot	No closed season	No limit
Wolverine ^a	10 Nov–28 Feb	No limit

^a Wolverine season extended

Results and Discussion

Harvest by Hunters-Trappers

AMERICAN MARTEN

Harvest averaged 727 (range = 490–1068) during this reporting period (Table 1). This is a slight decrease compared to the 10-year average of 787 (range = 490–1084). All marten were trapped or snared during the reporting period (Schumacher 2013a, Schumacher 2013b, Parr 2016, Parr 2017, Parr 2018). The high harvest in RY12 and RY13 coincides with high fur prices which likely increased overall trapping effort. Marten pelt value averaged \$67.35 during the reporting period (RY 2012–2016; range = \$34.47–\$123.70; Table 2) providing incentive to trap. This was higher than the 10-year average of \$60.09 (range = \$31.31–\$123.70; Table 2). The number of successful trappers decreased from 39 in RY12 and RY13 to 22 in RY16. Although the number of active trappers and number of sets made are unknown, it seems as though effort decreased from RY12 and RY13 to RY16 which likely coincides with reduced fur prices.

Table 1. Harvest and method of take for marten sealed in Unit 2, RY12–RY16.

Regulatory Year	Total Harvest	Successful Participants	Percent Males	Percent Female	Percent Unknown	Method of Take			
						Shot	Trapped	Snared	Unknown
RY12	1014	39	42	26	33	0	1013	0	1
RY13	1068	39	45	31	24	0	1068	0	0
RY14	490	31	45	33	22	0	458	32	0
RY15	491	25	48	36	16	0	491	0	0
RY16	574	22	51	37	13	0	507	1	66

RIVER OTTER

Harvest averaged 285 (range = 115–563) during this reporting period (Table 3). This is an increase compared to the 10-year average of 208 (range = 71–563). During the reporting period, most river otters were trapped and only a few were shot in Region I (Schumacher 2013a, Schumacher 2013b, Parr 2016, Parr 2017, Parr 2018). From conversations with trappers, a combination of trapping and shooting are used to take river otters, however, the majority are taken with traps. Firearms are used opportunistically rather than as the principle method for harvesting river otters. Average price of river otters was up slightly this reporting period at \$56.62 (range = \$21.05–\$86.17; Table 2) compared to the ten-year average of \$50.64 (range = \$21.05–\$86.17; Table 2). For example, harvest dropped from a high of 563 in RY12 to 122 in RY16. This is likely due to a drop in effort (26 successful trappers in RY12 compared to 11 in RY16) because of low fur prices (Table 3).

BEAVER

Harvest averaged 135 (range = 51–189) during this reporting period (Table 4). This is a decrease compared to the 10-year average of 173 (range = 51–309). Beavers are difficult to sex until after skinned thus there are few animals sealed with information on sex. Traps and snares were the main methods reported for taking beavers with a small percentage shot in Region I during this reporting period (Schumacher 2013a, Schumacher 2013b, Parr 2016, Parr 2017, Parr 2018). During the reporting period, 25% of harvest were kits and 75% adults (Table 4; Payne 1979).

Table 2. Average furbearer prices based on Fur Harvesters of America auctions 2007-2016 (Fur Harvesters Auction Incorporated 2016).

Species	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Beaver	21.24	22.00	13.56	12.03	16.54	20.76	24.96	16.63	13.15	9.40
Weasel ^a	5.92	6.12	4.25	4.86	3.77	4.50	3.80	4.74	4.74	2.72
Fisher	76.37	64.33	37.84	56.00	41.16	83.47	121.60	78.35	67.83	30.37
Marten	63.11	91.67	33.33	31.31	44.71	74.48	123.70	57.33	46.77	34.47
Mink	14.34	12.19	7.90	12.93	18.00	21.72	24.07	9.83	8.75	7.33
Muskrat	3.94	2.68	3.80	5.85	9.27	9.05	12.15	10.15	4.25	2.07
Squirrel ^b	1.34	1.67	1.23	N/A	1.06	1.03	0.94	0.66	0.38	0.70
River otter	49.50	42.58	36.48	30.50	64.22	83.80	86.17	50.34	41.72	21.05
Wolf	127.60	200.30	151.20	198.00	181.00	198.50	260.50	191.00	108.50	169.00
Wolverine	246.20	294.00	192.30	246.30	250.50	266.70	260.60	259.20	230.40	218.40

^a Long-tailed (*Mustela frenata*), short-tailed (*Mustela erminea*) and least weasel (*Mustela nivalis*).

