

Furbearer Management Report and Plan, Game Management Units 7 and 15:

Report Period 1 July 2017–30 June 2022, and
Plan Period 1 July 2022–30 June 2027

Jason Herreman



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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 Jeff Selinger, Management Coordinator for Region II 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 Game Management Units 7 and 15 for the 5 regulatory years 2017–2021 and plans for survey and inventory management activities in the next 5 regulatory years, 2022–2026. A regulatory year (RY) begins 1 July and ends 30 June (e.g., RY17 = 1 July 2017–30 June 2018). This report is produced primarily to provide agency staff with data and analysis to help guide and record agency efforts but is also provided to the public to inform it of wildlife management activities. In 2016 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's (ADF&G, the department) Division of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) launched this 5-year report to report more efficiently report on trends and to describe potential changes in data collection activities over the next 5 years. It replaces the furbearer management report of survey and inventory activities that was previously produced every 3 years.

I. RY17–RY21 Management Report

Management Area

Units 7 and 15 combined comprise an area of approximately 8,397 mi², encompassing the Kenai Peninsula. The Kenai Peninsula has 3 major population centers, including Seward, Kenai–Soldotna, and Homer, as well as numerous smaller towns interspersed throughout the peninsula. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is the largest land manager on the peninsula.

Unit 7 is approximately 3,520 mi² in area and consists of the eastern portion of the Kenai Peninsula bounded by the western edge of the Kenai Mountains, the Russian River, and the Harding Ice Field on the west, and the western edge of the Sargent Ice Field and eastern edge of Spencer Glacier on the east (Fig. 1). The landscape of Unit 7 consists of mountainous terrain interspersed with river and creek drainages, a few large lakes, and ice fields. Riparian areas and hillsides are densely forested until reaching the alpine zone. Approximately 78% of Unit 7 is comprised of federally managed lands: 50% U.S. Forest Service, Chugach National Forest; 22% National Park Service, Kenai Fjords National Park; 5% USFWS, Kenai National Wildlife Refuge; and 1% other federal land.

Unit 15 incorporates the western portion of the Kenai Peninsula and is divided into 3 administrative units: 15A (1,314 mi²), 15B (1,121 mi²), and 15C (2,441 mi²). Each unit is significantly different in its topography, flora, and ecological history. The most northern is Unit 15A, which is separated from Unit 15B by the Kenai River and Skilak Lake. The most southern is Unit 15C, separated from Unit 15B by the Tustumena Glacier, Tustumena Lake, and the Kasilof River (Fig. 2).

Unit 15A is relatively flat, with many small lakes leading up to the foothills of the Kenai Mountains to the east. The dominant flora is a mixed spruce and hardwood climax community. The Kenai National Wildlife Refuge is the largest landholder in Unit 15A. No significant habitat disturbance has occurred in Unit 15A since the 1969 burn that encompassed approximately 85,306 acres.

