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ILLINOIS FURBEARER TRAPPING SURVEY, 1998-99

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FEDERAL AID IN WILDLIFE RESTORATION ACT
PROJECT NUMBER: W-112-R-8

JOB COMPLETION REPORT
ILLINOIS FURBEARER TRAPPING SURVEY, 1998-99
STUDY 101
JOB NUMBER 101:2

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7 April 2000

JOB COMPLETION REPORT

WILDLIFE HARVEST AND HUNTER OPINION SURVEYS

STATE OF ILLINOIS

PROJECT No. W-112-R-8

STUDY No. 101: Surveys of Hunters/Trappers Via Mail-Letter Questionnaire

JOB NO. 101:2: Illinois Furbearer Trapping Survey, 1998-99

ABSTRACT: A systematic sample of 900 persons who purchased a 1998 Illinois resident trapping license was surveyed after the furbearer trapping season. The licensees were contacted by bulk rate postage (Address Service Requested) in 3 mailings. Questionnaires were delivered to 875 (97.2%) of the recipients, from which 670 useable replies were received (76.6% response). Of these, 565 (84.3%) were active trappers--i.e., set ≥1 traps during the season. Only 12 (1.1%) of the active trappers were ineffective--i.e., caught nothing. The active trappers had trapped furbearers for an average of 14.9 seasons; 12.9% had used padded foothold (leghold) traps; and 13.8% had used EGG traps, Duffer's traps, or Coon Cuffs.

The 1998-99 survey covered 11 furbearer species. Findings are presented: (1) on a statewide basis, (2) for each of the 10 wildlife management units in the state, and (3) for the 2 furbearer management zones currently in use. Data include estimated number and density of effective trappers, estimated number and density of trapper harvest, and average season catch. Statewide estimates for the number of effective trappers (and their catch) were: muskrat (Ondatra zibethicus) 1,853 (44,199), mink (Mustela vison) 1,187 (4,333), raccoon (Procyon lotor) 2,846 (101,224), opossum (Didelphis virginiana) 1,892 (23,966), red fox (Vulpes vulpes) 444 (1,043), gray fox (Urocyon cinereoargenteus) 94 (122), beaver (Castor canadensis) 1,171 (8,688), striped skunk (Mephitis mephitis) 533 (1,903), weasel (Mustela frenata and M. nivalis) 22 (33), coyote (Canis latrans) 538 (2,630), badger (Taxidea taxus) 61 (61), and all species combined 3,068 (188,202). There were an estimated 3,135 active trappers in 1998-99.

Active trappers had traps set for an average of 26.7 days (or nights) during the 1998-99 season. Two-thirds (66.8%) of the effective muskrat trappers caught ≤20 muskrats. An estimated 43.7% of the effective raccoon trappers caught 1-15 raccoons and 61.4% caught ≤25. Furbearers, primarily raccoons, were hunted by 29.4% of the licensed trappers. The harvest of furbearers by hunting trappers was equivalent to 9.7% of the trapped catch. The trappers who hunted took 53.3% of their coyote harvest by "following tracks in the snow or spotting coyotes at a distance and stalking until within range". Eighty-six trappers reported seeing river otter (Lutra canadensis) or otter sign in 45 counties, and 54 trappers reported seeing bobcat (Felis rufus) or bobcat sign in 32 counties, during the past 3 years. A plurality (33.7%) of the active trappers thought the muskrat population had decreased from 1997-98 to 1998-99, whereas 42.2% believed the raccoon population was unchanged. Books and magazines were the single most important source of information for trappers. Attitudes toward Best Management Practices (BMPs) are addressed.

JOB COMPLETION REPORT

WILDLIFE HARVEST AND HUNTER OPINION SURVEYS

STATE OF ILLINOIS

PROJECT NO. W-112-R-8

STUDY 101: Surveys Hunters/Trappers Via Mail-Letter Questionnaire

JOB NO. 101.2: Illinois Furbearer Trapping Survey, 1998-99

OBJECTIVE: To survey furbearer (11 species of mammals) trappers to determine their activities, harvests, characteristics, attitudes, and opinions in Illinois.

PROCEDURES: A stratified random sample of individuals who purchased 1998 trapping licenses was surveyed via mail-questionnaire. Name/address cards of license purchasers were filled out by vendors for the first license sold in each book of 5 resident trapping licenses in the 1998 series (total sales estimated at 3,717 - January 2000) (Fig. 1). At the same time, the person purchasing the license was provided with an information card which requested him/her to keep a record of his/her trapping activities (Fig. 2). The name/address cards were returned to the Division of Wildlife Resources via business reply mail and were filed according to the licensee's county of residence. The sample was drawn from these cards. For some strata, it was necessary to supplement the mailing list with names/addresses from the stubs of trapping licenses sold during the current year.

The stratified random sample was based on the distribution of the 1986-1990 trapping license sales. The size of the sample was set at approximately 900 because this quantity would result in 600 to 700 useable replies ($\geq$15% of all licensed trappers) and insure statistically reliable results at the statewide level.

The questionnaire (Fig. 3), a letter of explanation (Fig. 4), and a return envelope (pre-addressed and postage-paid, first class) were mailed to the individuals on the mailing list. Non-respondents were sent 2nd and 3rd copies of the questionnaire, and accompanying letters (Figs. 5 and 6) at approximately monthly intervals. Bulk rate postage (Address Service Requested) was used for sending out all 3 mailings.

Data from returned questionnaires were transferred to a computer file (Ashton-Tate dBASE IV) and analyzed using a computer program designed for the survey. Respondents were placed into 1 of 2 categories: inactive - those who did not set any traps for furbearers, or active - those who did set $\geq$1 traps for furbearers. Active trappers were further classified as: effective - those who caught $\geq$1 furbearers of the species in question, or ineffective - those who did not catch any furbearers.

Data for each species surveyed were compiled for the 10 wildlife management units in Illinois (Fig. 7). In addition, confidence limits at the 95% level were calculated by species for the number of effective trappers, average season catch, and total trapper harvest on a statewide basis. The formulas used were described by Cochran (1953) and Snedecor and Cochran (1967). These are as follows:

a. Number of effective trappers for species:

$$\pm 2N\sqrt{\frac{pq}{n}}$$

where N = total license sales

n = number of licensees in sample

p = portion of licensees in sample who effectively trapped species

q = $1-p$

b. Average season catch per effective trapper for species:

$$\pm\ 1.96\ \frac{s_1}{\sqrt{n_1}}$$

where s_1 = standard deviation of average catch per effective trapper

n_1 = number of licensees in sample who effectively trapped species

c. Total trapper harvest:

$$\pm 2N \times \frac{s}{\sqrt{n}}$$

where s = standard deviation of average catch of species by all fur hunters in sample

All calculations assumed there were no differences between the activities of the licensees who returned the questionnaire and those who did not.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS:

1998-99 Trapping Seasons

The 1998-99 fur-bearing mammal trapping seasons varied from 67 to 147 days in length (Table 1). The seasons for all species except beaver lasted 67 days in both the northern and southern management zones (Fig. 7). In the northern zone, opening dates were 5 November for muskrat, mink, raccoon, opossum, beaver, striped skunk, and weasel, and 10 November for red fox, gray fox, coyote, and badger. In the southern zone, opening dates were 10 November for all 11 species. The beaver trapping season was 147 days in length in the northern zone and 142 days in the southern zone. Special regulations reduced the length of the beaver season to 67 days along the Mississippi River from Interstate 80 north to the JoDaviess County line as a protective measure for river otter. Except for badger, no bag limits were in effect for any furbearer. Badgers were reinstated as legal game for trapping in Illinois beginning with the 1996-97 season; the limit since that year has been 2 per season in the northern zone and 1 in the south zone.

1998-99 Trapper Mail Survey

The initial mailing of 900 questionnaires was completed on 26 February 1999. The 2 follow-up mailings to non-respondents were made on 14 April and 13 May, respectively, and the mailings were closed out on 27 July 1999.

A total of 875 (97.22%) licensees in the 1998-99 survey sample was reached by the Postal Service. The 25 remaining questionnaires were returned as undeliverable. There were 670 useable replies received from the licensees contacted, representing a 76.57% response for the number delivered. Of these respondents, 565 (84.33%) reported that they set $\geq$1 traps for furbearers during the season and were classified as active. A total of 553 (97.88%) active trappers were effective--i.e. caught $\geq$1 furbearers, and the remaining 12 (2.12%) were ineffective--i.e. caught nothing. Based on these data, there were an estimated 3,135 active trappers and 3,068 effective trappers in Illinois in 1998-99.

The active trappers reported that they had trapped furbearers for an average of 14.9 seasons (n=563); 51.3% had trapped for 1-10 seasons, 22.1% for 11-20 seasons, 13.8% for 21-30 seasons, and 12.8% for 31-71 seasons.

Among the 565 active trappers, 12.9% had used padded foothold (leghold) traps; and 13.8% had used EGG traps, Duffer's traps, or Coon Cuffs.

A. Number of Days of Trapping

Active trappers had traps set for an average of 26.67 days (or nights) during the 1998-99 season (Fig. 8). The maximum number of days a trapper could have legally trapped was 147. However, only 13.9% of the respondents stated they had traps set for >45 days, and 28.9% trapped >30 days. The vast majority of trapping activity is concentrated during the initial 15 to 30 days of the muskrat, mink, and raccoon seasons. In comparison, Illinois trappers had traps set for an average of 23.0 days in 1985-86 (108-day season), 20.9 days in 1990-91 (139-day season), 30.4 days in 1993-94 (147 days), 28.4 days (147-day season) in 1994-95, 30.7 days in 1995-96, 32.3 days in 1996-97, and 33.7 days in 1997-98 (Hubert 1986; Anderson and Campbell 1992 and 1998; Anderson et al. 1995, 1996a, 1996b, and 1999).

