

## **Fall 2016 Furbearer Quotas**

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Recently, 2016 Furbearer Advisory Committee quota recommendations were approved by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Policy Team, as described below.

### **Bobcat**

The Furbearer Advisory Committee recommended a Northern Zone quota of 225 (a decrease from the 300 quota recommended last year) and a Southern Zone quota of 150 (an increase of 50 from last year).

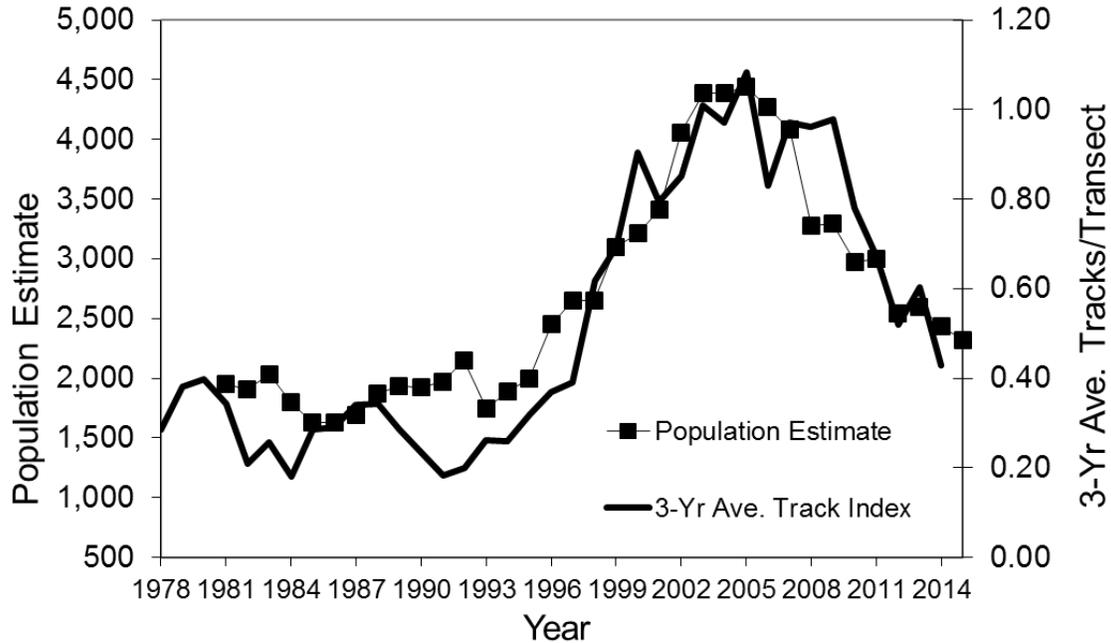
The final quota, minus tribal declarations, will be split equally between two time periods (Oct. 17 to Dec. 25 and Dec. 25 to Jan. 31). The Northern Zone quota for each time period is 88, with a Southern Zone quota of 73 for each respective time period. Due to differences in success rate, the number of permits for each zone and time period will differ.

In the Northern Zone, where the department and harvesters have years of experience and history, we use the highest success rate in the prior three years for permit issuance. In 2016, for Time Period 1 this would be 50%, and Time Period 2 would be 78%. Primary reasons for a higher success rate in the latter time period most likely relates to the presence of tracking snow and devoted, late-season hound hunting. With a quota of 88 bobcats for each time period, there would be approximately 175 permits issued for the Northern Zone Time Period 1, and 110 permits issued for the Northern Zone Time Period 2.

In the Southern Zone, where we have two years of recent harvest experience, the success rate was 42% for Time Period 1 and 58% for Time Period 2. With a quota of 73 bobcats for each time period, there would be 175 permits issued for the Southern Zone Time Period 1 and 125 permits issued for the Southern Zone Time Period 2.

The total statewide bobcat quota for 2016 is slightly lower than in 2015 (400 in 2015, 375 in 2016).

Harvest needs to be reported within 24 hours online at [gamereg.wi.gov](http://gamereg.wi.gov) or by phone at (844)486-9194 (844 GAME REG). Experience proves online reporting to be quicker and easier. Pelts must be registered (carcass included) with your local conservation officers within five days of the month of harvest. Carcasses are used to collect age information from all bobcats and reproductive status for females.



The above graph illustrates pre-hunt bobcat population estimates for northern Wisconsin, and 3-year mean numbers of bobcat racks observed per transect in winter track surveys, 1978-2015.

### Fisher

Fisher management continues to present unique challenges, with somewhat long-term declines in northern portions of Fisher Zones A – D and a significant population increase in southern portions of these zones, as well as Zones E & F in southern Wisconsin.

Approved harvest quotas are as follows:

#### **Zone A – 150 (decrease from 175 in 2015)**

- After tribal declarations are honored, the highest success rate in the last three years (38%), 195 permits will be available this year.

#### **Zone B - 75 (no change from 2015)**

- After tribal allocation and with a success rate of 22%, 255 permits will be available this year.