^b North American Sciuridae *spp.* (Baker et al. 2003).

Table 3. Harvest and method of take for river otters sealed in Unit 2, Southeast Alaska, RY12–RY16.

Regulatory Year	Total Harvest	Successful Participants	Percent Males	Percent Female	Percent Unknown Sex	Percent Juvenile ^a	Percent Adult ^a	Percent Unknown Age	Method of Take			
									Shot	Trapped	Snared	Unknown
RY12	563	26	39	37	24	73	20	6	114	429	0	20
RY13	473	34	58	42	0	30	70	0	46	427	0	0
RY14	115	20	66	34	0	37	63	0	15	84	9	7
RY15	153	24	52	47	1	68	32	0	46	96	10	1
RY16	122	11	55	45	0	49	51	0	12	106	0	4

^a Juvenile river otters measure (length) <42", adults = ≥42"

Table 4. Harvest and method of take for beavers sealed in Unit 2, RY12–RY16.

Regulatory Year	Total Harvest	Successful Participants	Percent Kits ^a	Percent Adults ^b	Percent Unknown	Method of Take			
						Shot	Trapped	Snared	Unknown
RY12	189	23	31	67	2	0	179	10	0
RY13	183	28	29	71	0	0	182	1	0
RY14	151	22	23	77	0	0	148	3	0
RY15	103	16	16	81	3	7	96	0	0
RY16	51	11	24	77	0	1	49	1	0

^a Beavers measuring (length + width) \leq 52" = Kits.

^b Beavers measuring (length + width) $>$ 52" = Adults.

Similar to river otters, firearms are typically used for opportunistic harvest of beavers in Unit 2. Beavers are typically easier to harvest with traps given their nocturnal activity patterns.

The average price of beaver fur for the reporting period was \$16.98 (range = \$9.40–\$24.96; Table 2) which is slightly down from the 10-year average of \$17.03 (range = \$9.40–\$24.96; Table 2).

OTHER SPECIES

There are no harvest data for coyote, red fox, squirrels, mink, muskrat, or short-tailed weasel since sealing is not required and only mink, squirrels, and short-tailed weasel are present in Unit 2. Short-tailed weasel and squirrels were caught as bycatch while targeting marten. Conversations with trappers did not yield concerns over the abundance of these species. The average price of \$14.34 (range = \$7.33–\$24.07) for mink during this reporting period was higher than the average price of \$13.71 (range \$7.33–\$24.07) for mink over the past 10 years (Table 2).

Hunter Residency and Success

The majority of harvest came from residents of Unit 2 at 86% of total harvest. Resident Alaskans from other areas of the state made up 13% of harvest, and nonresidents accounted for <1% of harvest. Trapping pressure from other Alaska residents (outside of Unit 2) mainly comes from neighboring Unit 1A which is a short boat ride away.

Harvest Chronology

Marten harvest steadily dropped throughout the season (1 December–15 February) with most animals taken in December during the reporting period (Table 5). River otter and beaver harvest were similar in December and January (Table 5). Beaver harvest in November, March, and April is likely lower than December and January because trappers tend to put forth most of their effort during the 1 December–15 February season when more species are available to trap. Harvest of beaver, marten, and river otter all dropped during February which is likely due in part to the seasons ending in mid-February.

Transport Methods

Most marten were trapped with the use of a highway vehicle or boat (Table 6). Boats in Southeast Alaska provide easy access to large swaths of land, which is why they are a popular mode of travel for trapping. Most river otters were taken by boat or highway vehicle as access through water provides opportunity along with roads that provide easy access to river otter habitat. Most beavers were taken by highway vehicle (Table 6). The body-gripping traps used for beaver are heavy and most easily transported with aid of a vehicle or boat. Unit 2 is unique in Southeast Alaska for the extensive road system that allows trappers access to most of the island for trapping.

