

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

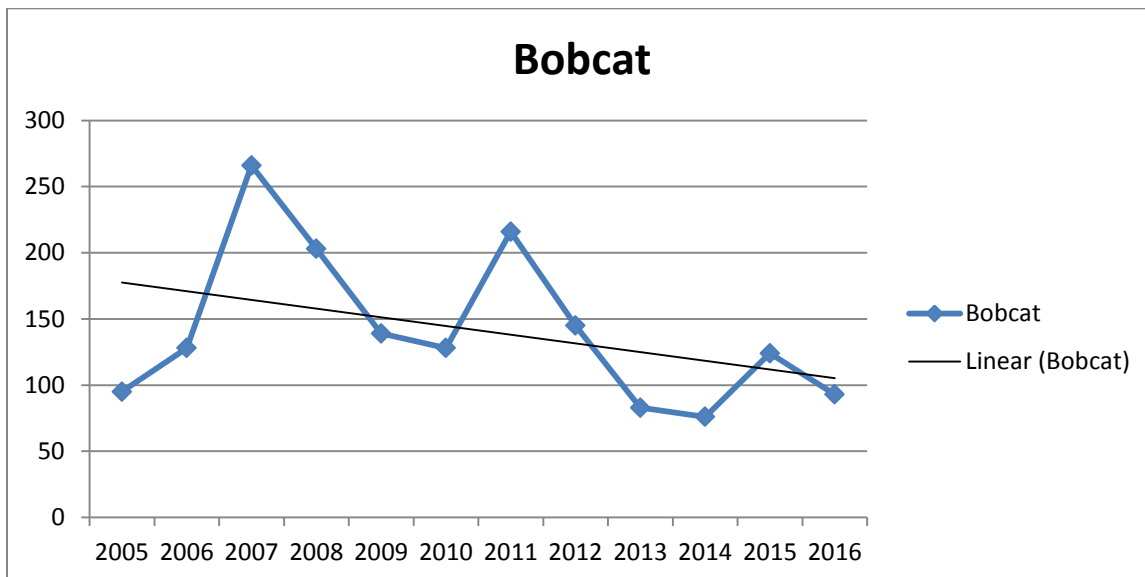


Figure 2: Number of Raccoon Recorded during Annual Roadside Survey

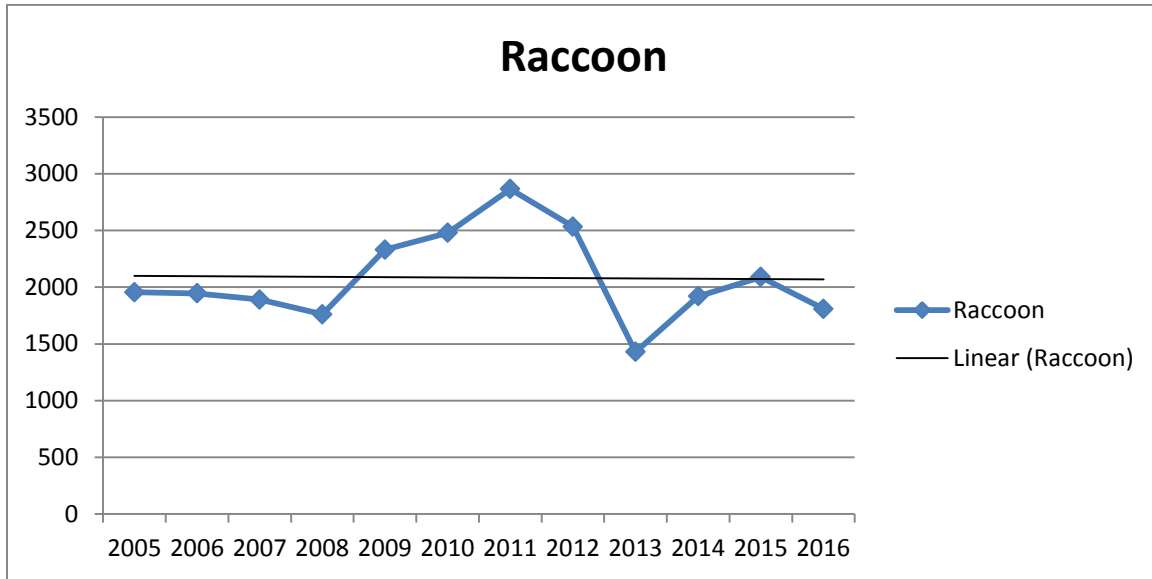