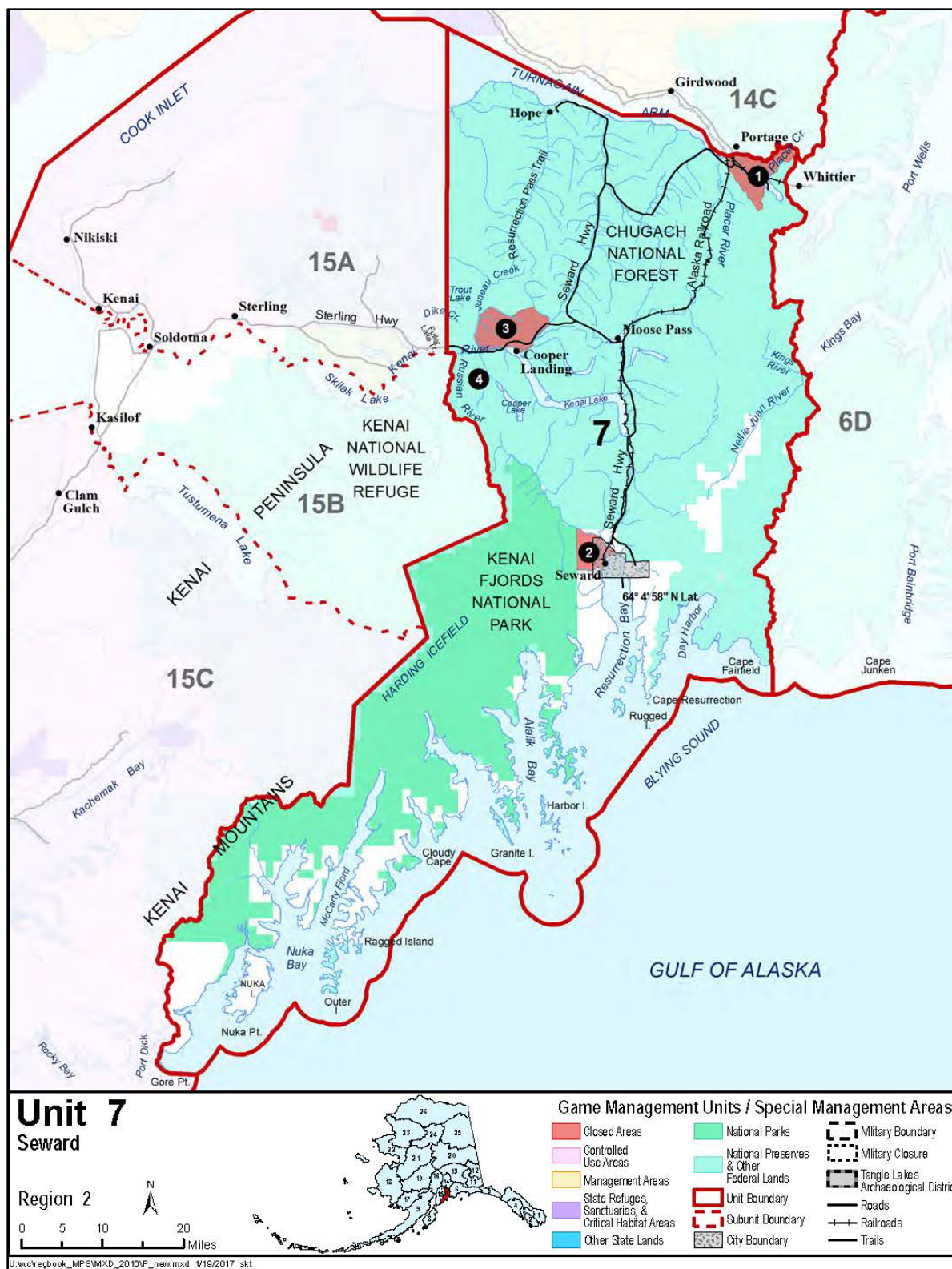


Figure 1. Map of Unit 7 boundaries, with indicators of controlled use areas (numbered circles) found in the Alaska Hunting Regulations, administrative units, and federal lands, Alaska, regulatory years 2017–2021.