B. Fur Harvest Summary

A statewide summary for the 11 species of furbearers surveyed in 1998-99 is presented in Table 2. The data for each species include the estimated number of effective trappers and their representation (percentage) among all licensed trappers, average season catch per effective trapper, and estimated total trapper harvest. Similar information for each of the 11 species, plus estimated density of effective trappers and furbearer harvest in each of the 10 wildlife management units, is provided in Tables 3 through 13. The original sample sizes from which these data were derived are presented in Table 14, which also provides the percent of effective trappers for each species.

The 95% confidence intervals for number of effective trappers, average season catch per effective trapper, and total harvest for each furbearer statewide are given in Table 15. In most instances, those species with the greater number of effective trappers in the sample have smaller limits of variability which result in greater confidence in the projections. For example, effective raccoon trappers were the most numerous in 1998-99 and their projected number varied by only $\pm$4.29%. The 95% confidence interval projections for less numerous gray fox trappers varied by $\pm$47.87% and for uncommon weasel trappers by $\pm$100.00%.

C. Distribution of Harvest Among Effective Trappers

With minor exception, muskrat and raccoon were the 2 most important furbearers trapped during the 1998-99 season in terms of average season catch, total harvest, and number of effective trappers (Table 2). The reported number of muskrats harvested by 334 effective muskrat trappers ranged from 1 to 409 and averaged 23.85 (Fig. 9). During the season, 66.8% of these trappers harvested ≤20 muskrats and 96.7% caught ≤100. The average number of muskrats taken by effective trappers was 33.2% less in 1998-99 than in 1997-98 (Anderson et al. 1999). Of the effective trappers who responded, 30 (9.0%) stated that their catch averaged ≥1 muskrats per day for the entire season.

The distribution of harvest among effective raccoon trappers was similar to that for muskrat. The number of raccoons caught by the 513 effective raccoon trappers for whom data were available averaged 35.57 and ranged from 1 to 487 (Fig. 10). Less than the average season catch was taken by 71.3% of these trappers. For the entire season, 43.7% of the trappers harvested ≤15 raccoons and 61.4% trapped ≤25. Only 77 (15.0%) of the effective raccoon trappers reported making an average daily catch of ≥1 raccoons throughout the season.

The harvest of the other 9 open-season furbearers was distributed among effective trappers much like the muskrat and raccoon harvests (Table 16). For 4 of these species (red fox, gray fox, weasel, and badger), ≤15% of the effective trappers made season catches of >5 pelts. For the other species, the following percentages of effective trappers took >5 pelts: mink 18.7%, opossum 55.5%, beaver 37.4%, striped skunk 17.6%, and coyote 19.6%.

The above data emphasize the inapplicability of bag limits (both daily and seasonal) to furbearer trapping in Illinois. Few trappers are successful in making large seasonal catches. The ones who do are active throughout the season over extensive areas. Reductions in season length offer the most potential for reducing the furbearer harvest by highly successful trappers. Bag limits could potentially increase harvest because of their goal-setting implications.

D. Management Zone Data Summary

Management zone and statewide data summaries for each of the 11 species of furbearers surveyed in 1998-99 are presented in Tables 17-27. The data for each species include estimated number and density of effective trappers, average season catch, estimated total trapper harvest, and trapper harvest per unit area. The northern and southern zones listed for 1998-99 are nearly identical to the zones employed for regulatory management in previous years (1979-80 through 1997-98) (Fig. 7).

E. Pelts Sold

Trappers sold an estimated 87.36% of their catch during the 1998-99 season. The proportion of each species sold ranged from a low of 16.67% for weasel to a high of 93.75% for raccoon (Table 2). The fraction of pelts sold in Illinois and out-of-state also varies among species (Table 28). Overall, 78.97% of the marketed portion of the trapped catch was sold in Illinois and 21.03% out-of-state. In comparison, 95.33% of the 1983-84 catch was sold (93.86% in Illinois and 6.14% out-of-state) (Hubert 1984). More recently, 90.67% of the 1994-95 catch was sold (82.25% in Illinois and 17.75% out-of-state) (Anderson et al. 1996a).

F. Fur Hunting by Trappers

A total of 197 trappers (29.40% of licensees sampled) reported hunting furbearers with gun and/or dogs in 1998-99 (Table 29). This equates to a statewide total of 1,093 hunting trappers, and their total harvest was estimated to be 18,325 pelts or an average of 16.77 per hunter. The hunting harvest equals 9.74% of the total trapped catch estimated by this survey. More trappers hunted raccoon than any other species. Next in popularity was the coyote. From 1986-87 through 1990-91, 25.91% to 29.47% of the trappers in Illinois also hunted furbearers (Hubert 1987, 1988, 1989; Anderson et al. 1990 and 1991). In 1993-94, 28.30% of Illinois' trappers also hunted furbearers (Anderson et al. 1995); 27.56% hunted in 1994-95, 28.82% hunted in 1995-96 (Anderson et al. 1996a and 1996b), 30.35% hunted in 1996-97 (Anderson and Campbell 1998), and 31.06% hunted in 1997-98 (Anderson et al 1999). Sampson (1973) reported that 33.6% of the trappers in Missouri were fur hunters. Obviously, there is much overlap between the user groups designated as fur trappers and fur hunters.

The trappers who hunted took one-half (53.3%) of their coyote harvest by "following tracks in the snow or spotting coyotes at a distance and stalking until within range" (Table 30). An additional 29.1% of the coyotes were taken with the aid of predator calls, and another 10.9% was associated with hunting with hounds or dogs.

G. Observations of River Otters and Bobcats

Participating trappers were asked whether they saw river otter or otter sign, and/or bobcat or bobcat sign, during the past 3 years. Eighty-six trappers claimed they saw river otter or otter sign. These trappers provided 85 reports of otter in 45 counties (Fig. 11). Although the reports came from counties throughout the state, they tended to be associated with riverine habitat.

Fifty-four trappers said they saw bobcat or bobcat sign. These trappers provided 53 reports of bobcat in 32 counties (Fig. 12). Except for being rare or nonexistent in northeast and east-central Illinois, the counties were located throughout the state.

H. Changes in Furbearer Populations

When asked to express their opinions of changes in furbearer populations from 1997-98 to 1998-99, a plurality (42.2%) of the active trappers thought that raccoon numbers were unchanged (Table 31). However, a plurality (33.7%) of the trappers thought that muskrat numbers were down. For the other 3 species, pluralities of the trappers who expressed opinions felt that coyote numbers were up, beaver numbers were unchanged, and red fox numbers were down.

I. Sources of Information About Trapping

Majorities (>50%) of the active trappers used books/ magazines, other trappers, fur buyers, and the hunting/trapping regulations digest to obtain new information about trapping (Table 32). Except for conventions/demonstrations, the other sources of information listed in the table were relatively unimportant. Among those who expressed an opinion, books/ magazines were by far the single most important source of information.

J. Best Management Practices

When asked if they had heard of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for trapping, 25.8% of the 565 active trappers said "yes". The trappers who had heard of BMPs tended to have neutral feelings as to whether the program was a good idea, would increase public acceptance of trapping, or would improve welfare of trapped animals (Table 33). One-half (51.0%) of the trappers agreed with the statement that "BMPs will lead to regulations that allow trapping to occur in places where it's currently prohibited", and 79.6% agreed that "BMPs will not effect trapping in Illinois". However, 78.4% agreed that "BMPs will lead to regulations that prohibit some of the traps/sets I currently use".

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The present Illinois Furbearer Trapping Survey probably realizes its best use and reliability for furbearer management as an indicator of trends in trapping pressure, success, harvest, and recreation. Until 1990, this survey (formerly called "Trapper Harvest Survey") provided the only regional harvest data

available for the trapped portion of the annual furbearer catch. Beginning with the 1990-91 season, another survey, entitled "Illinois Fur Hunter/Trapper Survey", was created. Because the mailing list for this survey was derived from purchasers of the Illinois Furbearer Stamp, it provided data for both fur hunter and fur trapper activities.

Both the Fur Hunter/Trapper Survey and the Furbearer Trapping Survey were conducted during the 1990-91 season in order to have a year of overlap in the 2 data sets for trapping activities. Because there was a high level of agreement between the 2 surveys (Anderson and Campbell 1992), the Furbearer Trapping Survey was discontinued. The Fur Hunter/Trapper Survey was continued through the 1991-92 and 1992-93 seasons.

The creation of the Illinois Habitat Stamp in 1993 was accompanied by a legislative mandate to discontinue the Illinois Furbearer Stamp after the 1992 season. The Habitat Stamp is required for most people who take or attempt to take any game species in Illinois except waterfowl. Because of these changes, the Fur Hunter/Trapper Survey was replaced with 2 separate surveys: (1) the present Furbearer Trapping survey, which will be conducted annually and will sample purchasers of the resident trapping license, and (2) a Furbearer Hunter Survey, which will be conducted periodically and will sample purchasers of the Habitat Stamp who indicate on the stamp stub that they hunted furbearers during the previous year. A Furbearer Hunter Survey was conducted for the 1998-99 season.

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DATA AND REPORTS:

Original data and reports for this investigation are on file in the Wildlife Harvest and Human Dimensions Research Program offices, Natural Resources Studies Annex, Champaign, Illinois 61820.

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Wildlife Harvest and Human Dimensions Research Program

Illinois Natural History Survey

DATE: 7 April 2000

APPROVED BY: _____
Jeffrey M. Ver Steeg, Chief
Division of Wildlife Resources

DATE: 11 June 2000

Table 1. Furbearer trapping seasons in Illinois, 1998-99.

Species	Trapping Seasons	
	Northern Zone	Southern Zone
Muskrat, mink, raccoon, opossum, striped skunk, weasel	5 Nov - 10 Jan (67)[a]	10 Nov - 15 Jan (67)
Beaver	5 Nov - 31 Mar (147)[b]	10 Nov - 31 Mar (142)
Red fox, gray fox, coyote, badger	10 Nov - 15 Jan (67)	10 Nov - 15 Jan (67)

[a]Numbers in parentheses are season lengths in days.