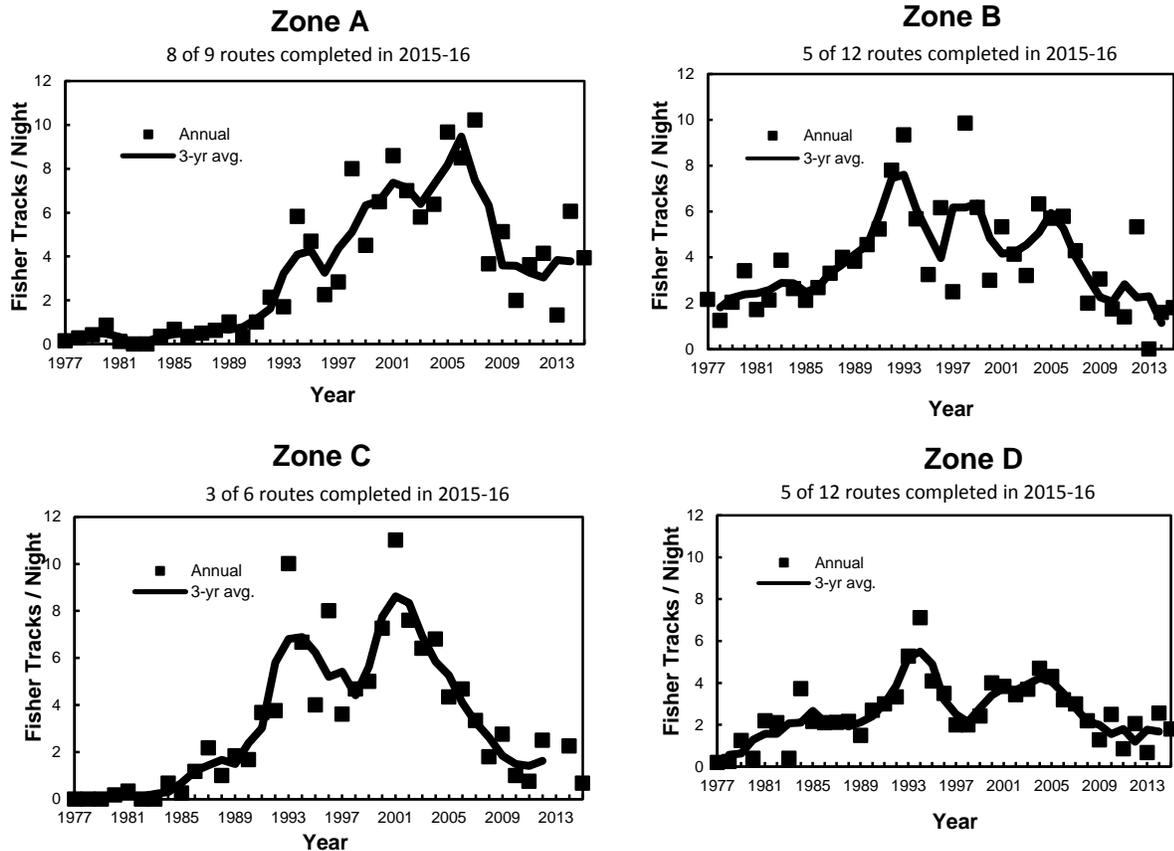
#### **Zone C - 60 (no change from 2015)**

- With no tribal declarations and a success rate of 18%, 340 permits will be available this year.

#### **Zone D - 100 (increase from 75 in 2015)**

- With no tribal declarations and a success rate of 22%, 445 permits will be available this year.

## Trends in Northern Forest Fisher Track Counts by Management Zone



The southern half of Wisconsin is comprised of two fisher management zones. Without consistent snow for annual track surveys we carefully watch success rates and combine this with local knowledge and observations in developing quotas.

### **Zone E – 250 (no change from 2015)**

This central forest zone was first established and opened for regulated trapping in 2000. The 2000 quota was 20, with 21 permits issued. In 2015, Zone E established over a twelve-fold increase in quota and a 33-fold increase in permits. With no tribal declarations and a success rate of 36% (highest in the last eight years), 690 permits will be available this year.

### **Zone F – 350 (no change from 2015)**

Zone F is the largest fisher zone in the state and includes areas we once anticipated would not make for reasonably good fisher habitat; fishers now thrive in the Zone F. Zone F first opened for fisher harvest in 2004 with a quota of 40. In 2015, Zone F accounted for over 30% of the statewide harvest. With no tribal declarations and a success rate of 23%, 1,540 permits will be available this year.

Fisher harvest follows the same criteria as bobcat, with 24-hour harvest reporting online at [gamereg.wi.gov](http://gamereg.wi.gov) or by phone at (844)486-9194 (844 GAME REG) and pelts must be registered

(carcass included) with local conservation officers within five days of the month of harvest. Fisher skulls from all zones will be required at the time of registration to collect age information.

### **Otter**

Over the past two decades, the department has worked to improve survey methods and continue aerial surveys through direct financial assistance from the Wisconsin Trappers Association. When harvest success rates are compared to aerial surveys there is no correlation. When aerial surveys are compared to beaver trapper opinions there is no correlation. And, when beaver trapper opinions are compared to harvest success rates, there is no correlation.

With a wide array of information that doesn't fit squarely within definable trends, the Furbearer Committee has closely evaluated trapper and field personnel input. For 2016–17, the statewide otter quota has been set at 2,000. Total quota is divided amongst three zones with 40% allotted to the North Zone, 30% to the Central Zone, and 30% to the South Zone. Success rates are somewhat similar in the North (26%) and Central (24%) zones, with the South Zone at 17%.

Approved harvest quotas are as follows:

#### **North Zone - 800 (increase from 605 in 2015)**

With tribal declarations, 2,875 permits will be available this year.

#### **Central Zone - 600 (increase from 510 in 2015)**

With no tribal declarations, 2,490 permits will be available this year.

#### **South Zone – 600 (increase from 510 in 2015)**

With no tribal declarations, 3,530 permits will be available this year.

Like bobcat and fisher, harvest needs to be reported within 24 hours online at [gamereg.wi.gov](http://gamereg.wi.gov) or by phone at (844)486-9194 (844 GAME REG), and pelts must be registered with local conservation officers within five days of the month of harvest. Otter carcasses are not being collected during the 2016-17 trapping season.