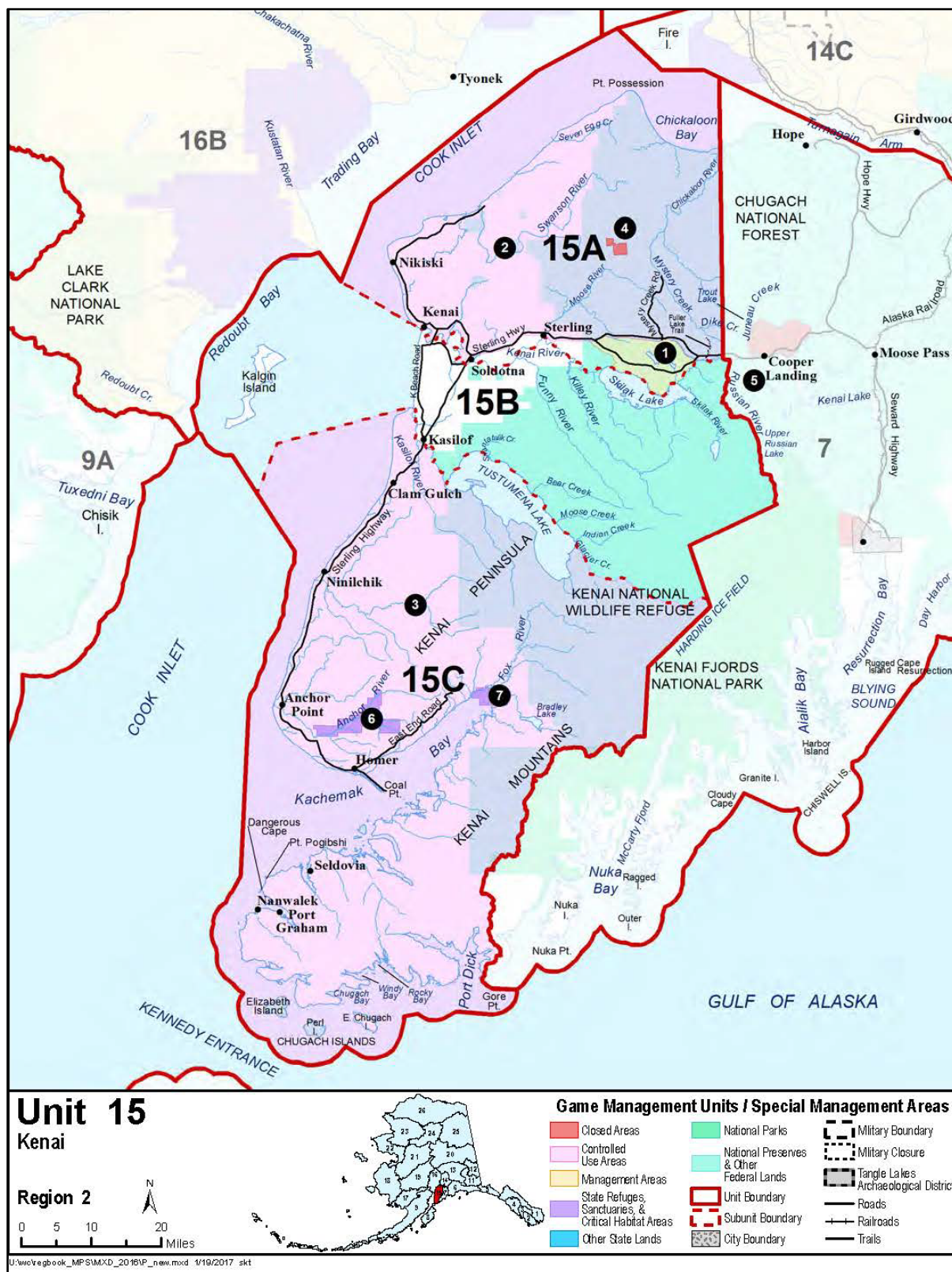


Figure 2. Map of Unit 15 boundaries, with indicators of controlled use areas (numbered circles) found in the Alaska Hunting Regulations, administrative units, and federal lands, Alaska, regulatory years 2017–2021.

The Kenai National Wildlife Refuge is also the largest landholder in Unit 15B. The western portion of Unit 15B is similar to the topography and flora in Unit 15A; however, Unit 15B becomes more mountainous further east and transitions into an alpine ecosystem. Forests within Unit 15B succumbed to widespread spruce bark beetle (*Dendroctonus rufipennis*) infestations that began in the 1990s. Unlike Unit 15A, Unit 15B recently experienced significant habitat turnover from the 2014 Funny River fire that burned approximately 196,610 acres, most of which were in Unit 15B. This fire burned in a mosaic pattern and should provide good wildlife habitat in the near future.

Unit 15C is significantly different from both Units 15A and 15B. Refuge lands make up only a small portion of Unit 15C in the northeast corner. The rest of Unit 15C is a mix of state, private, and municipal land ownership. The portion of Unit 15C north of Kachemak Bay and the Fox River peaks in the Caribou Hills and the Ninilchik Domes, sloping down to the lowlands. Very few small lakes are present, but numerous riparian areas exist draining from the highlands. Dominant vegetation is a mosaic consisting of spruce, willow, bluejoint grass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*; particularly in salvage-logged areas), alder, and some hardwood stands. The northern portion of Unit 15C has seen fairly consistent habitat disturbance over the past 2 decades in the form of wildfires, beetle kill, logging, and human development. The portion of Unit 15C south of Kachemak Bay and the Fox River consists of a very different ecotype compared to the northern portion of Unit 15C, as it comprises coastal temperate rain forest and subalpine habitat.

Summary of Status, Trend, Management Activities, and History of Furbearers in Units 7 and 15

Beavers (*Castor canadensis*), coyotes (*Canis latrans*), least weasels (*Mustela nivalis*), lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), marten (*Martes americana*), mink (*Neovison vison*), muskrats (*Ondatra zibethicus*), red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), river otters (*Lontra canadensis*), ermine (*Mustela erminea*), wolves (*Canis lupus*), red squirrels (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*), marmots (*Marmota caligata*), and wolverines (*Gulo gulo*) are found on the Kenai Peninsula at varying densities, depending upon habitat quality or prey abundance. Furbearers are harvested under both hunting and trapping seasons and regulations.

