

2016 Post Season Furbearer Report

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) gathers information about furbearing animal populations and fur prices from a limited number of sources. One source is the Annual Roadside Survey and is used to gather trend data concerning population dynamics. A second source of data includes numbers and species of pelts as well as average price paid per pelt sold at annual fur auctions in Oklahoma.

The Annual Roadside Survey is conducted each spring by ODWC employees as they go about driving to and from work assignments across the state. A standardized report form is provided to each employee with instructions to indicate which area of the state, how many miles are driven, and the number and species of furbearers, either live or dead, are observed each day. This data is collected, analyzed and reported in Table 1 and Figures 1 - 9. The table and figures below show tremendous variability in reported numbers. While there is a great deal of variability from year to year due to weather influences, population fluctuations, and sampling methodology, the overall trends show generalized broad-scale stability across the majority of the furbearer species we monitor.

Tables 2 and 3 depict data collected at fur auctions held each year in our state. Over the history of this project various groups have sponsored these sales including the Oklahoma Furbearer Alliance (OFBA) and the Fur Takers of Oklahoma (FTO). In most years there are two auctions, although some years might have only one.

Depending on the species, the availability of harvest data directly relates to the average price per pelt that is offered. The years that prices are down, there are not nearly the amount of animals sold at auctions and therefore a reduction in the amount of data that can be collected. This method of data collection does not capture those animals that are harvested and held over in hopes that the following year will bring better prices. Such "stockpiling" can appear as deflated numbers when they are held over and inflated numbers when the prices increase in subsequent years. For this and other reasons it is the trend data that is much more reliable than looking solely at individual numbers. Starting in 2013, the quantities of most pelts sold at in-state auctions have drastically reduced. More trappers seem to be shipping their furs directly to the major auction houses instead of selling at local auctions.

Additionally, prices paid at these auctions do not necessarily have a direct correlation with population abundance or harvest pressure. International fur markets that buy fur harvested in Oklahoma have numerous factors that will decide the price they are willing to pay for the fur. Weather, economics and politics are three in a very long list of factors that will drive the price up or down *independent* of supply.

In summary, the 2016 Annual Roadside Survey in comparison with 2015 indicates a stabilizing trend in opossum, striped skunk, beaver and gray fox. The same comparison shows decreased linear progression for raccoon sightings. River otter, red fox, coyote and bobcat shows no change in the linear progression with the addition of data from the 2016 Annual Roadside Survey. Fur auction results indicate a somewhat cyclic market and price paid for fur with prices generally increasing from 2005 through 2008, then declining in 2009-10, and increasing again from 2011-13. Prices for some species increased while

others declined in 2014 and 2015. 2016 data displayed a marked drop in fur sold and price paid almost across the board. Prices for beaver, mink, and striped skunk were the only species to show increase in average price per pelt in the 2016 auction results.

Table-1: Total Number of Furbearers Recorded by Species during Annual Roadside Survey.

| Species/Year | Bobcat | Raccoon | Gray Fox | Red Fox | Coyote | Skunk | Opossum | Beaver | River Otter* |
|--------------|--------|---------|----------|---------|--------|-------|---------|--------|--------------|
| 2005 | 95 | 1955 | 9 | 10 | 827 | 5292 | 3312 | 115 | N/A |
| 2006 | 128 | 1945 | 18 | 22 | 770 | 4162 | 2427 | 93 | N/A |
| 2007 | 266 | 1890 | 29 | 17 | 1385 | 7822 | 2301 | 91 | N/A |
| 2008 | 203 | 1761 | 33 | 8 | 1432 | 8288 | 2308 | 102 | N/A |
| 2009 | 139 | 2330 | 17 | 22 | 895 | 4651 | 2758 | 113 | N/A |
| 2010 | 128 | 2478 | 24 | 29 | 1166 | 6724 | 2843 | 27 | N/A |
| 2011 | 216 | 2865 | 13 | 58 | 1495 | 8979 | 2962 | 32 | N/A |
| 2012 | 145 | 2533 | 33 | 35 | 1130 | 6979 | 2610 | 19 | 17 |
| 2013 | 83 | 1429 | 6 | 15 | 746 | 3468 | 1212 | 13 | 59 |
| 2014 | 76 | 1920 | 14 | 10 | 1013 | 5075 | 2161 | 81 | 47 |
| 2015 | 124 | 2089 | 19 | 6 | 1314 | 4622 | 2877 | 130 | 42 |
| 2016 | 93 | 1809 | 8 | 22 | 1107 | 4492 | 3117 | 118 | 47 |

* Data collected for River Otter could only be found back to the 2011-2012 season.

