



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
WILDLIFE
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RIVER OTTER SURVEY - 2000-2001^[1]

by

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Introduction

In order to allow export of river otter (*Lutra canadensis*) under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), the United States Fish and Wildlife Service compiles data on the harvest and status of river otter. This is the 21st consecutive year of the otter survey in Michigan (Cooley et al. 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1997a, 1997b, 1999, 2000, and 2001). The data has been used to verify the stability of river otter populations and to allow continued harvest and exportation of pelts.

As in previous years, the Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Bureau required trappers to submit all river otter pelts for sealing. Skinned otter carcasses were collected from trappers throughout Michigan who voluntarily submitted them. The age and sex was determined for each carcass collected (Appendix 1).

Materials & Methods

The sex of each skinned otter carcass was determined and a lower canine tooth removed. Age was estimated by radiographing the tooth to determine the width of the pulp cavity (Kuehn and Berg 1982, personal communication) and by counting cementum annuli in longitudinal thin sections of the tooth root (Stephenson 1977).

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Results and Discussion

Data were summarized on a statewide basis, due to the small useable sample size (47 examined from a harvest of 989 animals) (Table 1). The sex ratio of the submitted otters was 292:100 (35:12) males to females. The most prominent age class represented was the 0.5 year-old class with 36.2% of the examined animals in this category. The 0.5-1.5 year-old age classes comprised 68.1% (32/47) of the total animals examined.

Management Application

The collection and examination of carcasses is used to assess the status of otter, in addition to population modeling, harvest levels, and winter track surveys. This information helps to assure that Michigan trappers continue to have the opportunity to harvest and export this furbearing species.

Acknowledgments

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Table 1. Sex and age distribution of Michigan otter, 2000-2001 season

AGE	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL	%
0.5	12	5	17	36.2
1.5	9	6	15	31.9
2.5	8		8	17.0
3.5	3		3	6.4
4.5	3	1	4	8.5
TOTAL	35	12	47	100.0

APPENDIX I.

2000-2001 OTTER DATA

COUNTY	TWN	RNG	SEC	DATE	SEAL	SEX	AGE	+/- yr.
Alcona	25N	06E	11	02/13/01	0002681	M	1.5	
Alcona	25N	06E	11	01/07/01	0002655	M	2.5	
Alcona	26N	07E	31	03/24/01	0002690	M	2.5	
Alcona	28N	05E	27	04/09/01	0002689	M	3.5	
Arenac	20N	03E	1	04/11/01	0002350	M	2.5	
Clare	20N	06W	8	12/08/00	0002303	F	1.5	
Dickinson	42N	29W	8	01/03/01	0002015	M	4.5	
Grand Traverse	26N	10W	21	02/13/01	0003285	M	0.5	
Ionia	06N	07W	31	01/19/01	0003012	M	0.5	
Ionia	06N	07W	31	01/27/01	0003040	M	0.5	
Ionia	07N	05W	2	12/04/00	0003091	M	1.5	
Ionia	07N	05W	3	12/26/00	0003092	M	2.5	
Iosco	22N	06E	29	12/21/00	0002342	M	1.5	
Iron	46N	37W	10	10/29/00	0002282	F	0.5	
Iron	45N	36W	7	02/10/01	0002288	F	1.5	
Iron	46N	31W	20	03/17/01	0003376	F	1.5	
Iron	43N	36W	21	02/27/01	0002290	M	0.5	
Iron	46N	31W	20	03/17/01	0003377	M	1.5	
Isabella	16N	06W	35	12/30/00	0002305	F	4.5	
Kalkaska	27N	06W	12	03/26/01	0003242	M	0.5	
Mackinac	44N	10W	36	03/29/01	0000011	F	0.5	
Mackinac	43N	10W	17	11/07/00	0000002	M	0.5	
Mackinac	44N	10W	36	03/20/01	0000009	M	0.5	
Mackinac	44N	10W	36	03/25/01	0000010	M	2.5	
Marquette	45N	29W	27	12/08/00	0003369	F	1.5	
Marquette	48N	29W	15	12/01/00	0003365	M	0.5	
Marquette	45N	29W	21	12/23/00	0003367	M	0.5	
Marquette	47N	28W	29	12/08/00	0003370	M	1.5	
Mason	19N	16W	9	04/07/01	0003223	M	4.5	1
Mecosta	14N	07W	11	02/25/01	0003127	F	1.5	
Mecosta	14N	08W	1	12/20/00	0003121	M	1.5	
Mecosta	14N	08W	32	01/18/01	0003122	M	1.5	
Mecosta	15N	09W	24	03/25/01	0003125	M	4.5	
Menominee	37N	25W	17	11/09/00	0002241	M	2.5	
Menominee	37N	27W	27	11/16/00	0002251	M	2.5	
Missaukee	21N	05W	3	04/03/01	0003243	F	1.5	
Montcalm	11N	05W	22	01/06/01	0003020	F	0.5	
Montcalm	10N	06W	14	02/23/01	0003017	M	0.5	
Montcalm	10N	07W	25	02/07/01	0003039	M	0.5	
Montmorency	32N	04E	9	01/06/01	0002503	F	0.5	
Newaygo	12N	12W	18	02/25/01	0003123	M	3.5	
Osceola	19N	08W	16	03/07/01	0003093	M	0.5	
Oscoda	25N	02E	11	04/02/01	0002683	M	1.5	
Oscoda	25N	04E	3	03/29/01	0002684	M	2.5	
Presque Isle	33N	02E	16	12/24/00	0002832	F	0.5	
Presque Isle	34N	04E	36	01/27/01	0002504	M	1.5	
Tuscola	15N	08E	22	03/18/01	0000421	M	3.5	