Unit 15C supports small remnant populations of red fox with occasional observations reported from other areas of the Kenai Peninsula; however, of the 3 canid species, red fox is uncommon. Wolves recolonized the Kenai Peninsula in the 1960s after a 50-year absence (Peterson et al. 1984). Wolf management information for RY17–RY21 can be found in *Wolf Management Report and Plan, Game Management Units 7 and 15: Report Period 1 July 2010–30 June 2015, and Plan Period 1 July 2015–30 June 2020* (Herreman 2018). Wolves and coyotes are currently distributed throughout the Kenai Peninsula. Coyotes were established on the Kenai Peninsula around 1930 (ADF&G 1976), and population abundance has fluctuated since that time. No surveys are conducted for coyotes, and sealing is not required for this species. Wildlife conflict reports from homeowners, reports from trappers, and requests for depredation permits suggest that the number of coyotes living near human-populated areas remains significant.

Marten are moderately abundant in Unit 7 but are rare in Unit 15 except in the portion of Unit 15B between the Kenai and Skilak rivers. More recently, marten have been increasing in abundance in Unit 15A. It is well-documented that marten are uncommon on the western side of the Kenai Peninsula (Osgood 1901, Allen 1902). Habitat and prey availability, or some other regional limiting factor or factors, likely influence their distribution. The spread of marten in Unit 15A as the forest matured is an indication that habitat might be a limiting factor. Marten harvest in western Unit 15A increased in the late 2000s and has fluctuated since then. Recent fires in Units 15A and 15B, including the 2014 Funny River fire, 2015 Card Street fire, and 2019 Swan Lake fire, have reset succession in large portions of both units, which may influence marten abundance in the coming years.

Beaver can be found in suitable habitat on the Kenai Peninsula; however, population densities and trends have not been measured and are poorly understood. Beaver have historically been overharvested in some portions of the peninsula, leading to population declines and extirpation. Significant icing, flooding, and subsequent breakup events may also have a negative impact on population numbers in some of the larger river systems, such as the Anchor River. Beaver are uncommon on the southern end of the Kenai Peninsula in easily accessible drainages, such as the lower portions of Deep Creek, Clam Creek, Stariski Creek, Chakok River, and the Anchor River. The yearly harvest of beaver in Units 7 and 15 averaged more than 400 beavers in the late 1950s and early 1960s, reaching a high of nearly 800 beavers in 1959; however, since 1964, the yearly harvest has been below 300 beavers with an average yearly harvest of 48 beavers during RY17–RY21.

River otters are common in inland waters and sheltered coastal areas of the Kenai Peninsula. Observations and harvest information indicate that otters are present in drainages supporting anadromous fish, lake systems, and sheltered coastal waters, such as the south shore of Kachemak Bay. Long-term average harvest has been stable at 45 otters per year since the 1970s. The average annual harvest during this reporting period was 45 animals.

Wolverines are most commonly found in the Kenai Mountains, including the southern and eastern peninsula coastal areas, Caribou Hills, and the hilly terrain that forms the headwaters of the Deep Creek and Anchor River drainages. Much of their range is naturally protected from trapping by difficult access, and in the case of Kenai Fjords National Park, trapping closures (Golden et al. 2007). The twenty-year average annual harvest (RY97–RY16) is 16 wolverines.

Lynx are cyclically abundant in the forest habitats of the Kenai Peninsula. Mixed deciduous and spruce forests in Units 15A and 15B historically appeared to have a higher abundance of snowshoe hares. Consequently, lynx numbers were usually higher in these areas than in the hemlock and spruce forests of Units 7 and 15C. This did not appear to be the case during the most recent snowshoe hare cycle peak that occurred from 2009 to 2010, likely due to recent fires in Unit 15C and subsequent regeneration of forage and a lack of recent fire history in Units 15A and 15B until 2014. Lynx harvest peaked during 2011–2012 at 456 total animals, which was 3 times higher than the previously recorded harvest peak during 1998–1999. More than half of these lynx were harvested in Unit 15C. In 2014, the trapping season was closed following the hare population crash and remained closed until 2020. Since 2020, harvest has averaged 124 lynx annually.