[b]Those portions of Carroll, Whiteside, and Rock Island counties lying west of Illinois Rt. 84 from Interstate 80 north to the JoDaviess county line were open to beaver trapping 5 Nov. 1998 - 10 Jan. 1999 only.

Table 2. Summary of statewide data from post-season mail survey of resident trappers in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=670).

Species	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers	Percent of Licensed Trappers	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Percent Sold	Estimated Total Sold
Muskrat	1853	49.85	23.85	44199	92.85	41037
Mink	1187	31.94	3.65	4333	91.68	3972
Raccoon	2846	76.57	35.57	101224	93.75	94900
Opossum	1892	50.90	12.67	23966	57.62	13808
Red fox	444	11.94	2.35	1043	79.26	827
Gray fox	94	2.54	1.29	122	90.91	111
Beaver	1171	31.49	7.42	8688	87.04	7562
Skunk	533	14.33	3.57	1903	27.70	527
Weasel	22	0.60	1.50	33	16.67	6
Coyote	538	14.48	4.89	2630	62.45	1642
Badger	61	1.64	1.00	61	36.36	22

Table 3. Summary of muskrat trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=334).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	239 (12.9)	2.54	47.58	11351	120.77
Northeast Moraine	67 (3.6)	0.80	23.83	1587	19.18
Mississippi Border-North	105 (5.7)	1.34	32.74	3451	43.97
Mississippi Border-South	178 (9.6)	1.30	20.81	3695	27.02
Western Prairie/Forest	194 (10.5)	1.35	16.71	3245	22.50
Central Sand Prairie	67 (3.6)	1.61	35.17	2341	56.45
Grand Prairie	544 (29.3)	1.03	19.44	10568	20.08
Southern Plain	350 (18.9)	1.47	18.95	6624	27.92
Wabash Border	67 (3.6)	0.99	14.67	976	14.48
Shawnee Hills	39 (2.1)	0.74	7.86	305	5.85
Unknown	6 (0.3)	..	10.00	55	..
Statewide	1853 (100.0)	1.27	23.85	44199	30.26

Table 4. Summary of mink trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=214).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	139 (11.7)	1.48	4.16	577	6.14
Northeast Moraine	39 (3.3)	0.47	3.14	122	1.48
Mississippi Border-North	78 (6.5)	0.99	2.50	194	2.47
Mississippi Border-South	89 (7.5)	0.65	3.94	350	2.56
Western Prairie/Forest	122 (10.3)	0.85	1.91	233	1.62
Central Sand Prairie	50 (4.2)	1.20	2.44	122	2.94
Grand Prairie	311 (26.2)	0.59	3.68	1143	2.17
Southern Plain	277 (23.4)	1.17	4.30	1193	5.03
Wabash Border	44 (3.7)	0.66	6.13	272	4.03
Shawnee Hills	33 (2.8)	0.64	3.50	117	2.23
Unknown	6 (0.5)	..	2.00	11	..
Statewide	1187 (100.0)	0.81	3.65	4333	2.97

Table 5. Summary of raccoon trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=513).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	394 (13.8)	4.19	42.58	16771	178.43
Northeast Moraine	133 (4.7)	1.61	23.79	3168	38.30
Mississippi Border-North	222 (7.8)	2.83	36.50	8100	103.21
Mississippi Border-South	294 (10.3)	2.15	37.72	11090	81.10
Western Prairie/Forest	288 (10.1)	2.00	28.83	8316	57.67
Central Sand Prairie	122 (4.3)	2.94	28.36	3462	83.48
Grand Prairie	804 (28.3)	1.53	27.50	22119	42.03
Southern Plain	449 (15.8)	1.89	51.59	23184	97.71
Wabash Border	72 (2.5)	1.07	32.54	2347	34.81
Shawnee Hills	61 (2.1)	1.17	42.64	2602	49.88
Unknown	6 (0.2)	..	12.00	67	..
Statewide	2846 (100.0)	1.95	35.57	101224	69.30

Table 6. Summary of opossum trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=341).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	288 (15.2)	3.07	12.40	3578	38.07
Northeast Moraine	83 (4.4)	1.01	10.60	882	10.66
Mississippi Border-North	139 (7.3)	1.77	16.20	2247	28.63
Mississippi Border-South	200 (10.6)	1.46	11.06	2208	16.15
Western Prairie/Forest	222 (11.7)	1.54	10.53	2336	16.20
Central Sand Prairie	67 (3.5)	1.61	14.58	971	23.41
Grand Prairie	571 (30.2)	1.09	9.68	5531	10.51
Southern Plain	239 (12.6)	1.01	21.77	5193	21.89
Wabash Border	44 (2.3)	0.66	9.50	422	6.25
Shawnee Hills	33 (1.8)	0.64	17.50	583	11.17
Unknown	6 (0.3)	..	3.00	17	..
Statewide	1892 (100.0)	1.30	12.67	23966	16.41

Table 7. Summary of red fox trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=80).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	55 (12.5)	0.59	4.20	233	2.48
Northeast Moraine	28 (6.3)	0.34	1.40	39	0.47
Mississippi Border-North	22 (5.0)	0.28	1.75	39	0.49
Mississippi Border-South	33 (7.5)	0.24	2.83	94	0.69
Western Prairie/Forest	44 (10.0)	0.31	3.25	144	1.00
Central Sand Prairie	17 (3.8)	0.40	2.00	33	0.80
Grand Prairie	166 (37.5)	0.32	1.67	277	0.53
Southern Plain	67 (15.0)	0.28	2.58	172	0.72
Wabash Border	6 (1.3)	0.08	1.00	6	0.08
Shawnee Hills	6 (1.3)	0.11	1.00	6	0.11
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	0.00	0	..
Statewide	444 (100.0)	0.30	2.35	1043	0.71

Table 8. Summary of gray fox trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=17).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	6 (5.9)	0.06	2.00	11	0.12
Northeast Moraine	6 (5.9)	0.07	1.00	6	0.07
Mississippi Border-North	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Mississippi Border-South	11 (11.8)	0.08	1.00	11	0.08
Western Prairie/Forest	11 (11.8)	0.08	1.00	11	0.08
Central Sand Prairie	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Grand Prairie	11 (11.8)	0.02	1.50	17	0.03
Southern Plain	33 (35.3)	0.14	1.50	50	0.21
Wabash Border	6 (5.9)	0.08	1.00	6	0.08
Shawnee Hills	11 (11.8)	0.21	1.00	11	0.21
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	0.00	0	..
Statewide	94 (100.0)	0.06	1.29	122	0.08

Table 9. Summary of beaver trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=211).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	144 (12.3)	1.53	8.81	1270	13.52
Northeast Moraine	67 (5.7)	0.80	6.25	416	5.03
Mississippi Border-North	61 (5.2)	0.78	9.91	605	7.71
Mississippi Border-South	55 (4.7)	0.41	8.40	466	3.41
Western Prairie/Forest	117 (10.0)	0.81	7.52	877	6.08
Central Sand Prairie	55 (4.7)	1.34	13.90	771	18.60
Grand Prairie	377 (32.2)	0.72	6.85	2585	4.91
Southern Plain	205 (17.5)	0.87	5.68	1165	4.91
Wabash Border	44 (3.8)	0.66	3.75	166	2.47
Shawnee Hills	44 (3.8)	0.85	8.25	366	7.02
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	0.00	0	..
Statewide	1171 (100.0)	0.80	7.42	8688	5.95

Table 10. Summary of skunk trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=96).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	50 (9.4)	0.53	3.44	172	1.83
Northeast Moraine	39 (7.3)	0.47	4.29	166	2.01
Mississippi Border-North	44 (8.3)	0.57	6.00	266	3.39
Mississippi Border-South	44 (8.3)	0.32	2.38	105	0.77
Western Prairie/Forest	44 (8.3)	0.31	2.75	122	0.85
Central Sand Prairie	28 (5.2)	0.67	3.40	94	2.27
Grand Prairie	205 (38.5)	0.39	3.46	710	1.35
Southern Plain	55 (10.4)	0.23	4.10	227	0.96
Wabash Border	11 (2.1)	0.16	1.50	17	0.25
Shawnee Hills	11 (2.1)	0.21	2.00	22	0.43
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	0.00	0	..
Statewide	533 (100.0)	0.36	3.57	1903	1.30

Table 11. Summary of weasel trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=4).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Northeast Moraine	6 (25.0)	0.07	1.00	6	0.07
Mississippi Border-North	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Mississippi Border-South	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Western Prairie/Forest	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Central Sand Prairie	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Grand Prairie	11 (50.0)	0.02	2.00	22	0.04
Southern Plain	6 (25.0)	0.02	1.00	6	0.02
Wabash Border	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Shawnee Hills	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	0.00	0	..
Statewide	22 (100.0)	0.02	1.50	33	0.02

Table 12. Summary of coyote trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=97).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	72 (13.4)	0.77	3.62	261	2.77
Northeast Moraine	22 (4.1)	0.27	6.00	133	1.61
Mississippi Border-North	44 (8.2)	0.57	14.00	621	7.92
Mississippi Border-South	39 (7.2)	0.28	3.00	117	0.85
Western Prairie/Forest	61 (11.3)	0.42	5.27	322	2.23
Central Sand Prairie	17 (3.1)	0.40	6.33	105	2.54
Grand Prairie	166 (30.9)	0.32	3.63	605	1.15
Southern Plain	72 (13.4)	0.30	4.92	355	1.50
Wabash Border	28 (5.2)	0.41	3.40	94	1.40
Shawnee Hills	17 (3.1)	0.32	1.00	17	0.32
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	0.00	0	..
Statewide	538 (100.0)	0.37	4.89	2630	1.80

Table 13. Summary of badger trapper and harvest data by wildlife management units in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=11).