Figure 1: Number of Bobcat Recorded during Annual Roadside Survey

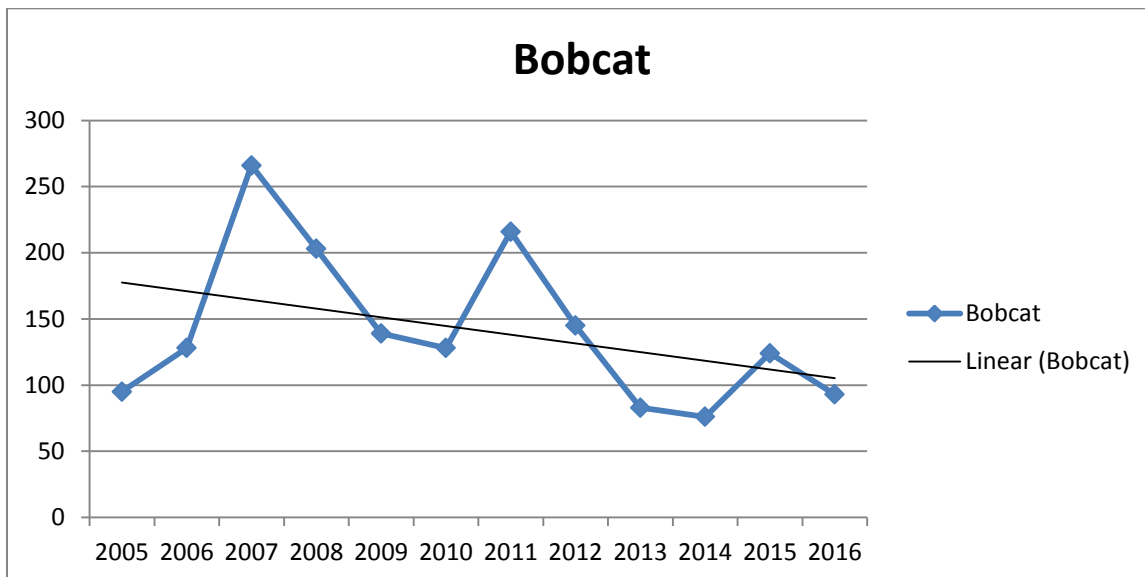


Figure 2: Number of Raccoon Recorded during Annual Roadside Survey

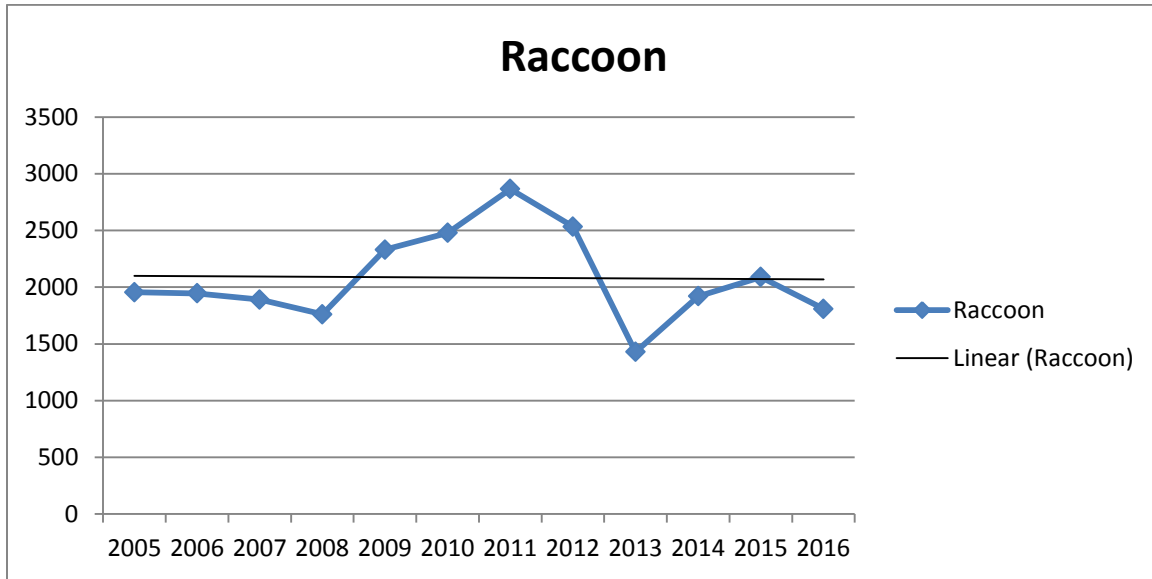


Figure 3: Number of Gray Fox Recorded during Annual Roadside Survey

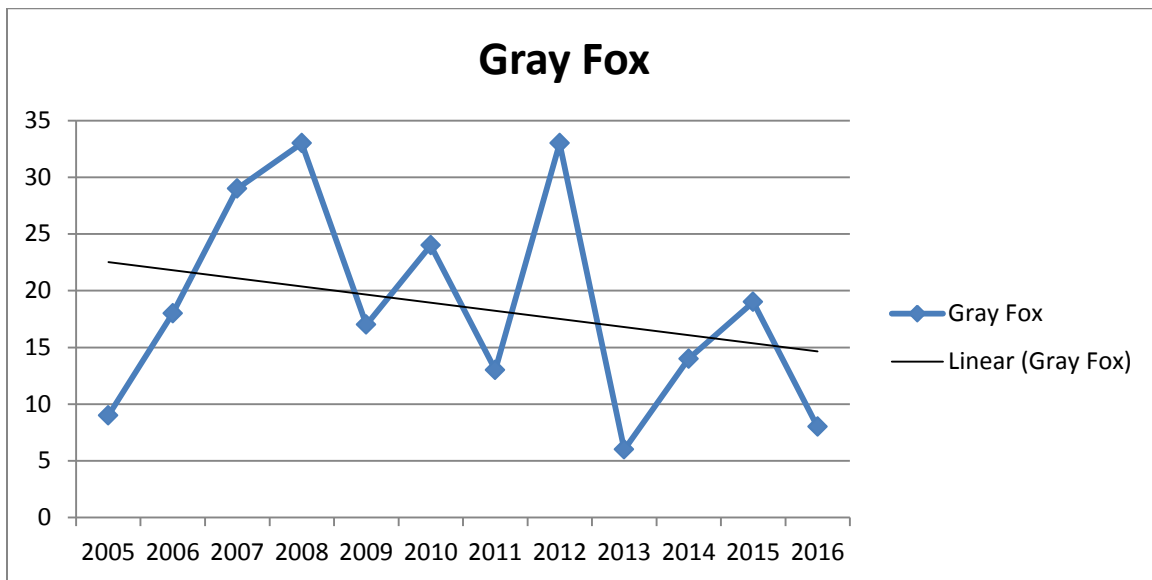


Figure 4: Number of Red Fox Recorded during Annual Roadside Survey

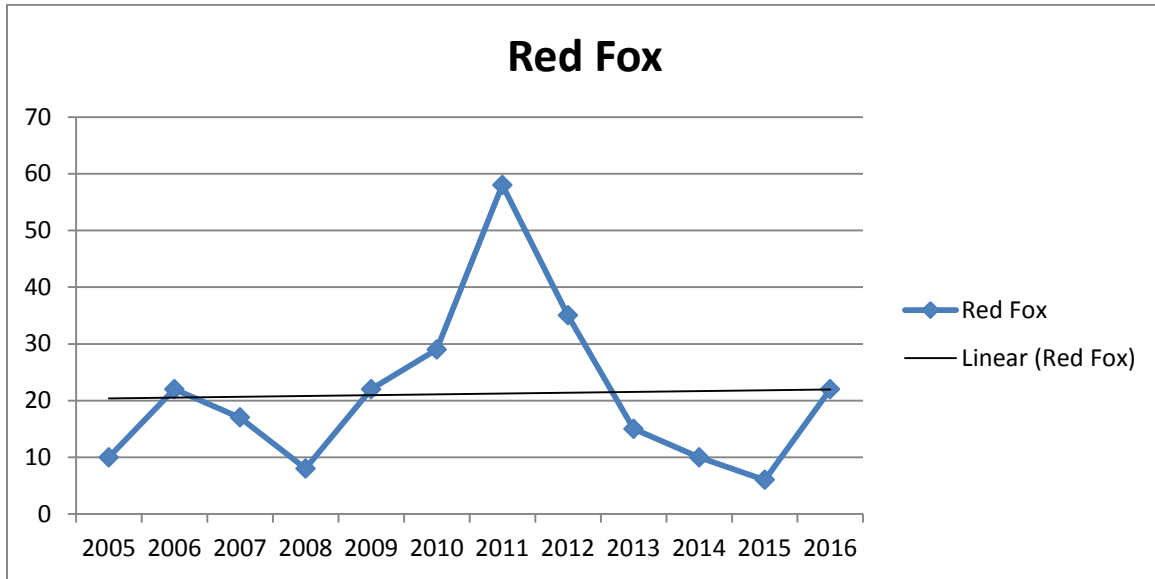


Figure 5: Number of Coyote Recorded during Annual Roadside Survey

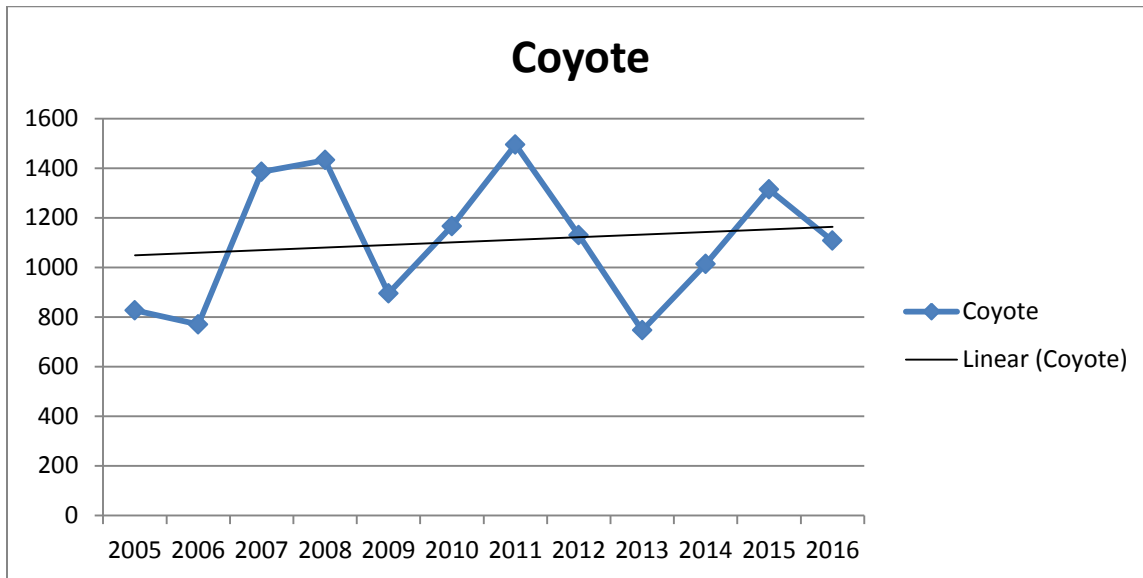


Figure 6: Number of Striped Skunk Recorded during Annual Roadside Survey

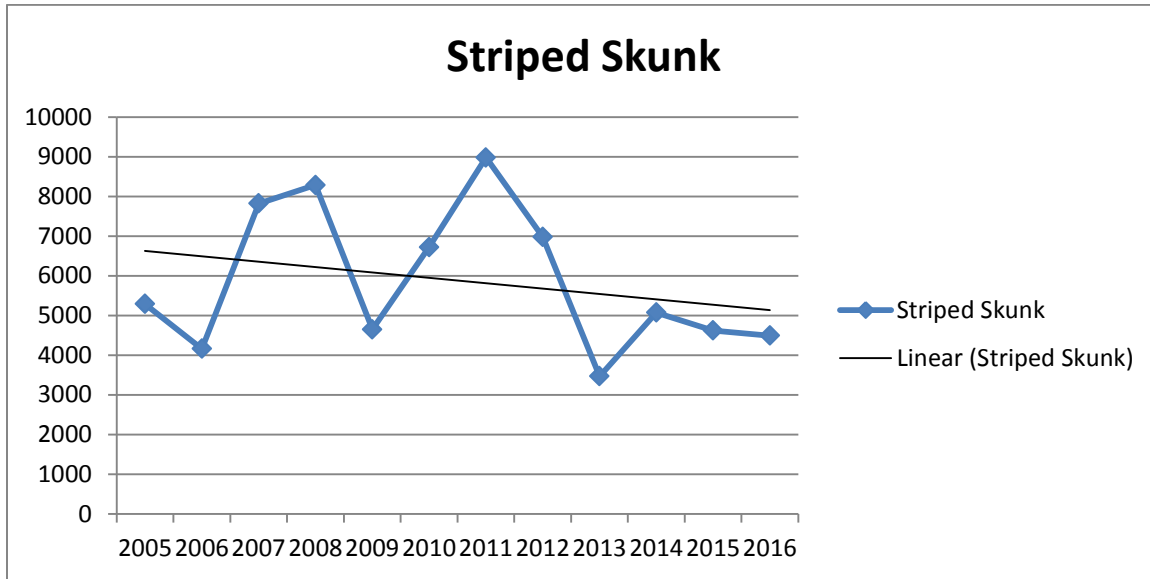


Figure 7: Number of Opossum Recorded during Annual Roadside Survey