Mink, ermine, and squirrel are common throughout Units 7 and 15. Least weasels are uncommon, only recently being documented on the peninsula (McDonough and Olson 2009). Their abundance and distribution are currently unknown. Although the pelt values for mink and weasels are generally low, they continue to be important furbearers, especially for young trappers. Muskrat distribution is limited over much of the Kenai Peninsula, and marmots are typically limited to the alpine areas, with some remnant populations found in the bluff areas of Ninilchik and Mud Bay in Homer. Mink, weasel, squirrel, marmot, and muskrat harvest numbers are not currently well documented for this area.

Management Direction

EXISTING WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PLANS

The 1976 Alaska Wildlife Management Plan (ADF&G 1976) established the Cook Inlet Furbearer Management Plan, which included Units 7, 14, and 15; however, it contains limited information on furbearer management. The primary goal of this plan was to provide the greatest opportunity possible to participate in hunting and trapping furbearers while providing for optimum harvest.

Recent management objectives, harvest strategies, and subsequent changes have resulted from public comment, staff recommendations, and Board of Game (the board) actions and have been reported in the division's previous species management reports. The plan portion of this report contains the current management plan for furbearers in Units 7 and 15.

GOALS

The management goal is to provide optimum sustainable harvests and maximum opportunities to participate in the hunting and trapping of furbearers (ADF&G 1976).

CODIFIED OBJECTIVES

Amounts Reasonably Necessary for Subsistence Uses

The board has issued a positive customary and traditional use finding under 5 AAC 99.025(13) for furbearers throughout the state, with 90% of the harvestable portion specifically allocated for subsistence use.

Intensive Management

Not applicable.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

- Allow for the sustainable harvests of all furbearer species.
- Monitor the harvest through sealing and trapper questionnaires.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Population Status and Trend

ACTIVITY 1.1. Record observations of furbearers seen incidentally during other survey work and anecdotal reports from the public.

Data Needs

Incidental observations were insufficient for estimating the population or detecting changes that would trigger management action. Statistical estimates of furbearers derived from a sample-based estimator, including a measure of precision, are needed to detect change in the population.

Methods

GPS (Global Positioning System) locations and characteristics were recorded for any furbearers observed during aerial survey flights directed at other species.

Results and Discussion

Incidental records and anecdotal reports from trappers and outdoor enthusiasts provide a very limited view of furbearer abundance and must be used with caution. Reports can often be contradictory or skewed by the individual's perspective, but when there is a large enough sample size, these reports can provide some indications as to what the population is doing. Tracking depredation events for lynx and other furbearers on domestic animals helps indicate if these animals are present in the landscape.

Recommendations for Activity 1.1.

Continue to actively seek information from trappers and others who observe furbearers to create a database to maintain incidental observations.

2. Mortality-Harvest Monitoring and Regulations

ACTIVITY 2.1. Monitor harvest through sealing records.

Data Needs

Harvest must be assessed to understand the potential impact of furbearer harvest.

Methods

Harvest data was collected when sealing hides of beaver, marten, otter, wolverine, and lynx taken by trappers and hunters and by trapper questionnaire surveys for other species. Results from trapper questionnaires can be found in the department's annual Alaska Trapper Report, which can be found online at www.wildlifepublications.adfg.alaska.gov by searching for "Trapper Survey Report" in the "Specific Publication Type" field. When hides were sealed, the location of take, the date of harvest, the method of take, the transportation mode, and the sex were recorded. Hides were measured for lynx, otter, and beaver. Sealing must occur with an authorized ADF&G representative or a state-appointed sealer within 30 days of the close of the season. These data

were entered into ADF&G's Wildlife Information Network (WinfoNet) database. Harvest data were summarized by regulatory year.

Season and Bag Limit

Hunting

Regulatory years	Species	Season	Bag limit
2017–2021	Beaver	No open season	–
2017–2021	Coyote	No closed season	No limit
2017–2021	Red fox	No open season	–
2017–2021	Lynx	1 Jan–15 Feb	2 lynx
2017–2021	Squirrel	No closed season	No limit
2017–2021	Wolverine	1 Sep–1 Mar	1 wolverine

Trapping

Regulatory years	Species	Season	Bag limit
2017–2021	Beaver	15 Oct–30 Apr	20 beavers
2017–2021	Coyote	15 Oct–31 Mar	No limit
2017–2021	Red fox	10 Nov–28/29 Feb	1 red fox
2017–2021	Lynx	1 Jan–15 Feb ^a	No limit
2017–2021	Marten	10 Nov–31 Jan	No limit
2017–2021	Mink	10 Nov–31 Jan	No limit
2017–2021	Muskrat	10 Nov–15 May	No limit
2017–2021	River otter	10 Nov–28/29 Feb	No limit
2017–2021	Squirrel and marmot	No closed season	No limit
2017–2021	Wolverine	10 Nov–28/29 Feb	No limit

^a The RY17–RY19 trapping season was closed.