Wildlife Management Unit	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
Northwest Hills	17 (27.3)	0.18	1.00	17	0.18
Northeast Moraine	6 (9.1)	0.07	1.00	6	0.07
Mississippi Border-North	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Mississippi Border-South	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Western Prairie/Forest	17 (27.3)	0.12	1.00	17	0.12
Central Sand Prairie	6 (9.1)	0.13	1.00	6	0.13
Grand Prairie	6 (9.1)	0.01	1.00	6	0.01
Southern Plain	6 (9.1)	0.02	1.00	6	0.02
Wabash Border	6 (9.1)	0.08	1.00	6	0.08
Shawnee Hills	0 (0.0)	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	0.00	0	..
Statewide	61 (100.0)	0.04	1.00	61	0.04

Table 14. Statewide sample sizes for post-season mail survey of resident fur trappers in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=670).

Species	Number of Effective Trappers In Sample	Percent Effective Trappers	Season Harvest by Effective Trappers in Sample
Muskrat	334	49.85	7967
Mink	214	31.94	781
Raccoon	513	76.57	18246
Opossum	341	50.90	4320
Red fox	80	11.94	188
Gray fox	17	2.54	22
Beaver	211	31.49	1566
Skunk	96	14.33	343
Weasel	4	0.60	6
Coyote	97	14.48	474
Badger	11	1.64	11

Table 15. Confidence intervals (95%) for estimated number of effective trappers, average season harvest, and total trapper harvest by species in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=670).

Species	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers			Estimated Average Season Catch			Estimated Total Harvest		
Muskrat	1853	±	144	23.85	±	4.11	44199	±	8431
Mink	1187	±	134	3.65	±	0.58	4333	±	926
Raccoon	2846	±	122	35.57	±	4.24	101224	±	12699
Opossum	1892	±	144	12.67	±	1.92	23966	±	4118
Red fox	444	±	93	2.35	±	0.58	1043	±	404
Gray fox	94	±	45	1.29	±	0.28	122	±	107
Beaver	1171	±	133	7.42	±	1.50	8688	±	2086
Skunk	533	±	101	3.57	±	0.75	1903	±	608
Weasel	22	±	22	1.50	±	0.98	33	±	59
Coyote	538	±	101	4.89	±	2.13	2630	±	1306
Badger	61	±	36	1.00	±	0.00	61	±	73

Table 16. Distribution of furbearer harvest among effective trappers in Illinois, 1998-99 season. Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Total Season Catch	Percentage of Effective Trappers										
	Muskrat (334)	Mink (214)	Raccoon (513)	Opossum (341)	Red fox (80)	Gray fox (17)	Beaver (211)	Striped skunk (96)	Weasel (4)	Coyote (97)	Badger (11)
1	8.4	36.0	2.7	9.4	56.3	76.5	21.3	27.1	75.0	36.1	100.0
2	8.1	25.7	2.5	9.1	18.8	17.6	17.1	29.2	0.0	19.6	0.0
3	4.5	11.7	3.7	11.1	8.8	5.9	10.4	12.5	25.0	13.4	0.0
4	5.7	4.7	3.3	7.3	6.3	0.0	7.6	8.3	0.0	8.2	0.0
5	3.3	3.3	4.7	7.6	1.3	0.0	6.2	5.2	0.0	3.1	0.0
6	3.9	3.3	4.1	4.4	2.5	0.0	7.1	5.2	0.0	3.1	0.0
7	4.2	1.4	2.5	4.1	1.3	0.0	3.3	3.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
8	3.3	3.7	2.3	3.2	1.3	0.0	3.8	1.0	0.0	3.1	0.0
9	1.2	0.0	1.2	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.5	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
10	7.2	2.3	4.9	5.9	0.0	0.0	1.4	2.1	0.0	3.1	0.0
11	0.6	1.4	1.6	1.2	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
12	2.4	1.4	3.7	2.9	1.3	0.0	1.9	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0
13	2.1	0.9	1.2	0.9	0.0	0.0	2.4	1.0	0.0	2.1	0.0
14	2.7	1.4	2.1	0.6	2.5	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
15	4.2	0.0	3.1	5.3	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
16-20	5.1	1.9	9.6	8.2	0.0	0.0	2.8	3.1	0.0	1.0	0.0
20-25	7.8	0.5	8.2	5.6	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
>25	25.4	0.5	38.6	11.7	0.0	0.0	4.7	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0

Table 17. Summary of muskrat trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=334).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	1104 (59.6)	1.35	27.77 ± 6.17	30662 (69.4)	37.47
South Zone	743 (40.1)	1.16	18.13 ± 4.42	13481 (30.5)	20.99
Unknown	6 (0.3)	..	..	55	..
Statewide	1853 (100.0)	1.27	23.85 ± 4.16	44199	30.26

Table 18. Summary of mink trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=214).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	649 (54.7)	0.79	3.32 ± 0.71	2153 (49.7)	2.63
South Zone	533 (44.9)	0.83	4.07 ± 0.97	2169 (50.1)	3.38
Unknown	6 (0.5)	..	..	11	..
Statewide	1187 (100.0)	0.81	3.65 ± 0.59	4333	2.97

Table 19. Summary of raccoon trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=513).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	1764 (62.0)	2.16	32.44 ± 5.28	57225 (56.5)	69.93
South Zone	1076 (37.8)	1.68	40.82 ± 7.08	43933 (43.4)	68.39
Unknown	6 (0.2)	..	..	67	..
Statewide	2846 (100.0)	1.95	35.57 ± 4.27	101224	69.30

Table 20. Summary of opossum trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=341).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	1232 (65.1)	1.50	11.71 ± 1.71	14419 (60.2)	17.62
South Zone	655 (34.6)	1.02	14.56 ± 4.51	9531 (39.8)	14.84
Unknown	6 (0.3)	..	..	17	..
Statewide	1892 (100.0)	1.30	12.67 ± 1.93	23966	16.41

Table 21. Summary of red fox trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=80).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	294 (66.3)	0.36	2.42 ± 0.78	710 (68.1)	0.87
South Zone	150 (33.8)	0.23	2.22 ± 0.78	333 (31.9)	0.52
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	..	0	..
Statewide	444 (100.0)	0.30	2.35 ± 0.58	1043	0.71

Table 22. Summary of gray fox trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=17).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	17 (17.6)	0.02	1.33 ± 0.65	22 (18.2)	0.03
South Zone	78 (82.4)	0.12	1.29 ± 0.32	100 (81.8)	0.16
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	..	0	..
Statewide	94 (100.0)	0.06	1.29 ± 0.28	122	0.08

Table 23. Summary of beaver trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=211).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	760 (64.9)	0.93	8.23 ± 2.09	6258 (72.0)	7.65
South Zone	411 (35.1)	0.64	5.92 ± 1.74	2430 (28.0)	3.78
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	..	0	..
Statewide	1171 (100.0)	0.80	7.42 ± 1.51	8688	5.95

Table 24. Summary of skunk trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=96).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	388 (72.9)	0.47	3.87 ± 0.97	1503 (79.0)	1.84
South Zone	144 (27.1)	0.22	2.77 ± 0.80	399 (21.0)	0.62
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	..	0	..
Statewide	533 (100.0)	0.36	3.57 ± 0.76	1903	1.30

Table 25. Summary of weasel trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=4).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	17 (75.0)	0.02	1.67 ± 1.31	28 (83.3)	0.03
South Zone	6 (25.0)	0.01	1.00 ± 0.00	6 (16.7)	0.01
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	..	0	..
Statewide	22 (100.0)	0.02	1.50 ± 1.13	33	0.02

Table 26. Summary of coyote trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=97).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	322 (59.8)	0.39	5.84 ± 3.48	1881 (71.5)	2.30
South Zone	216 (40.2)	0.34	3.46 ± 1.13	749 (28.5)	1.17
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	..	0	..
Statewide	538 (100.0)	0.37	4.89 ± 2.15	2630	1.80

Table 27. Summary of badger trapper and harvest data by furbearer management zones in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=11).

Area	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers (%)	Estimated Number of Effective Trappers/100km^2	Average Season Catch	Estimated Total Trapper Harvest	Estimated Trapper Harvest/100km^2
North Zone	44 (72.7)	0.05	1.00 ± 0.00	44 (72.7)	0.05
South Zone	17 (27.3)	0.03	1.00 ± 0.00	17 (27.3)	0.03
Unknown	0 (0.0)	..	..	0	..
Statewide	61 (100.0)	0.04	1.00 ± 0.00	61	0.04

Table 28. The number of pelts sold by successful trappers (i.e., caught ≥1 animal) for 11 species of furbearers in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=553).

Species	Total Number of Pelts Sold	Pelts Sold in Illinois		Pelts Sold Outside Illinois	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Muskrat	41037	36810	89.70	4227	10.30
Mink	3972	2990	75.28	982	24.72
Raccoon	94900	71350	75.18	23550	24.82
Opossum	13808	11927	86.38	1881	13.62
Red fox	827	599	72.43	228	27.57
Gray fox	111	78	70.27	33	29.73
Beaver	7562	4788	63.32	2774	36.68
Striped skunk	527	422	80.08	105	19.92
Weasel	6	6	100.00	0	0
Coyote	1642	838	51.04	804	48.96
Badger	22	22	100.00	0	0.00
Total	164414	129830	78.97	34584	21.03

Table 29. Summary of fur hunting activities by trappers[a] in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=670).

Species	Number of Trappers in Sample Hunting Species[a]	Number of Furbearers Harvested by Hunting	Average Number Harvested by Hunting	Estimated Percent of All Trappers Effectively Hunting Species	Estimated Total Harvest by All Trappers Effectively Hunting Species
Raccoon	138	2594	18.80	20.60	14392
Opossum	38	212	5.58	5.67	1176
Red fox	9	19	2.11	1.34	105
Gray fox	0	0	0.00	0.00	0
Striped skunk	7	13	1.86	1.04	72
Coyote	72	465	6.46	10.75	2580
All species	197[b,c]	3303	16.77	29.40	18325

[a]Active and inactive trappers.