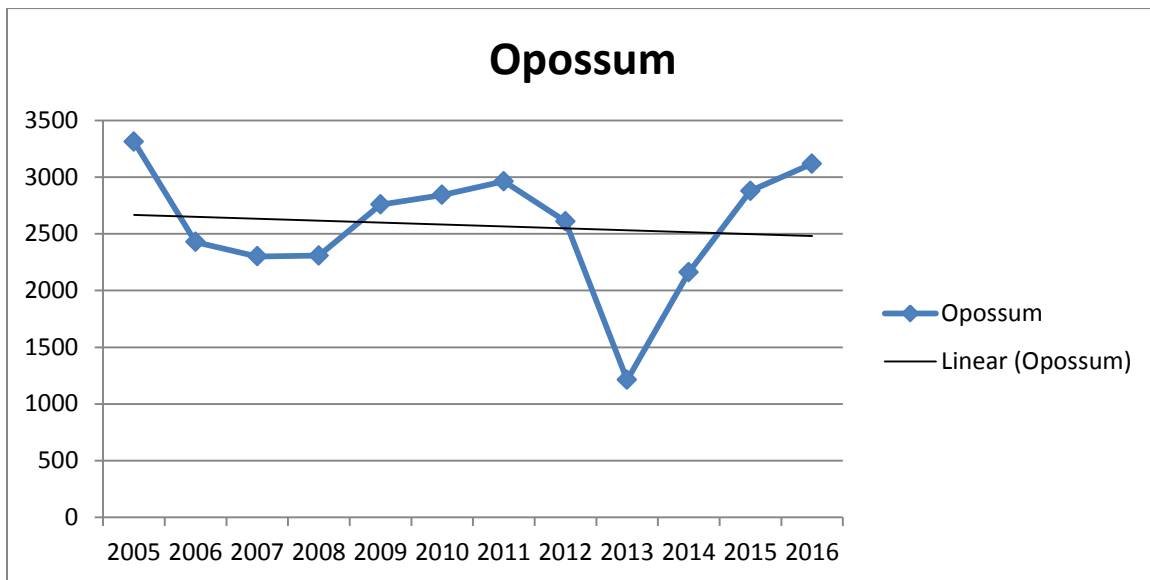


Figure 8: Number of Beaver Recorded during Annual Roadside Survey

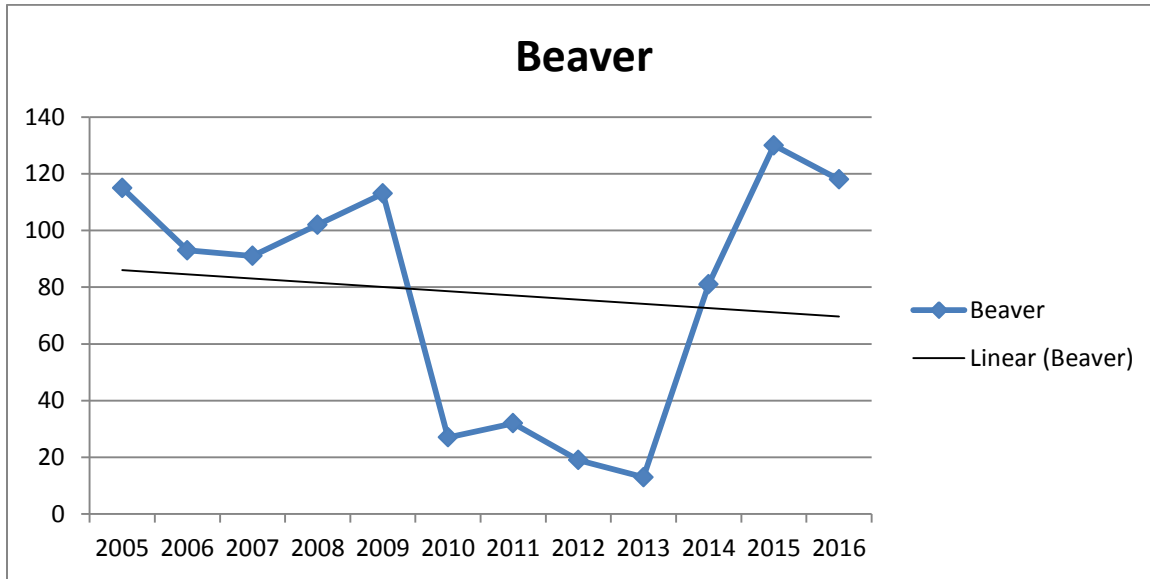


Figure 9: Number of River Otter Recorded during Annual Roadside Survey

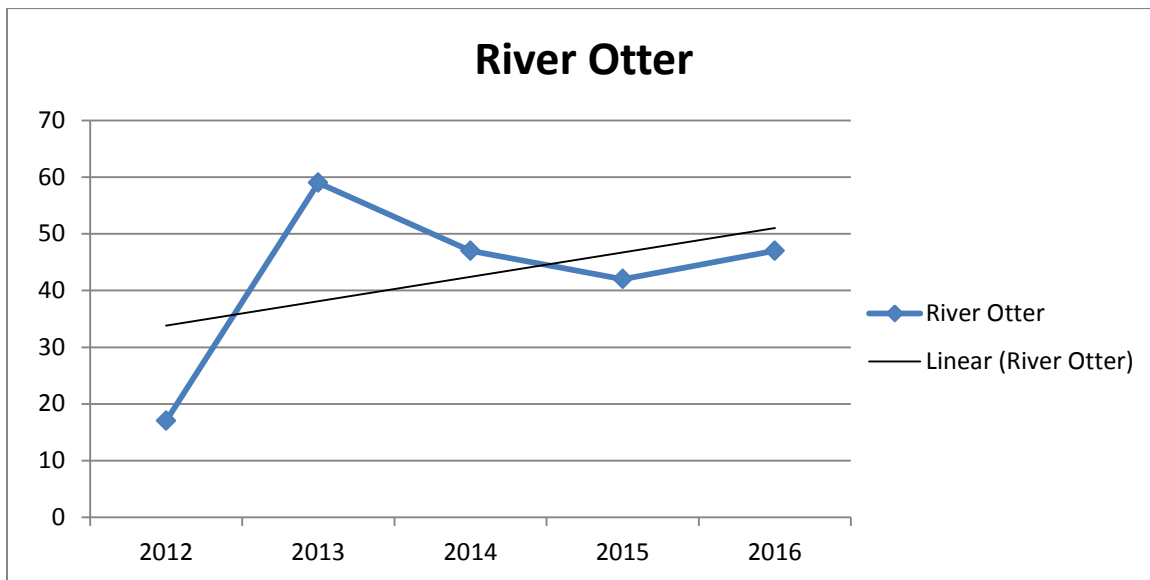


Table-2: Total Number of Pelts by Year Sold at OFBA and FTO Auctions in Oklahoma

| Species/Year | Badger | Beaver | Bobcat | Coyote | Gray Fox | Red Fox* | Mink | Muskrat | Nutria | Opossum | Raccoon | Striped Skunk | River Otter** |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------|----------|------|---------|--------|---------|---------|---------------|---------------|
| 2005 | 49 | 755 | 3452 | 974 | 321 | | 13 | 54 | 0 | 1474 | 7913 | 125 | |