Table 5. Unit 2 beaver, river otter, and marten harvest chronology by month, RY12–RY16.

Regulatory Year	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Unknown	<i>n</i>
<i>Beaver</i>											
RY12	0	0	10	51	52	33	30	13	0	0	189
RY13	0	0	15	57	77	11	7	16	0	0	183
RY14	2 ^a	0	2	2	52	11	2	22	0	0	91
RY15	0	0	3	22	67	4	2	5	0	0	103
RY16	0	0	3	22	7	14	2	3	0	0	51
<i>River otter</i>											
RY12	0	0	0	249	214	84	0	0	0	16	563
RY13	0	0	2 ^a	141	272	58	0	0	0	0	471
RY14	0	0	0	27	60	28	0	0	0	0	115
RY15	0	0	0	68	66	19	0	0	0	0	153
RY16	0	0	0	53	58	11	0	0	0	0	122
<i>Marten</i>											
RY12	0	0	0	562	411	30	0	0	0	11	1014
RY13	0	0	0	759	264	44	0	0	0	1	1068
RY14	0	0	0	372	110	8	0	0	0	0	490
RY15	0	0	0	408	83	0	0	0	0	0	491
RY16	0	0	0	468	84	22	0	0	0	0	574

^a Nuisance permit issued to take beavers out of season.

Table 6. Unit 2 beaver, river otter, and marten harvest by transportation method, RY12–RY16.

Regulatory Year	Airplane	Horse/Dog Team	Boat	Off-highway Vehicle	Snow-machine	Highway Vehicle	Ski/Snowshoe/Foot	Unknown	<i>n</i>
<i>Beaver</i>									
RY12	0	0	7	34	0	138	10	0	189
RY13	0	0	8	6	0	150	19	0	183
RY14	0	3	19	2	0	118	0	9	151
RY15	0	0	3	0	0	93	7	0	103
RY16	0	0	0	1	0	44	6	0	51
<i>River otter</i>									
RY12	0	1	539	31	59	372	9	3	1014
RY13	0	0	446	226	2	352	9	33	1068
RY14	0	0	96	101	0	291	2	0	490
RY15	0	0	82	15	0	394	0	0	491
RY16	0	0	142	20	0	330	6	76	574
<i>Marten</i>									
RY12	12	0	489	5	0	41	0	16	563
RY13	0	9	402	0	0	52	9	1	473
RY14	0	0	86	0	0	22	0	7	115
RY15	0	0	128	0	0	21	4	0	153
RY16	0	0	80	0	0	15	24	3	122

Alaska Board of Game Actions and Emergency Orders

In 2013 the Board of Game received several proposals for changes to furbearer trapping regulations. One proposal suggested lengthening the trapping season for coyotes from 1 December–15 February to 1 November–30 April, which passed. Another proposal that passed allowed trappers to take beavers with a firearm in Southeast. In 2015 the board changed the wolverine trapping season from 10 November–15 February to 10 November–28 February.

At the March 2016 Statewide Board of Game meeting the board rescinded the requirement for all traps and snares to be marked with a trapper's permanent identification or to post a sign nearby with the same information. In 2013 the BOG passed a proposal to allow the take of beavers with a firearm.

No emergency orders were issued during this reporting period.

Recommendations for Activity 2.1 Continue

Continue sealing beaver, marten, and river otter for critical information on harvest, furbearer demographics, and harvest locations. This enables the Department to determine trends in abundance for these species. We will continue to rely on the public for trends in abundance of other furbearer along with information they provide in the Alaska Trapper Questionnaire.

3. Habitat Assessment-Enhancement

Not applicable

NONREGULATORY MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS OR NEEDS

Data Recording and Archiving

- Data sheets are scanned and stored on the Ketchikan server.
- Original datasheets are stored in file folders located in the Ketchikan Area Biologist's office.
- Historical survey notes and data sheets are being digitized and scanned for permanent storage on the file server.
- Wildlife management reports and plans and the management operational plan for Furbearer – Unit 2 will be stored online at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=librarypublications.wildlifemanagement>.
- Memos, data forms, and additional hard copies will be stored in the Ketchikan Area Biologist files in Ketchikan.