Results and Discussion

Harvest by Hunters-Trappers

The annual variations in the furbearer harvest reflect effort, trapping conditions, and access. Only beaver, lynx, marten, otter, wolf, and wolverine are required to be sealed. The beaver harvest averaged 48 animals over RY17–RY21 (Table 1), down from the historic (1983–2013) average of 138 beaver per year. Marten harvest averaged 76 animals per year over RY17–RY21, slightly down from the historical (1988–2018) average of 84 marten. Most marten harvest occurred in Unit 7 (Table 1). The mean 5-year percentage of females in the marten harvest was 41%, similar to the historic average of 38%. The harvest of river otters averaged 45 animals over RY17–RY21 (Table 1), which is identical to the historic (1977–2017) average. The mean 5-year percentage of females in the river otter harvest was 41% compared to the historical average of 39%. Wolverine

harvest averaged 17 animals over RY17–RY21 (Table 1), slightly lower than the historic (1984–2014) average of 19 wolverine per year. The mean 5-year percentage of females in the wolverine harvest was 44%, higher than the historical average of 38%. Overall, harvest levels do not raise concerns when compared to historic harvest levels.

Table 1. Annual furbearer harvest on the Kenai Peninsula, Alaska, regulatory years 2017–2021.

Species	Regulatory year	Unit					Total
		7	15A	15B	15C	15Z ^a	
Beaver	2017	32	14	7	5	0	58
	2018	7	18	8	16	0	49
	2019	26	6	2	3	0	37
	2020	22	15	4	2	0	43
	2021	20	20	2	6	7	55
Lynx	2017 ^b	1	2	0	5	0	8
	2018 ^b	2	3	1	3	0	9
	2019 ^b	1	3	2	5	1	12
	2020	10	70	27	15	0	122
	2021	15	31	40	39	1	126
Marten	2017	16	0	0	0	0	16
	2018	30	4	0	0	0	34
	2019	27	4	0	0	0	31
	2020	164	20	0	0	0	184
	2021	82	33	0	0	0	115
River otter	2017	8	16	7	22	0	53
	2018	9	7	8	15	0	39
	2019	8	11	2	17	0	38
	2020	19	15	6	5	0	45
	2021	10	17	2	21	0	50
Wolverine	2017	8	0	0	8	0	16
	2018	12	0	2	7	0	21
	2019	9	3	1	3	0	16
	2020	10	0	3	4	0	17
	2021	10	0	1	4	0	15

^a 15Z represents an unknown location within Unit 15.

^b Trapping season closed.

Hunter-Trapper Residency and Success

Most harvest was taken by Alaska residents (99%). Nonresidents took 0.36% of the harvest, and individuals of unknown residency took 0.44% of the harvest. Harvest taken by Kenai Peninsula residents was down 4% from the previous report period to 79%. Residents from the greater Anchorage area took the next largest proportion of harvest at 20%.

Harvest Chronology

Interpretation of the harvest chronology can be misleading due to variations in weather and access. Most of Unit 15 is within the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, and restrictions related to snow depth affect when trappers can access the area by snowmachine. Periodic freeze-thaw cycles on the Kenai Peninsula can also affect effort throughout the winter. The detailed analyses required to obtain meaningful information concerning harvest chronology are beyond the scope of this report; therefore, the data are provided without interpretation (Table 2).

Other Mortality

No known significant human-caused mortality exists for furbearer species outside of hunting and trapping.

Alaska Board of Game Actions and Emergency Orders

No board actions affecting furbearer management were taken during this management period. The lynx season was closed by emergency order from RY17 through RY19 following the lynx tracking strategy adopted in 1992.

Recommendations for Activity 2.1.

Continue to seal beaver, lynx, marten, otter, wolf, and wolverine, and add red fox as a required species for sealing or close the harvest season for red fox.

Get statewide sealing certificates modified to include Uniform Coding Unit (UCU) for each animal harvested, which can then be incorporated into the beaver harvest database to help manage beaver by drainage.

3. Habitat Assessment-Enhancement

No habitat assessment or enhancement activities occurred for furbearers in Units 7 and 15 during RY17–RY21.