| 2006 | 44 | 1062 | 3322 | 662 | 153 | | 18 | 59 | 0 | 850 | 4019 | 69 | |
| 2007 | 115 | 1193 | 5104 | 1076 | 251 | 0 | 19 | 25 | 19 | 699 | 6733 | 142 | |
| 2008 | 88 | 1153 | 3469 | 898 | 390 | 32 | 20 | 17 | 0 | 1474 | 8740 | 133 | 72 |
| 2009 | 51 | 571 | 2007 | 389 | 413 | 17 | 13 | 21 | 0 | 1020 | 6875 | 111 | 115 |
| 2010 | 16 | 522 | 1012 | 166 | 59 | 2 | 8 | 11 | 0 | 361 | 2240 | 53 | 76 |
| 2011 | 75 | 801 | 3636 | 605 | 193 | 22 | 20 | 53 | 0 | 732 | 6781 | 103 | 84 |
| 2012 | 99 | 1364 | 3569 | 1244 | 304 | 60 | 15 | 25 | 1 | 1353 | 11292 | 58 | 208 |
| 2013 | 3 | 539 | 821 | 558 | 112 | 14 | 3 | 18 | 0 | 488 | 3377 | 218 | 90 |
| 2014 | 2 | 360 | 903 | 467 | 179 | 16 | 13 | 67 | 0 | 236 | 3189 | 73 | 96 |