[b]Successful and unsucessful hunters.

[c]Total for all species is less than the sum of the above values because many trappers hunted >1 species.

Table 30. Percentage of coyote harvest taken with different hunting methods employed by trappers who hunted furbearers in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=67).

Hunting Method	Percentage of Coyote Harvest
Using a predator call (electronic or mouth)	29.1
Hunting with hounds or dogs	10.9
Following tracks in the snow or spotting coyotes at a distance and stalking until within range . . . . (no dogs or predator calls)	53.3
Others[a]	6.7

[a]Other methods included shot while deer hunting and shot opportunistically while conducting other activities.

Table 31. Assessments by fur trappers[a] as to changes in furbearer populations from 1997-98 season to 1998-99 season. Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Species		Percentage of Active Trappers			
		Up	Unchanged	Down	Don't Know
Muskrat	(486)	15.2	27.2	33.7	23.9
Raccoon	(523)	28.3	42.2	18.2	11.3
Red fox	(426)	9.9	20.2	22.5	47.4
Beaver	(447)	24.2	29.8	14.5	31.5
Coyote	(439)	41.4	22.6	5.5	30.5

[a]Active trappers.

Table 32. Sources that active trappers used to obtain new information about trapping (Illinois 1998-99). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

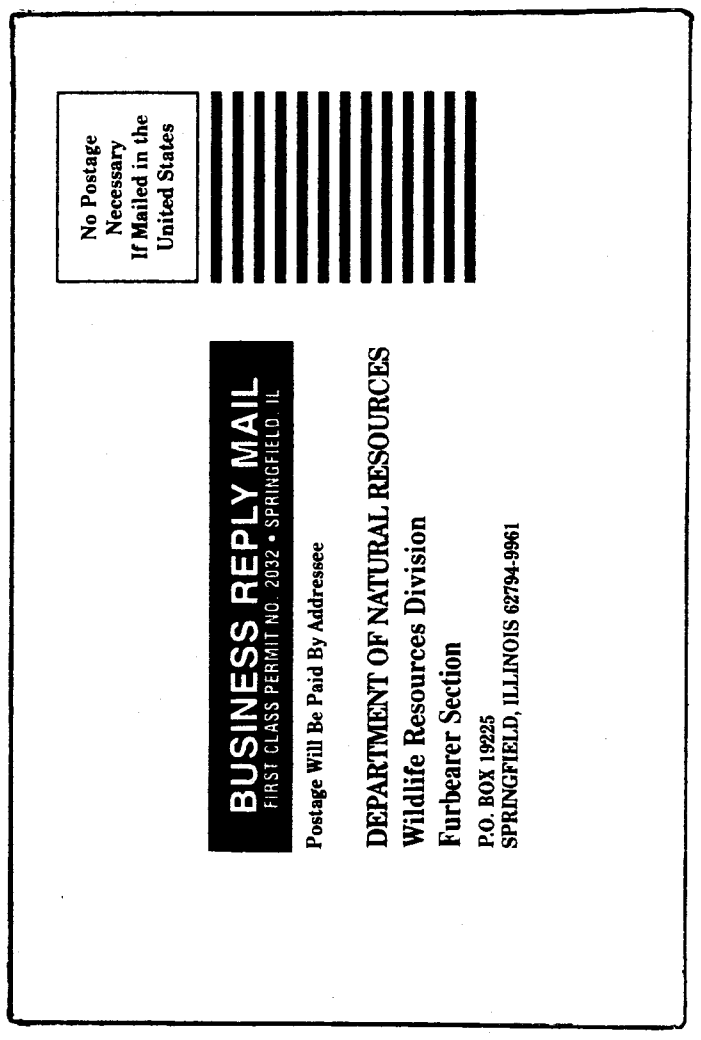
Source	Percentage of Trappers	
	Used Source	Most Important
	(549)	(223)
Books/magazines	77.2	60.1
Videos	14.0	1.8
Other trappers	67.4	15.7
Internet	6.0	0.4
Conventions/demonstrations	37.0	6.3
Fur buyers	53.6	4.0
Conservation police officers	15.7	0.4
Hunting/trapping regulations digest	55.6	8.5
Other[a]	2.9	---
Don't try to keep up	8.6	---

[a]Include personal experience (2.4%) and from DNR personnel (0.5%).

Table 33. Attitudes of active trappers toward Best Management Practices (BMPs) for trapping furbearers (Illinois 1998-99). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Statement About BMPs		Percentage of Trappers[a]				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
BMPs are a good idea	(137)	8.0	27.0	37.3	21.9	5.8
BMPs will increase public acceptance of trapping	(137)	5.1	27.0	27.0	30.7	10.2
BMPs will lead to regulations that prohibit some of the traps/sets I currently use	(139)	29.5	48.9	12.9	6.5	2.2
BMPs will lead to regulations that allow trapping to occur in places where it's currently prohibited	(137)	2.2	16.1	30.7	39.3	11.7
BMPs will not effect trapping in Illinois	(137)	2.2	2.9	15.3	54.8	24.8
BMPs will improve the welfare of trapped animals	(139)	5.0	17.3	40.2	28.1	9.4

[a]Those who had heard of Best Management Practices.



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DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Wildlife Resources Division
Furbearer Section
P.O. BOX 19225
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62794-9961

TO ISSUING CLERK:

COMPLETE THIS FORM AND MAIL IMMEDIATELY UPON SALE OF FIRST LICENSE IN BOOK

The Department of Natural Resources is conducting a survey to estimate the fur harvest in Illinois. To effect this, we need the names and addresses of part of our licensed trappers. Please print at the bottom of this page, in the space provided, name, mailing address including zip code, and county of residence of the person who purchases the first license in this book. Please detach the next page and give to license purchaser.

Thank you for your cooperation. **Please note** reverse side is Business Reply postal card, perforated at binding for removing.

MAIL IMMEDIATELY UPON SALE OF LICENSE
TRAPPING (1998 SERIES)
Please Print Plainly

Name

Street Address, R.R. and Box Number

City and State

Zip Code

County of Residence

Figure 1. The name/address card that was issued to license vendors for conducting the 1998-99 post-season Illinois Furbearer Trapping Survey.

DETACH THIS PAGE AND GIVE TO PERSON WHO PURCHASES FIRST LICENSE IN BOOK

Dear Trapper:

Please keep an accurate record of the **number of days you had traps set, the average number and kinds of traps you used during the season, the number of furbearers you caught in traps, what county you trapped in most, and the number and kinds of pelts you sold in Illinois and Out of State.**

You may be one of the selected trappers contacted at the close of the trapping season and provided a form to return to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Thanks for your cooperation.

THE BACK SIDE OF THIS CARD MAY BE USED FOR RECORD KEEPING.

Number of TRAPS I had set:_____

Number of DAYS I had traps set:_____

FURBEARERS CAUGHT IN TRAPS:_____

Species	Total Number Caught	Number Sold	
		In Illinois	Out-of-State
Muskrat			
Mink			
Raccoon			
Opossum			
Beaver			
Red Fox			
Gray Fox			
Coyote			
Striped Skunk			
Weasel			

Other Animals Caught:_____

_____

Figure 2. Information/activity record card that was issued to trappers for conducting the 1998-99 post-season Illinois Furbearer Trapping Survey.

ILLINOIS FURBEARER TRAPPING SURVEY
1998-99 SEASON

PART A - TRAPPING ACTIVITY

1. Did you SET ANY TRAPS for furbearers in Illinois during the 1998-99 season? (*Circle number for appropriate answer*)

   Yes . . . 1 No . . . 2

   If YES, continue with Question #2. If NO, go to Question #6.

2. In which COUNTY did you do MOST of your trapping? _____ County, Illinois

3. How many days (or nights) did you have traps set? _____ days (or nights)

4. During how many seasons have you actively trapped? (For example, if you started trapping 5 years ago, but did not trap during 2 of those 5 seasons, then you have actively trapped for 3 seasons).

   _____ seasons

PART B - HARVEST (TRAPPING ONLY)

5. Fill in ALL FOUR BLANKS for each kind of furbearer you TRAPPED in Illinois during the 1998-99 season. REPORT ONLY YOUR PERSONAL CATCH. If you trapped in partnership with another person, list only your half of the catch.

Species	*TOTAL Number Caught in traps*	*Number SOLD IN ILLINOIS*	*Number SOLD OR SHIPPED OUT OF STATE*	*Number NOT SOLD*
Muskrat				
Mink				
Raccoon				
Opossum				
Red fox				
Gray fox				
Beaver				
Skunk				
Weasel				
Coyote				
Badger				

Figure 3. The questionnaire used to conduct the 1998-99 post-season Illinois Furbearer Trapping Survey (continued).

PART C - FURBEARER POPULATIONS

6. Compared to 1997-98 (last season), were the populations of the following furbearers up, unchanged, or down during 1998-99 (this season)? (*Express your opinion by circling the appropriate number for each species*)

Species	Up	Unchanged	Down	Don't Know
Muskrat	1	2	3	4
Raccoon	1	2	3	4
Red fox	1	2	3	4
Beaver	1	2	3	4
Coyote	1	2	3	4

7. Have you seen a river otter or observed river otter sign in Illinois during the past three years?

Yes . . . 1 No . . . 2 If yes, list county: _____

8. Have you seen a bobcat or observed bobcat sign in Illinois during the past three years?

Yes . . . 1 No . . . 2 If yes, list county: _____

PART D - FURBEARER HUNTING

9. Did you also HUNT furbearers with a gun and/or dogs during the 1998-99 season?

Yes . . . 1 (please continue) No . . . 2 (If no, go to question 11)

If yes, please give the number of each kind taken:

_____ Raccoon _____ Red Fox _____ Skunk

_____ Opossum _____ Gray Fox _____ Coyote

10. If you hunted coyotes, please indicate the percentage of your total hunting catch of coyotes taken by the following methods:

Using a predator call (electronic or mouth) . . . . . _____ %

Hunting with hounds or dogs. . . . . _____ %

Following tracks in the snow or spotting coyotes at a distance and stalking until within range (no dogs or predator calls). . . . . _____ %

Other (please specify) . . . . . _____ %

Total . . . . . 100 %

Figure 3. Continued - page 2.