NONREGULATORY MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS OR NEEDS

No nonregulatory management problems or needs have been identified at this time.

Data Recording and Archiving

Original copies of sealing forms are sent to the Anchorage Area Office, where they are scanned and entered into the WinfoNet database. Paper duplicates of sealing forms are stored in filing cabinets at the local Soldotna and Homer offices.

Agreements

No specific management agreements exist for furbearer species in Units 7 or 15 during RY17–RY21.

Table 2. Chronology of furbearer harvest on the Kenai Peninsula, Alaska, regulatory years 2017–2021.

Species	Regulatory year	Month										Other or unknown	Total
		Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		
Beaver	2017	1	0	1	20	6	2	2	8	5	13	0	58
	2018	1	2	0	14	4	4	8	7	3	5	1	49
	2019	0	1	0	4	11	8	3	0	3	3	4	37
	2020	0	0	0	7	25	3	3	3	1	1	0	43
	2021	0	0	0	21	18	3	10	3	0	0	0	55
Lynx	2017 ^a	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	0	0	0	8
	2018 ^a	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	2	0	0	0	9
	2019 ^a	1	0	0	0	0	0	7	3	0	0	1	12
	2020	0	0	1	0	0	0	82	29	0	0	10	122
	2021	0	0	0	0	0	0	87	39	0	0	0	126
Marten	2017	0	0	0	1	5	6	4	0	0	0	0	16
	2018	0	0	0	0	3	10	16	0	0	0	5	34
	2019	0	0	0	0	10	6	15	0	0	0	0	31
	2020	0	0	0	0	56	60	68	0	0	0	0	184
	2021	0	0	0	0	24	40	51	0	0	0	0	115
River otter	2017	0	0	0	1	8	19	13	12	0	0	0	53
	2018	0	0	0	0	10	14	16	5	0	0	0	45
	2019	0	0	1	0	14	6	11	6	0	0	0	38
	2020	0	0	0	0	1	7	15	16	0	0	0	39
	2021	0	0	0	0	14	12	13	11	0	0	0	50
Wolverine	2017	0	0	0	0	3	2	7	3	1	0	0	16
	2018	0	0	0	1	1	0	12	7	1	0	0	22
	2019	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	7	0	0	3	16
	2020	0	0	0	0	2	1	9	5	0	0	0	17
	2021	0	0	0	0	0	1	9	5	0	0	0	15

^a Trapping season was closed.

Permitting

No specific permits exist for furbearer species in Units 7 or 15 during RY17–RY21.

Conclusions and Management Recommendations

Trapping effort varies substantially from year to year based on snow conditions, fur prices, and other factors. Lice are present in canid populations on the Kenai, and outbreaks flare up occasionally. Outbreaks can greatly decrease fur quality and often lead to reduced trapping effort.

Lynx management on the Kenai Peninsula has followed the recommendations of Brand and Keith (1979) and the principles set forth by Golden (1999). Their study indicated that during a lynx population decline in Alberta, trapping mortality was additive to natural mortality. Using computer modeling, they showed that more lynx would be produced and greater long-term harvest would be achieved when trapping was curtailed for 3–4 years, starting with the second year after the lynx harvest peak. This harvest strategy is in place on the Kenai Peninsula. Lynx trapping was closed in Units 7 and 15 from RY17 through RY19 and was reopened in RY20. Hunting has remained open, but the limited harvest suggests that the impact of hunting on the population is minimal.

Beaver harvest has declined dramatically in recent years compared to historic harvest. While it is possible that trapping effort could be affecting harvest, observations of beaver activity, communication with local trappers, and the most recent survey efforts in Unit 15C suggest that beaver numbers have declined precipitously from historic levels. The cause of the decline is unknown, but multiple factors are likely to be at play, including illegal harvest and overharvest. If beaver are to remain a functioning part of local ecosystems, it may be time for the department to take action to halt what appears to be a steady decline. Efforts could include closing trapping seasons, reintroduction to specific drainages, and research efforts to determine the cause of the decline.