| 2015 | 4 | 160 | 564 | 474 | 54 | 4 | 3 | 38 | 0 | 578 | 1887 | 127 | 49 |
| 2016 | 0 | 92 | 288 | 260 | 34 | 1 | 3 | 34 | 0 | 470 | 609 | 79 | 40 |
| *Red Fox season opened in 2006-2007 season. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **River Otter season opened in 2007-2008 season. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ***Total harvest by fur sales from given year. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Table-3: Average Price per Pelt Sold at OFBA and FTO Auctions in Oklahoma

| Species | Badger | Beaver | Bobcat | Coyote | Gray Fox | Red Fox | Mink | Muskrat | Nutria | Opossum | Raccoon | St. Skunk | R. Otter |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------|---------|-------|---------|--------|---------|---------|-----------|----------|
| Year | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2005 | 11.5 | 4.61 | 48.33 | 6.08 | 9.65 | * | 8.78 | 0.99 | * | 0.7 | 5.28 | 0.69 | * |
| 2006 | 11.85 | 9.03 | 56.67 | 6.99 | 13.36 | * | 14.01 | 2.93 | * | 1.07 | 4.01 | 4.2 | * |
| 2007 | 12.36 | 8.99 | 63.69 | 9.69 | 18.98 | * | 15.96 | 14.38 | 4.52 | 1.04 | 6.47 | 3.2 | * |
| 2008 | 21.41 | 7.23 | 73.22 | 7.81 | 25.5 | 15.79 | 11.75 | 1.71 | * | 1.56 | 8.92 | 2.25 | 25.87 |
| 2009 | 7.47 | 4.58 | 42.21 | 4.68 | 12.81 | 10.99 | 6.89 | 1.43 | * | 0.68 | 4.72 | 1.19 | 19.8 |
| 2010 | 6.33 | 4.78 | 27.69 | 3.35 | 9.85 | 8.5 | 5.5 | 2.03 | * | 0.88 | 4.27 | 1.62 | 18.34 |
| 2011 | 8.45 | 5.42 | 71.4 | 5.42 | 13.15 | 13.32 | 10.51 | 3.47 | * | 0.94 | 5.72 | 2.02 | 38.88 |
| 2012 | 10.81 | 6.69 | 87.89 | 8.15 | 16.27 | 20.07 | 12.16 | 4.93 | 2 | 1.03 | 6.29 | 2.43 | 63.44 |
| 2013 | 10.83 | 10.45 | 157.4 | 13.9 | 20.09 | 40.51 | 24.5 | 7.22 | * | 1.09 | 10.12 | 2.05 | 71.45 |
| 2014 | 10 | 7.02 | 104.48 | 11.38 | 22.57 | 30.3 | 13.36 | 7.14 | * | 0.89 | 5.81 | 4.21 | 50.08 |
| 2015 | 10.75 | 4.7 | 77.5 | 12.6 | 15.08 | 20.34 | 6.25 | 3.93 | * | 0.92 | 3.61 | 2.06 | 29.49 |
| 2016 | * | 5.09 | 32.63 | 5.4 | 9.56 | 15 | 17 | 2.67 | * | 0.34 | 1.25 | 3.33 | 16.39 |
| *None Sold | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| * All values shown represented in U.S. currency (\$) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |