

Wisconsin Fur Buyers Report 2014-15

By Jes Rees

Abstract

The average price paid for furbearer pelts fell for 12 of the 13 species on the 2014-15 fur buyer survey. The total pelt value for 2014-15 was estimated at 2.0 million dollars, this was down 1.2 million dollars from the 2013-14 value. Over 264,000 furs were purchased from Wisconsin fur harvesters this season. Sixty-eight percent of all furs purchased were from out of state.

Methods

In order to document harvest totals, interstate fur sales, and total pelt value of the 2014-15 furbearer harvest season, survey forms were mailed to all licensed Wisconsin fur buyers. Fur buyers were asked to report the number of furs purchased from Wisconsin hunters, trappers, other fur dealers, and the number purchased from outside the state. Fur buyers were also questioned on the average prices paid to Wisconsin fur harvesters for furbearer pelts. Lastly, fur buyers were asked to estimate the percentage of furs purchased from Wisconsin fur hunters. A second and third mailing were sent to all non-respondents. Data from all returned questionnaires were entered into the DNR production server and summarized using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

Results

Responses were received from 42 of the 51 (82%) licensed fur buyers that were surveyed. Since some of the returned surveys covered more than one buyer's activities, the corrected response rate was 98% (50 of 51). Sixty-four percent of the respondents purchased furs during the 2014-15 season.

Of the 938,695 furs purchased by licensed Wisconsin fur buyers during the 2014-15 season, 28% were purchased from Wisconsin fur harvesters, 3% were purchased from Wisconsin dealers, and 68% were purchased from outside Wisconsin (Table 1).

The 264,036 furs purchased from licensed Wisconsin hunters and trappers yielded a total pelt value of \$2,048,247. This was lower than the 2013-14 season total of \$3,200,828. This is the 16th highest total pelt value in the last twenty-five years, and the 10th highest in the last ten.

The mean price paid to Wisconsin hunters/trappers in 2014-15 decreased for 12 of the 13 species surveyed yet the number purchased from Wisconsin fur harvesters increased for 9 of the 13 species. The lowest price paid for a furbearer pelt in the 2014-15 season was \$1, muskrat, opossum, and weasel. The highest price paid for a furbearer pelt in the 2014-15 season was \$150.00, bobcat. The mean percentage of coyote, gray fox, raccoon, and red fox pelts purchase that were taken via hunting during the 2013-14 season is 66%, 40%, 48% and 51% respectively.

Table 1. *Fur harvest data as reported by licensed Wisconsin fur buyers, 2014-15 trapping season.*

Species	# Purchased from Wisconsin Fur Harvesters	Average Price (\$)	Low Price (\$)	High Price (\$)	# Purchased from Wisconsin Dealers	# Purchased from Outside Wisconsin	Total Pelt Value (\$)
Muskrat	137,885	\$5.31	\$1.00	\$20.00	15,589	216,974	\$732,169.35
Raccoon	87,672	\$8.26	\$6.00	\$30.00	9,831	273,896	\$724,170.72
Mink	5,204	\$9.78	\$6.69	\$15.67	706	8,146	\$50,895.12
Red Fox	2,387	\$20.81	\$10.00	\$30.00	378	7,781	\$49,673.47
Beaver	12,111	\$11.70	\$5.00	\$30.00	2,561	70,280	\$141,698.70
Gray Fox	4,209	\$13.56	\$7.18	\$16.36	209	1,906	\$57,074.04
Otter	707	\$30.86	\$13.91	\$62.50	81	1,650	\$21,818.02
Coyote	10,094	\$23.06	\$7.00	\$40.00	2,065	49,050	\$232,767.64
Bobcat	81	\$77.52	\$52.96	\$150.00	33	1,444	\$6,279.12
Fisher	600	\$38.67	\$25.38	\$65.00	74	309	\$23,202.00
Opossum	543	\$3.78	\$1.00	\$27.00	33	4,139	\$2,052.54
Skunk	691	\$3.46	\$1.50	\$13.00	85	1,317	\$2,390.86
Weasel	1,852	\$2.19	\$1.00	\$5.00	641	5,481	\$4,055.88
Total	264,036				32,286	642,373	\$2,048,247.46

Species	Furs Purchased From WISCONSIN HUTERS AND TRAPPERS	Average Price Per Pelt \$ \$. ¢ ¢	Furs Purchased From WISCONSIN FUR DEALERS	Furs Purchased From OUTSIDE OF WISCONSIN	Percent of Furs Purchased From Wisconsin Fur Hunters <i>(Best Estimate)</i>
Muskrat.....	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	% of raccoons hunted <input type="text"/>
Raccoon.....	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Mink.....	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	% of red fox hunted <input type="text"/>
Red Fox.....	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Beaver.....	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	% of gray fox hunted <input type="text"/>
Gray Fox.....	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Otter.....	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	% of coyote hunted <input type="text"/>
Coyote.....	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Bobcat.....	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Fisher.....	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Mail to:
Opossum.....	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Surveys and Databases
Skunk.....	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Weasel.....	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	2801 Progress Rd.
					Madison, WI 53716

Figure 1. The 2014-15 furbuyer questionnaire.