Figure 3: Number of Gray Fox Recorded during Annual Roadside Survey

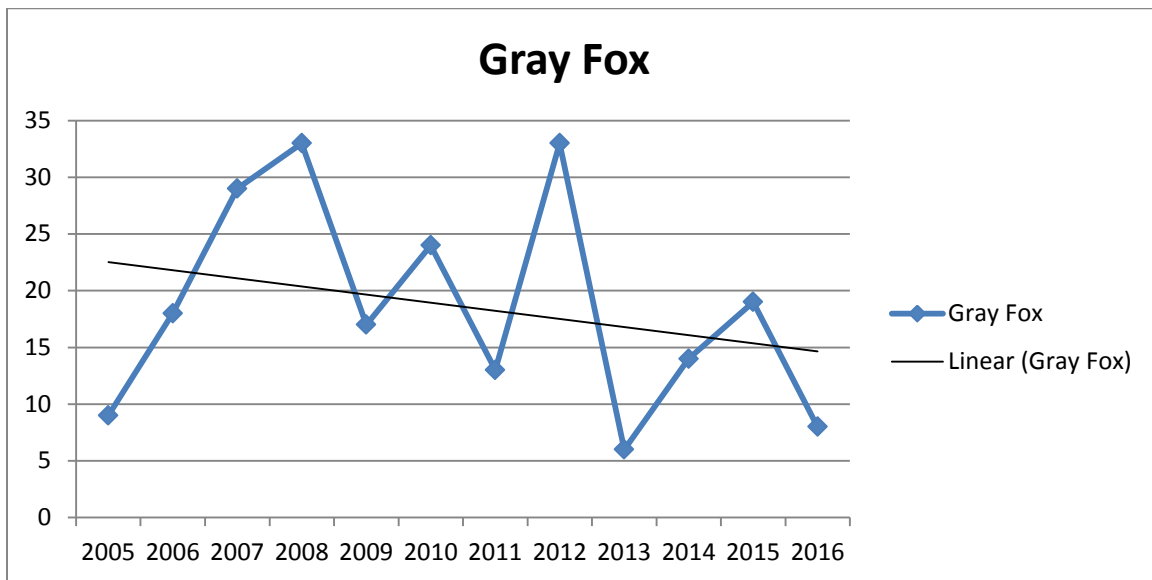


Figure 4: Number of Red Fox Recorded during Annual Roadside Survey

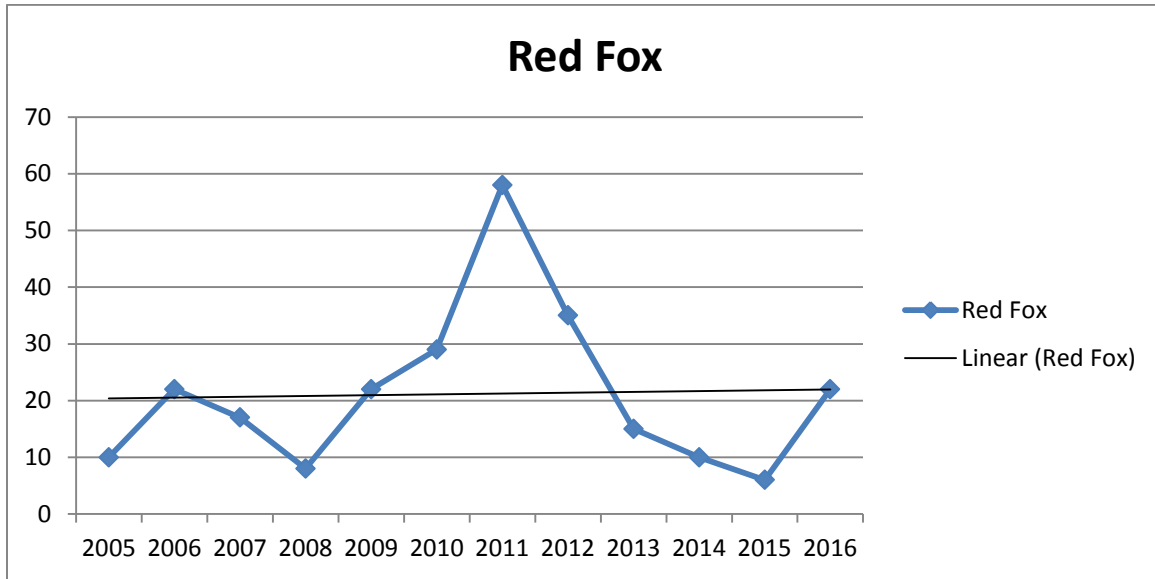