Agreements

None.

Permitting

None.

Conclusions and Management Recommendations

Quantifiable management objectives need to be established for beavers, marten, and river otters. Harvest information is available for all these species from sealing records, and application of existing and emerging methodologies may provide opportunities to monitor population trends.

Harvests of furbearers appear to be within sustainable limits, and no changes in seasons or bag limits are recommended.

II. Project Review and RY17–RY21 Plan

Review of Management Direction

MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

The existing management direction and goals appropriately direct management of furbearers in Unit 2. The management direction for Unit 2 ensures that furbearers will persist as part of the natural ecosystem and ensures continued hunting (on applicable species), trapping, and viewing opportunities. There is no indication that the long-term sustainability of the furbearer populations or that statewide goals for human uses cannot be met; therefore, the Unit 2 management direction should continue to be that furbearers will be managed in a manner that complements the statewide furbearer management goals.

GOALS

To provide the following:

1. An optimum harvest of furbearers.
2. The greatest opportunity to participate in hunting and trapping furbearers.

CODIFIED OBJECTIVES

Amounts Reasonably Necessary for Subsistence Uses

The Alaska Board of Game has made a positive subsistence finding for furbearers in all units, including Unit 2, with a harvestable surplus to be 90% of the harvestable portion (5 AAC 99.025(13)).

Intensive Management

Not applicable.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

- Regulate seasons and bag limits to maintain viewable and harvestable populations of beaver, marten, mink, river otters, short-tailed weasel, and squirrels.
- Seal harvested beaver, marten, and river otter pelts as they are presented for sealing.
- Contact reliable observers for general information about the status and trends of furbearer populations, including the use of an annual trapper survey.
- Necropsy beaver, marten, mink, river otters, short-tailed weasel, and squirrel carcasses as needed to determine disease, parasites, pregnancies, record morphometric data, and collect tissue samples.

REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Population Status and Trend

ACTIVITY 1.1

Contact reputable members of the public for insights on local trends in abundance. Record incidental sightings of furbearers for presence absence data.

Data Needs

Observations from reliable members of the public provide insight into local trends in abundance. For example, fur trappers that have trapped the same trapline for many years can provide valuable insight into trends in abundance. Incidental sightings of furbearers while conducting surveys or travelling to work locations help with presence absence information on all species of furbearers.

Methods

Observations from the public incorporated into furbearer reports. Members of the public contact our area office via phone, e-mail, or in person to provide details on their observations. Agency sightings are recorded and reported when considered significant. The annual trapper report provides valuable information on harvest, trapping methods, and other information on trapping in the region.

2. Mortality/Harvest Monitoring and Regulations

ACTIVITY 2.1

Data Needs

Harvest must be assessed to understand impacts of harvest and trends in abundance.

Methods

Harvest data will be collected by sealing hides of beaver, marten, and river otter taken by trappers and hunters. The Department record location and date of harvest, method of take, transportation mode, sex, and in the case of river otters and beavers, hides are measured. Sealing must occur by ADF&G staff or a State appointed sealer within 30 days of the close of the season. These data are entered into the Departments Wildlife Information Network database (Winfonet). Harvest data are summarized by regulatory year (RY), which begins 1 July and ends 30 June (e.g., RY15 = 1 July 2015–30 June 2016).

3. Habitat Assessment-Enhancement

Not applicable.

NONREGULATORY MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS OR NEEDS

Data Recording and Archiving

Data collected during surveys will be recorded on datasheets and transcribed into the furbearer observations spreadsheet located on the Ketchikan server.

Species wildlife management reports and plans and the management operational plan for furbearers in Unit 2 will be stored online at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=librarypublications.wildlifemanagement>. Memos, data forms, and additional hard copies will be stored in the area biologist files in Ketchikan.

Agreements

None.

Permitting

None.

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