PART E - OTHER TOPICS

11. How do you get new information about trapping? (International news, political and legislative happenings, new techniques, new traps on market, etc.) **(Check ALL that apply, then circle the letter for your single most important source of information)**

a. _____ read books or magazines
b. _____ purchase videos
c. _____ talk with other trappers
d. _____ use the Internet
e. _____ attend trapper conventions and trapping demonstrations
f. _____ Other (please specify) _____
g. _____ talk with fur buyers
h. _____ talk with Conservation Police Officers
i. _____ read state hunting/trapping regulations digest
j. _____ don't really try to keep up

12. Have you heard of Best Management Practices or "BMPs" for trapping furbearers?

Yes . . . 1 (continue with question 13) No . . . 2 (go to question 14)

13. Circle the choice that best represents YOUR level of agreement with each of the following statements about Best Management Practices (BMPs) for trapping.

Statement about BMPs	How I feel about the statement				
	strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
BMPs are a good idea	1	2	3	4	5
BMPs will increase public acceptance of trapping	1	2	3	4	5
BMPs will lead to regulations that prohibit some of the traps/sets I currently use	1	2	3	4	5
BMPs will lead to regulations that allow trapping to occur in places where it's currently prohibited	1	2	3	4	5
BMPs will NOT affect trapping in Illinois	1	2	3	4	5
BMPs will improve the welfare of trapped animals	1	2	3	4	5

14. Have you ever used padded foothold (leghold) traps?

Yes . . . 1 No . . . 2

15. Have you ever used EGG traps, Duffer's traps or Coon Cuffs?

Yes . . . 1 No . . . 2 Not familiar with these traps . . . 3

THANKS FOR YOUR COOPERATION!!!
POSTAGE IS PREPAID

Figure 3. Continued - page 3.

ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

524 South Second Street, Springfield 62701-1787 George H. Ryan, Governor ● Brent Manning, Director

March 1999

Dear Illinois Trapper:

The Department of Natural Resources conducts an annual survey of trappers to collect information about harvests, trapping success, and trapping pressure. We also ask for your opinions about furbearer populations in your area.

Results of the survey allow us to estimate the number of pelts taken by trappers, value of pelts taken by trappers, and distribution of harvest pressure. Estimates of trapping success, your opinions about furbearer populations, and observations of closed-season furbearers are used with other sources of information to track changes in furbearer numbers.

You can make an important contribution to management of Illinois' fur resources by completing the enclosed questionnaire. The questionnaire is short and self-explanatory. Your participation is important because you are part of a small, random sample of people who purchased a 1998-99 trapping license. **Please reply even if you did not trap this season or were not successful.**

If you do not remember exact figures, please give your best estimate. Also, if you trapped in partnership with another person, list only your half of the catch. Drop the completed questionnaire in the mail; no postage is required.

Thank you for participating in Illinois' furbearer management program. If you have comments on topics that are not addressed by this questionnaire, please write them on a separate sheet of paper to receive proper attention.

Sincerely,

Bob Bluett

Bob Bluett
Furbearer Program Manager

BB:bb

Figure 4. The letter that accompanied the first mailing of the questionnaire.

ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

524 South Second Street, Springfield 62701-1787

George H. Ryan, Governor ● Brent Manning, Director

April 1999

Dear Illinois Trapper:

We recently mailed you a Trapper Harvest Survey questionnaire and requested that you fill out and return the completed form. We have not received your form at this time - perhaps because you have misplaced the questionnaire or haven't found the time to complete it and return it to us.

We are enclosing another questionnaire which we hope you will complete and return to us as soon as possible. If you have already returned the questionnaire, please destroy this one. The information supplied by you and other trappers being sampled will be of great value to the Department of Natural Resources in better directing the management of Illinois' fur resources.

Please fill out the questionnaire and return it **even if you did not trap or were not successful**. If you trapped in partnership with another person, please list only your half of the catch. No postage is required to return the completed questionnaire. Simply fill it out and drop it in the mail.

Your prompt attention will be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Bob Bluett

Bob Bluett
Furbearer Program Manager

BB:bb

Figure 5. The letter that accompanied the second mailing of the questionnaire.

ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

524 South Second Street, Springfield 62701-1787 George H. Ryan, Governor ● Brent Manning, Director

May 1999

Dear Illinois Trapper:

This is to remind you that we would still like to receive your completed questionnaire regarding your trapping activities this past season. We don't like to keep bothering you, but this is very important information which only you can supply.

Another copy of the questionnaire is enclosed. We hope that you will complete and return it as soon as possible. If you have already returned a questionnaire, simply destroy this one.

We are making a final effort to obtain your responses so that we may compile the information received from all cooperating trappers and prepare a report of our findings. Remember, your response is needed, even if you did not trap or had an unsuccessful season. Results of the survey allow us to estimate the number of pelts taken by trappers, value of pelts taken by trappers, and distribution of harvest pressure. Estimates of trapping success, your opinions about furbearer populations, and observations of closed-season furbearers are used with other sources of information to track changes in furbearer numbers.

No postage is required to return the questionnaire. Just fill it out and drop it in the mail. Please help us complete this survey by sending your responses now.

Sincerely,

Bob Bluett
Furbearer Program Manager

BB:bb

Enc.

Figure 6. The letter that accompanied the third mailing of the questionnaire.

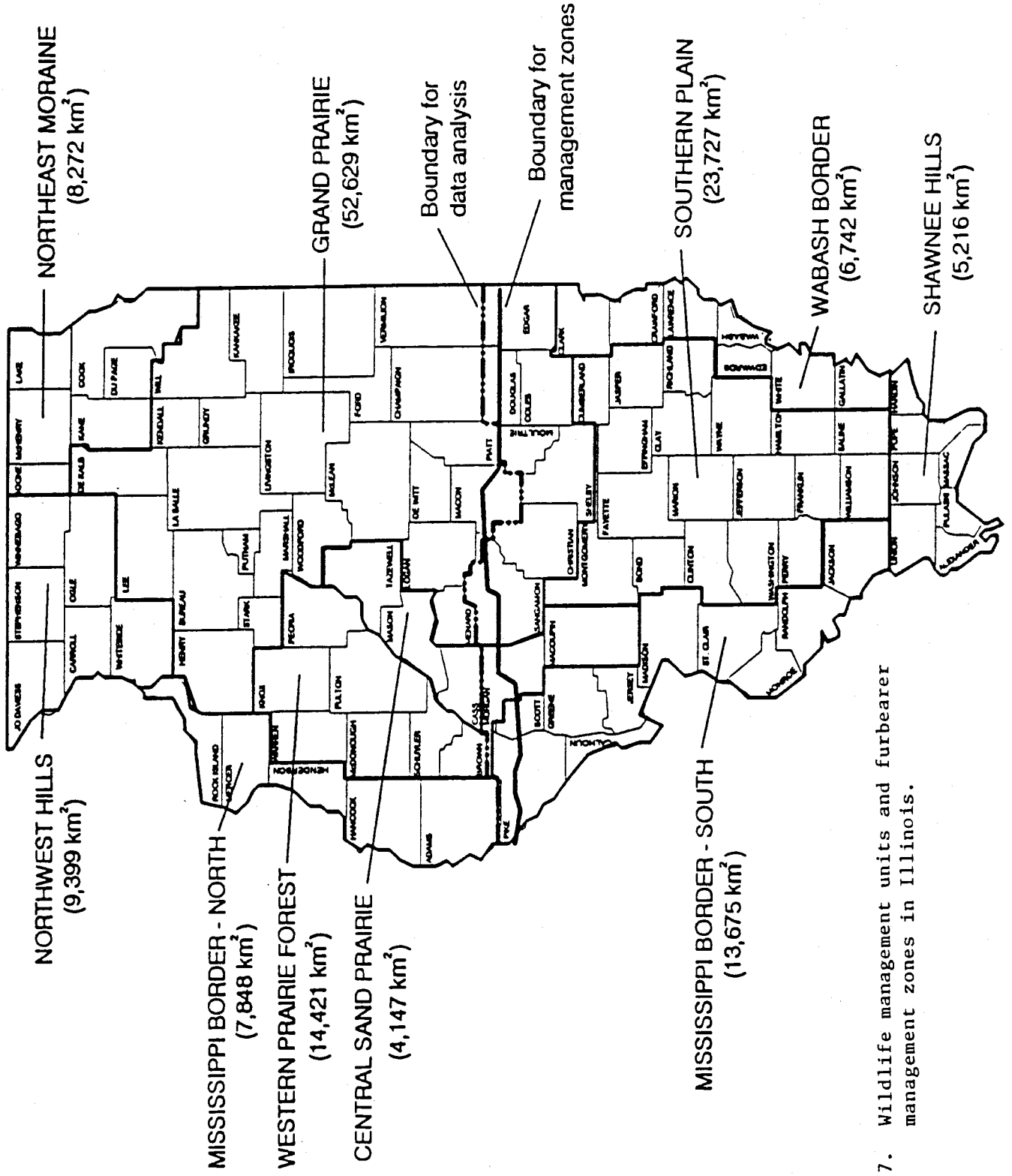

Figure 7. Wildlife management units and furbearer management zones in Illinois.