Figure 5: Number of Coyote Recorded during Annual Roadside Survey

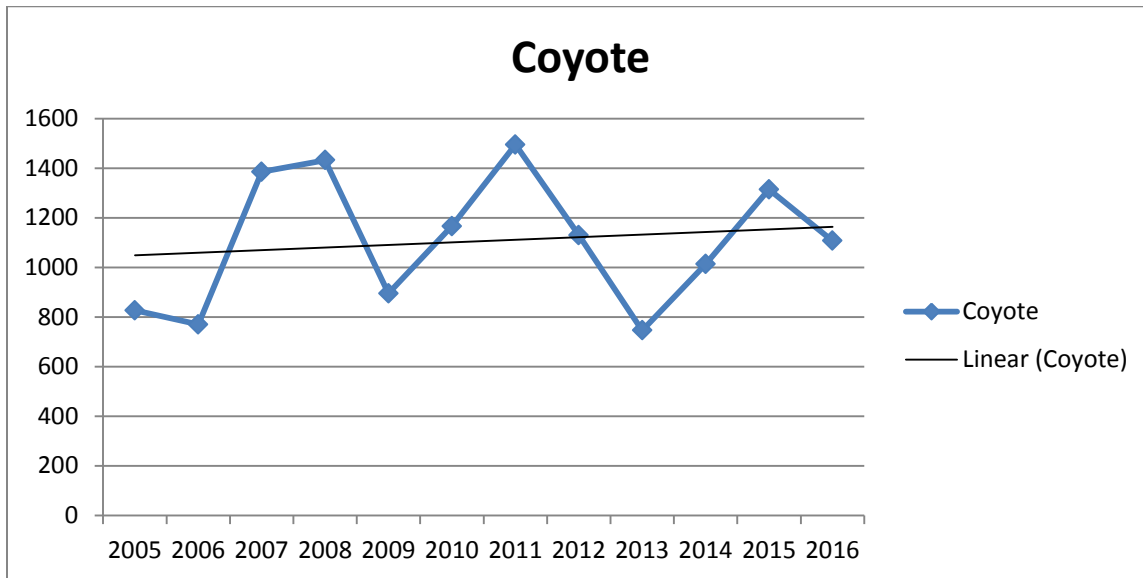


Figure 6: Number of Striped Skunk Recorded during Annual Roadside Survey

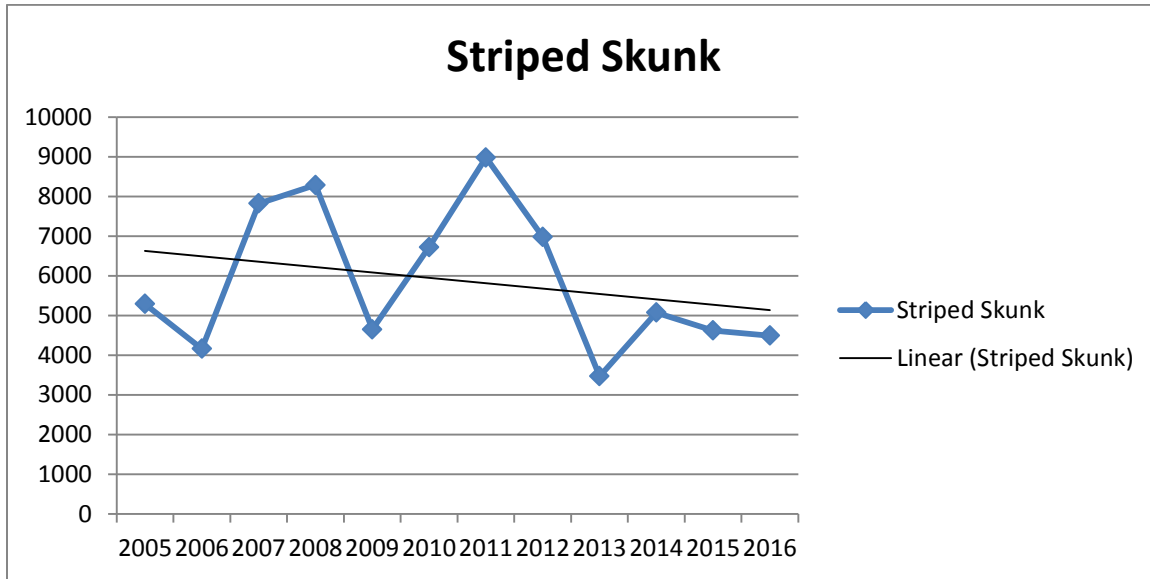