Because of their ecology and behavior, beaver should be managed by drainage to reduce the chance of overharvest and extirpation from local areas. Dispersal distances by beaver are minimal, usually less than 16 km by air (Jenkins and Busher 1979), with an average distance of 8.5 km (Leege 1968). Dispersal normally occurs at 2 years of age, which is also the age of earliest reproduction. Swenson et al. (1983) reported ovulation in 25% of females 2 years old, with full reproductive potential being reached at >5 years old and 92% of females ovulating. Home range size varies from 0.8 to 2.2 km of stream (0.5 to 1.4 mi; Novak 1987). Boyce (1981) reported a nearest neighbor distance of 1.6 km (1.0 mi) for streams in Interior Alaska. Typical beaver densities are 0.4 to 0.8 beaver per km² (0.15 to 0.31 beaver per mi²), but densities may reach up to 3 beavers per km² (1.16 beaver per mi²) in good habitat (Jenkins and Busher 1979), such as can be found on some parts of the Kenai Peninsula.

Department management recommendations established in 1988 (H. Melchior, Alaska Department of Fish and Game unpublished memorandum, Fairbanks, Alaska) suggest that 2 indices be used to guide beaver harvest: first, percentage of trappers who reach their limits and

second, percentage of kits in the harvest, with kits determined as an animal under 53 inches in length (Table 3).

Table 3. Recommended indices for guiding beaver harvest, Fairbanks, Alaska, 1988.

	% of trappers with their limit	% of kits in the harvest
Overharvest	20 or less	25 or more
Proper harvest	30 to 50	20 or less
Underharvest	60 or more	15 or less

Melchior suggested this analysis be conducted by towns, which could later be lumped into larger groups (H. Melchior, Alaska Department of Fish and Game unpublished memorandum, Fairbanks, Alaska). Based on the current harvest limit of 20 beavers and the indicators present suggesting a lack of beaver on the Kenai Peninsula, the percentage of trappers with their limit is currently not a relevant management metric. A more appropriate analysis level under our current sealing system for the Kenai Peninsula is to analyze the data by unit for a coarse overview, followed by a breakdown by UCU and drainage. Beaver harvest for the Kenai Peninsula should be analyzed using this method to determine if overharvest may have occurred and regulations adjusted accordingly.

II. Project Review and RY22–RY26 Plan

Review of Management Direction

MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

The existing management direction and goals appropriately direct the management of furbearers in Units 7 and 15. The management direction in these units ensures that furbearers will persist as part of the natural ecosystem and that opportunities will persist for hunting, trapping, and viewing applicable species. There is no indication that long-term sustainability of the furbearer populations or that goals for human uses cannot be met; therefore, the management direction should continue to be that furbearers will be managed in a manner that complements the statewide furbearer management goals. There are no area-specific issues in Units 7 or 15 that require a departure from statewide goals for furbearer management.

GOALS

The management goal is to provide optimum sustainable harvests and maximum opportunities to participate in the hunting and trapping of furbearers.

CODIFIED OBJECTIVES

Amounts Reasonably Necessary for Subsistence Uses

No change is expected for RY22–RY26.

Intensive Management

No change is expected for RY22–RY26.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

No change will occur in management objectives.

- Allow for the sustainable harvests of all furbearer species.
- Monitor the harvest through sealing and trapper questionnaires.

REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

All RY17–RY21 management activities will continue for RY22–RY26 with changes to needs and methods as described below.

1. Population Status and Trend

ACTIVITY 1.1. Record observations of furbearers seen incidentally during other survey work and anecdotal reports from the public.

Data Needs

No change from the RY17–RY21 report period.

Methods

GPS locations, group size (if applicable), and characteristics will be recorded during aerial survey flights. Anecdotal reports will be recorded to the maximum level of detail available. Reports will be recorded in a central database saved on the Homer Office server (O:\DWC\ADF&G-Homer\Files\Species Data\furbearer\anecdotal reports).

2. Mortality-Harvest Monitoring

ACTIVITY 2.1. Monitor harvest through sealing records.

Data Needs

Efforts should be made to add UCU to the statewide fur sealing forms.

Methods

No change from the RY17–RY21 report period.

3. Habitat Assessment-Enhancement

No habitat assessment or enhancement activities are expected for furbearers in Units 7 and 15 during RY22–RY26.

NONREGULATORY MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS OR NEEDS

Data Recording and Archiving

Original copies of sealing forms are sent to the Anchorage Area Office, where they are scanned and entered into the WinfoNet database. Paper duplicates of sealing forms are stored in filing cabinets at the local Soldotna and Homer offices.

Agreements

There are no planned furbearer-specific agreements for Units 7 or 15 during RY22–RY26.

Permitting

The department does not expect to seek or issue furbearer-specific permits in Units 7 or 15 during RY22–RY26.

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