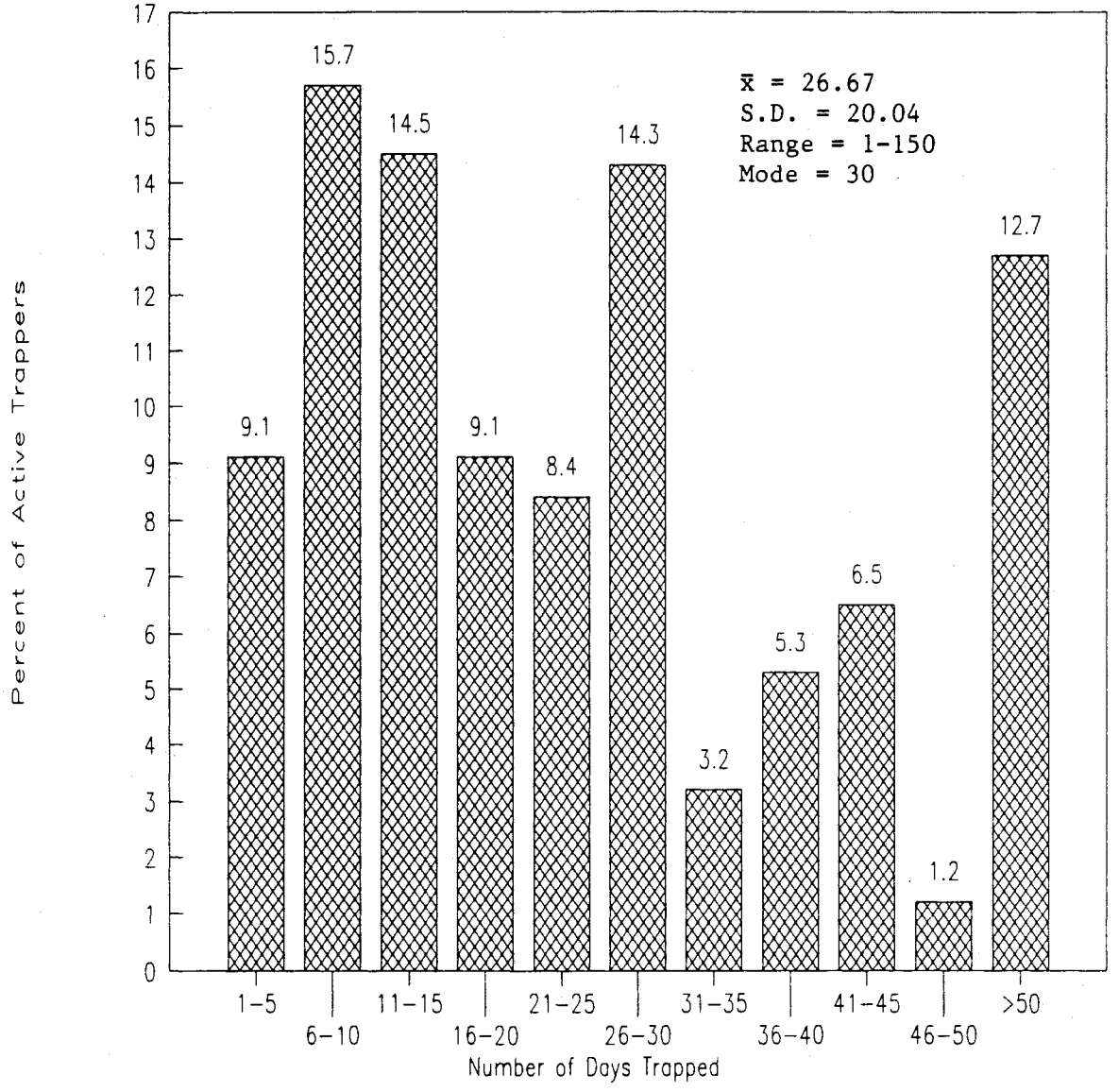

Figure 8. Distribution of days of trapping by active trappers in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=560).

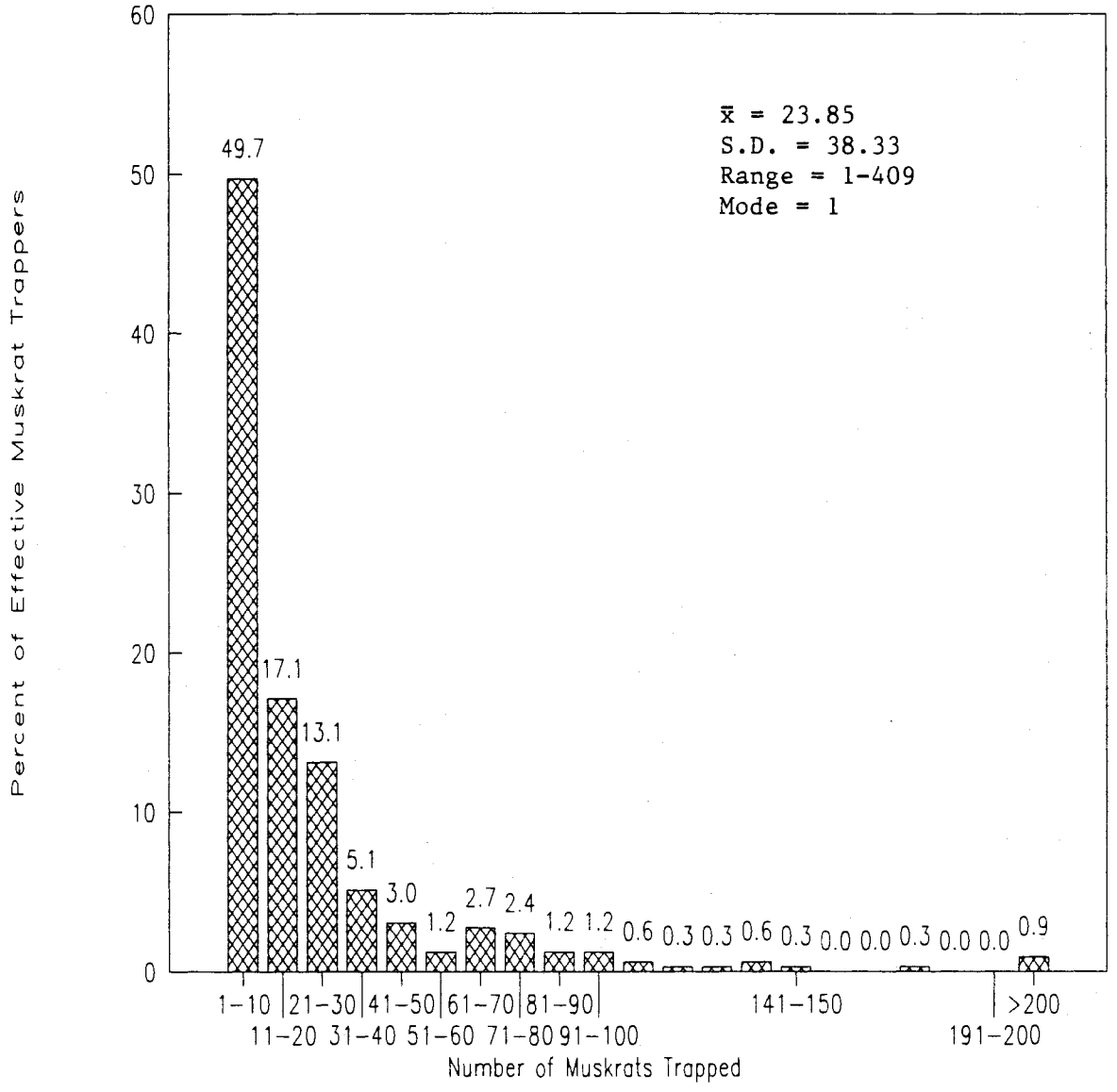

Figure 9. Distribution of the number of muskrats trapped per effective muskrat trapper in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=334).