Figure 7: Number of Opossum Recorded during Annual Roadside Survey

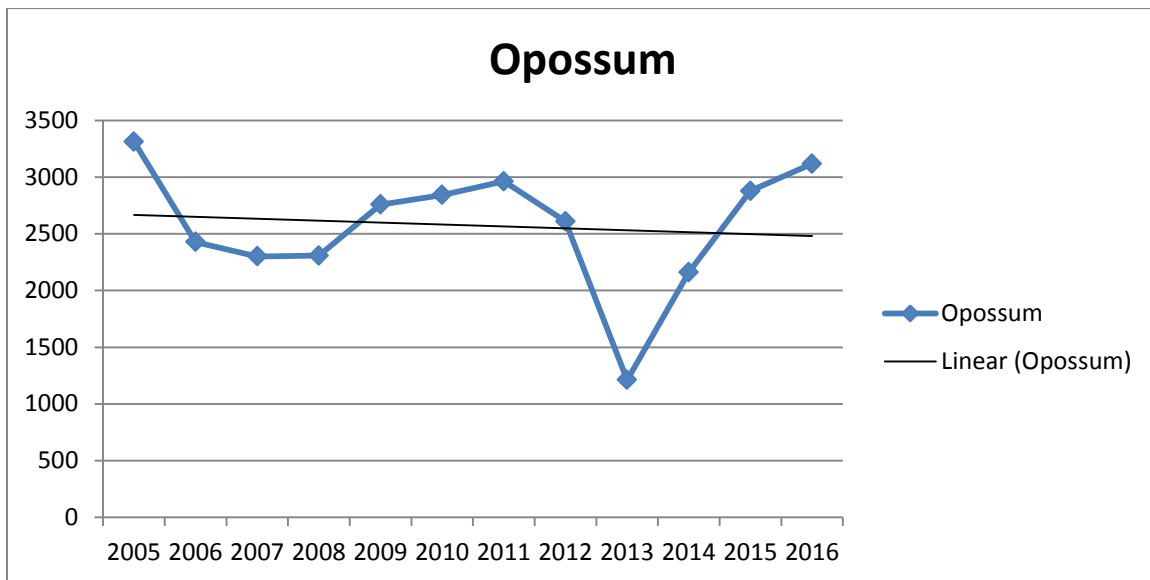


Figure 8: Number of Beaver Recorded during Annual Roadside Survey

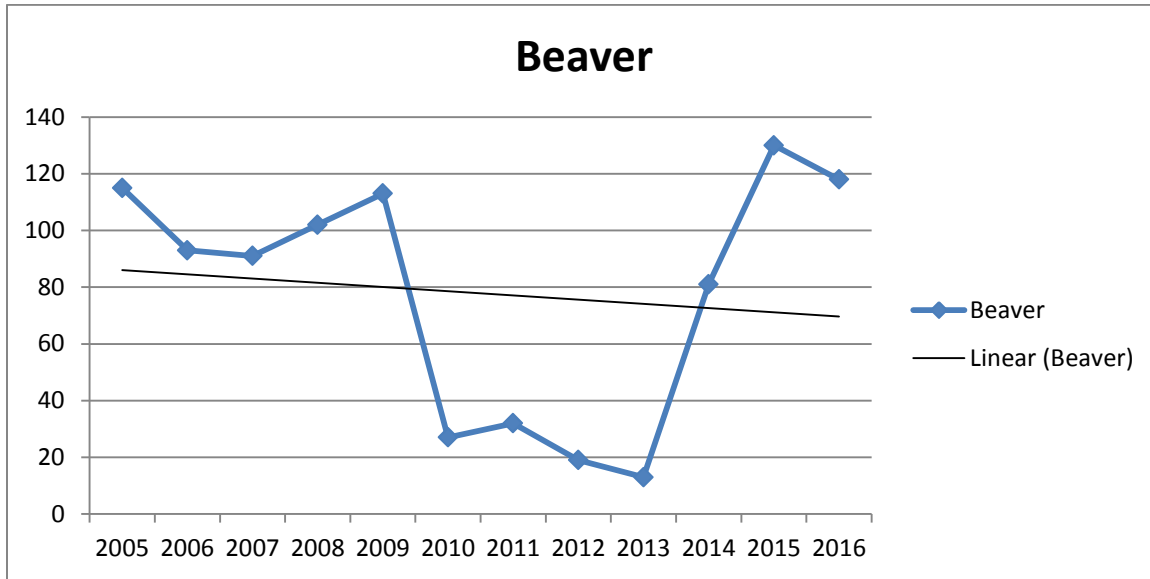


Figure 9: Number of River Otter Recorded during Annual Roadside Survey