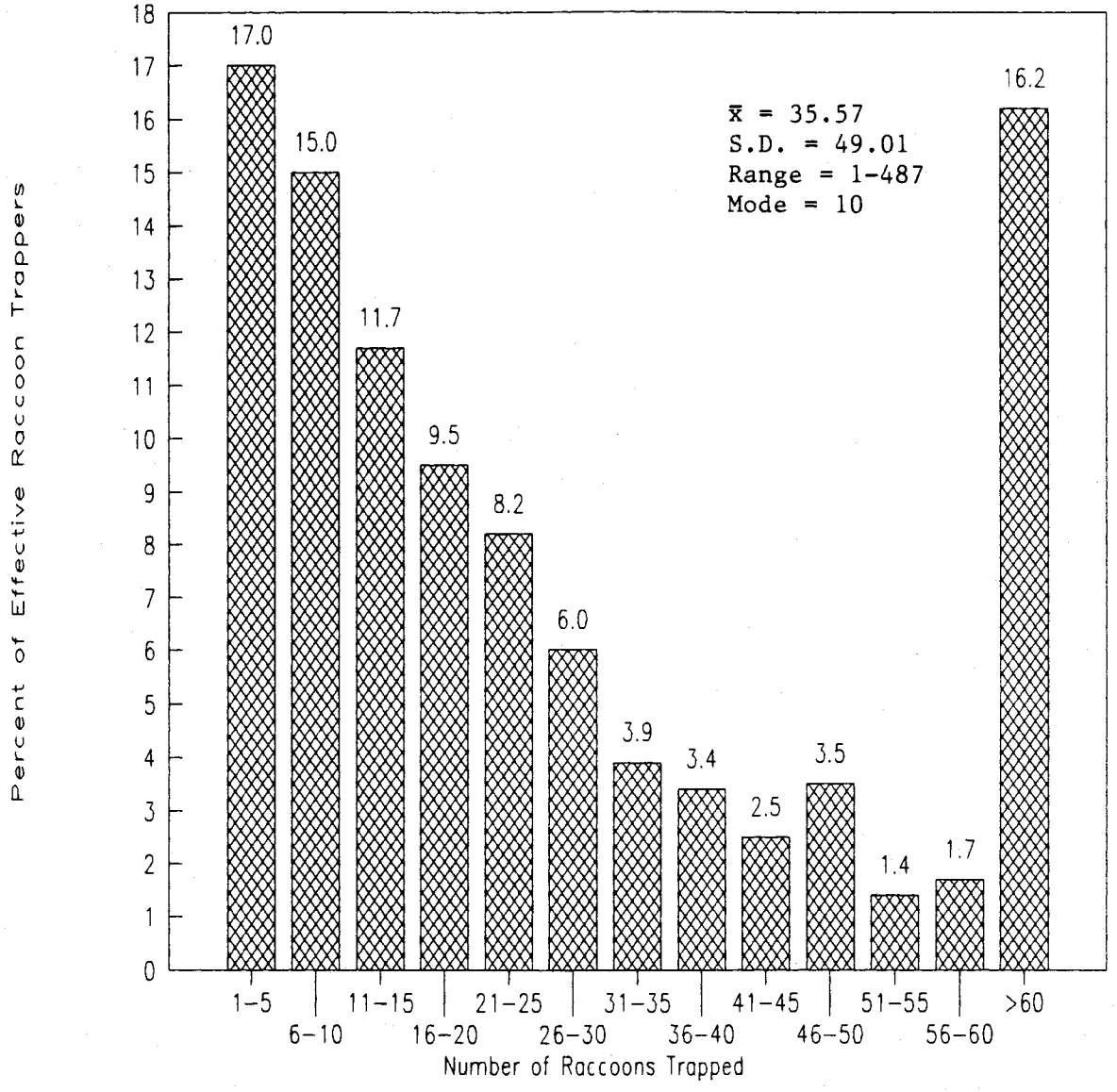

Figure 10. Distribution of the number of raccoons trapped per effective raccoon trapper in Illinois, 1998-99 season (n=513).

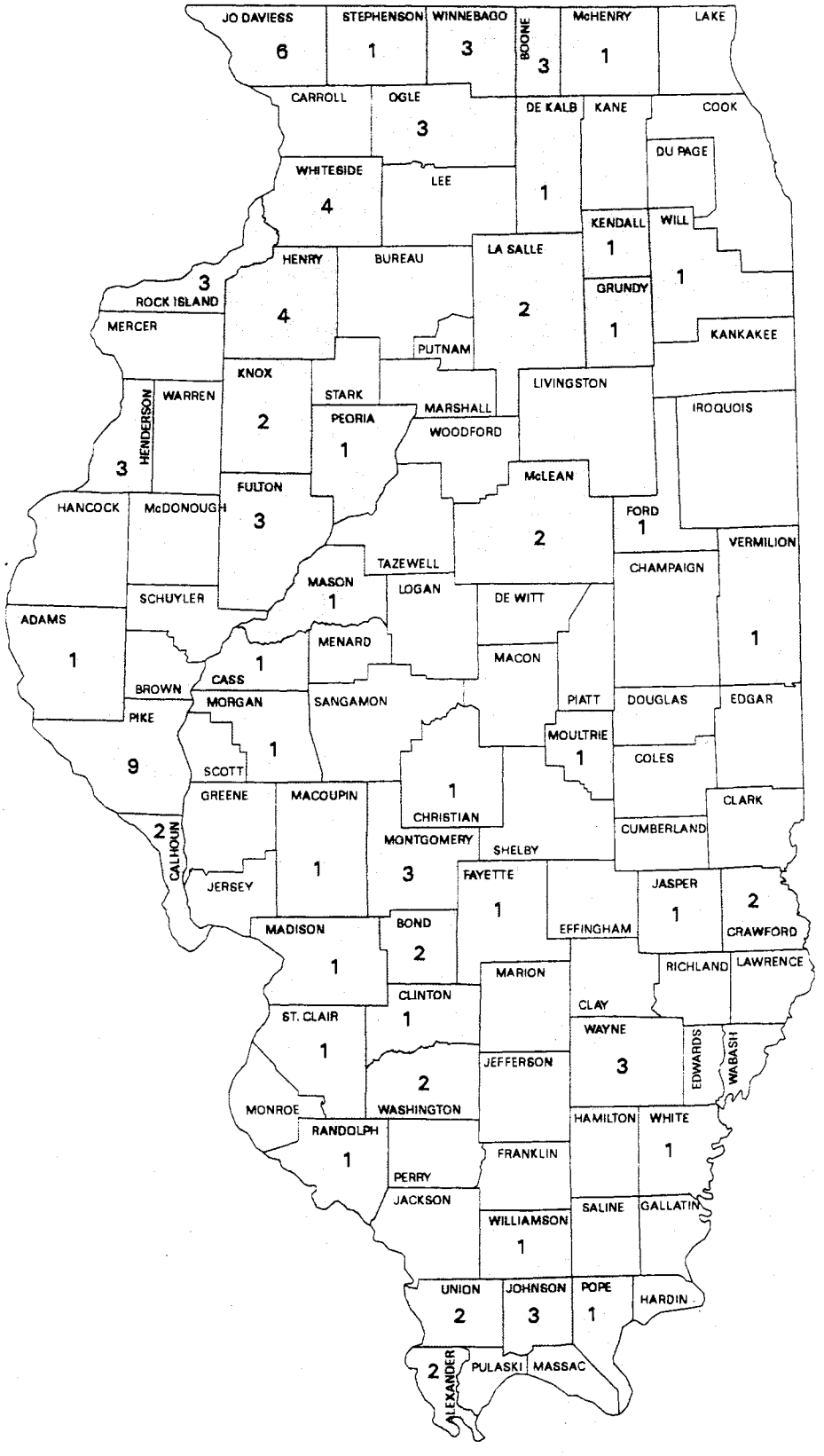

Figure 11. Illinois counties in which trappers reported observing river otters or their sign during the past three years (1996-97, 1997-98, and 1998-99 seasons). The number of reports is listed for each county.

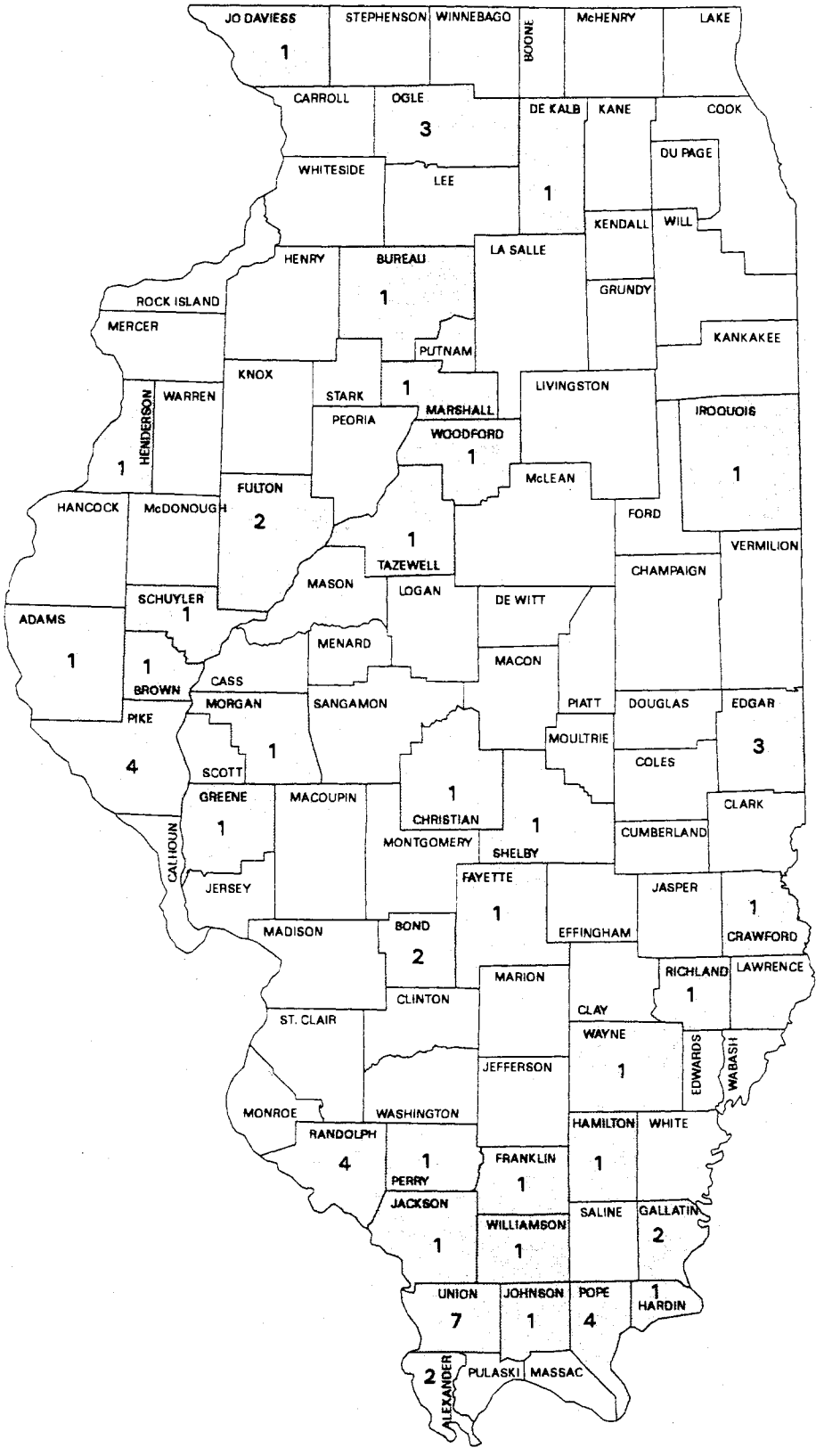

Figure 12. Illinois counties in which trappers reported observing bobcats or their sign during the past three years (1996-97, 1997-98, and 1998-99 seasons). The number of reports is listed for each county.