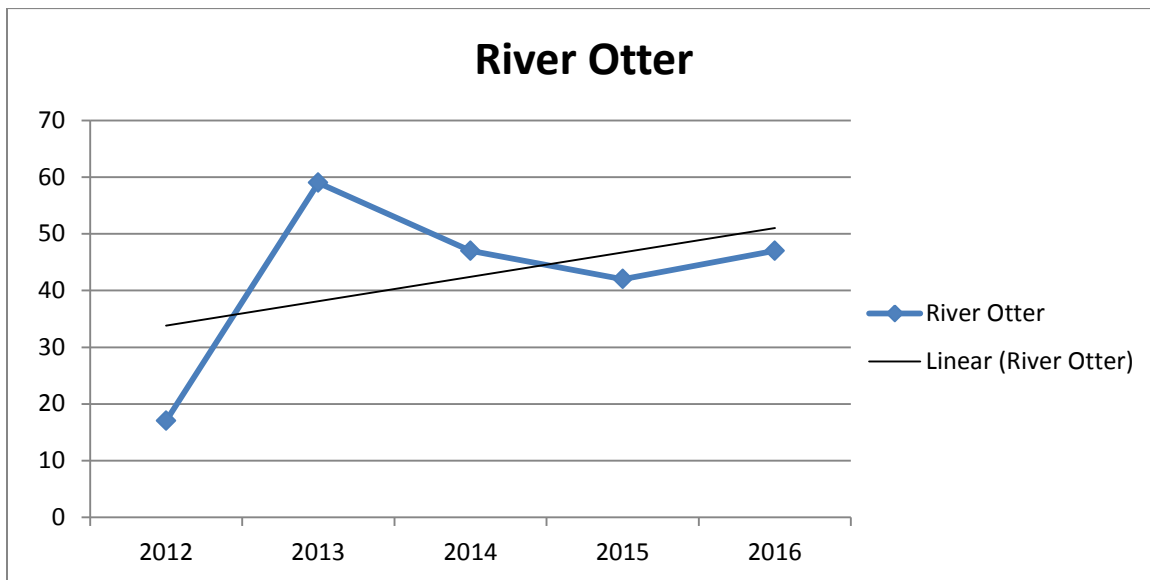


Table-2: Total Number of Pelts by Year Sold at OFBA and FTO Auctions in Oklahoma

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 (\$)													