

**Ochig (fisher), Nigig (otter) and Gidagaa-
bizhiw (bobcat) harvests during 1999 - 2000
in the 1837 and 1842 Ceded Territories in
Wisconsin and Minnesota**

by

Jonathan Gilbert
GLIFWC
Wildlife Section Leader

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& Wildlife Commission**
P. O. Box 9
Odanah, WI 54861
(715) 682 - 6619

OCHIG (fisher), NIGIG (otter) AND GIDAGAA-BIZHIW (bobcat) HARVESTS DURING 1999-2000 IN THE 1837 AND 1842 CEDED TERRITORIES IN WISCONSIN AND MINNESOTA

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide the results of the 1999 - 2000 off-reservation treaty trapping seasons for ochig (fishers), nigig (otters) and gidagaa-bizhiw (bobcats) in the 1837 and 1842 ceded territories of Wisconsin and Minnesota. Hunters and trappers were members of the six Wisconsin Bands of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians and the Mille Lacs Chippewa Tribe (Minnesota). Harvests by Fond du Lac trappers was reported by Schrage (2000) but are included in totals in this report.

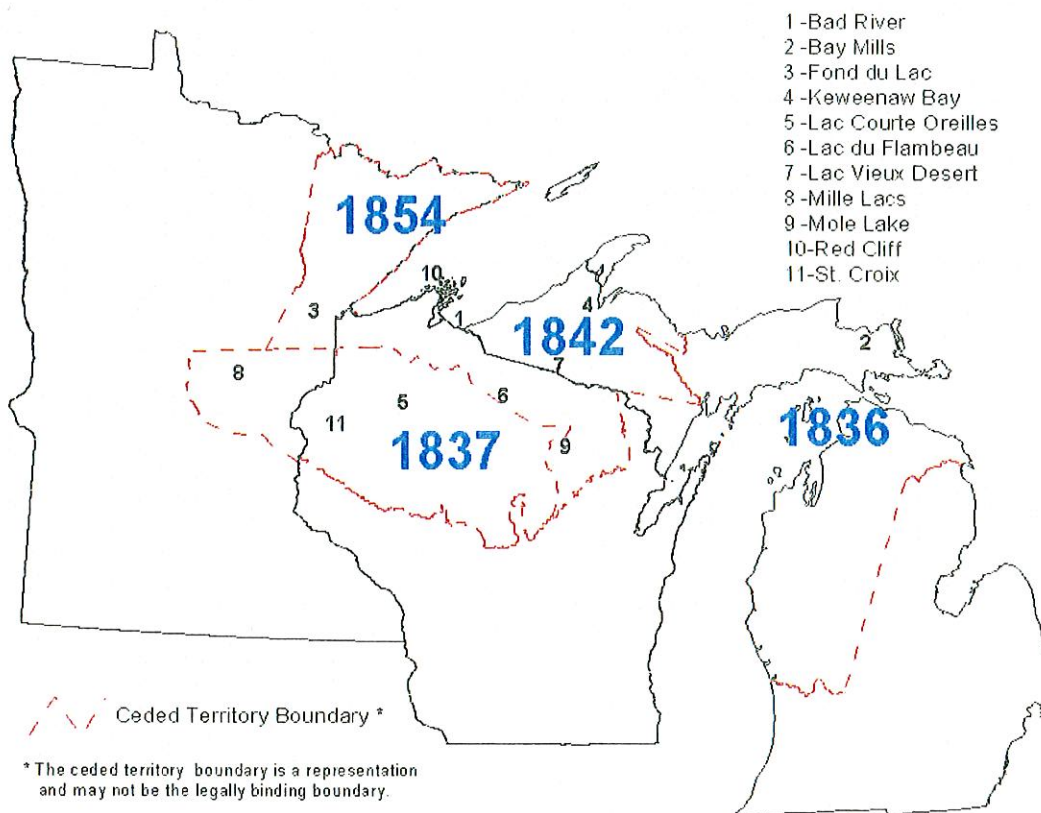


Figure 1. Location of GLIFWC member tribes in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Regulations and Ten Year Summary

Wisconsin

The trapping season began on October 1 for otters and bobcats and on November 1 for fishers. The season ended on March 31 for all species. Trappers (and hunters for bobcats) were required to obtain carcass tags for each species. Upon harvest the trapper or hunter was required to tag the animal and register it at a tribal registration station by 5:00 pm of the next working day. Fisher harvest was limited by zone, while otter and bobcat harvests occurred throughout the ceded territories.

This year (1999-2000) nearly the same number of people obtained a trapping permit as in 1998 - 99 (Table 1 and Figure 2). The harvests of fisher, otter and bobcat all declined from record levels established in 1997 - 98. The reason for these declines is unknown.

Table 1. Number of licensed trappers and numbers of fishers, otters, and bobcats harvested by tribal members in Wisconsin during off-reservation treaty trapping seasons from 1988-89 through 1999-2000.

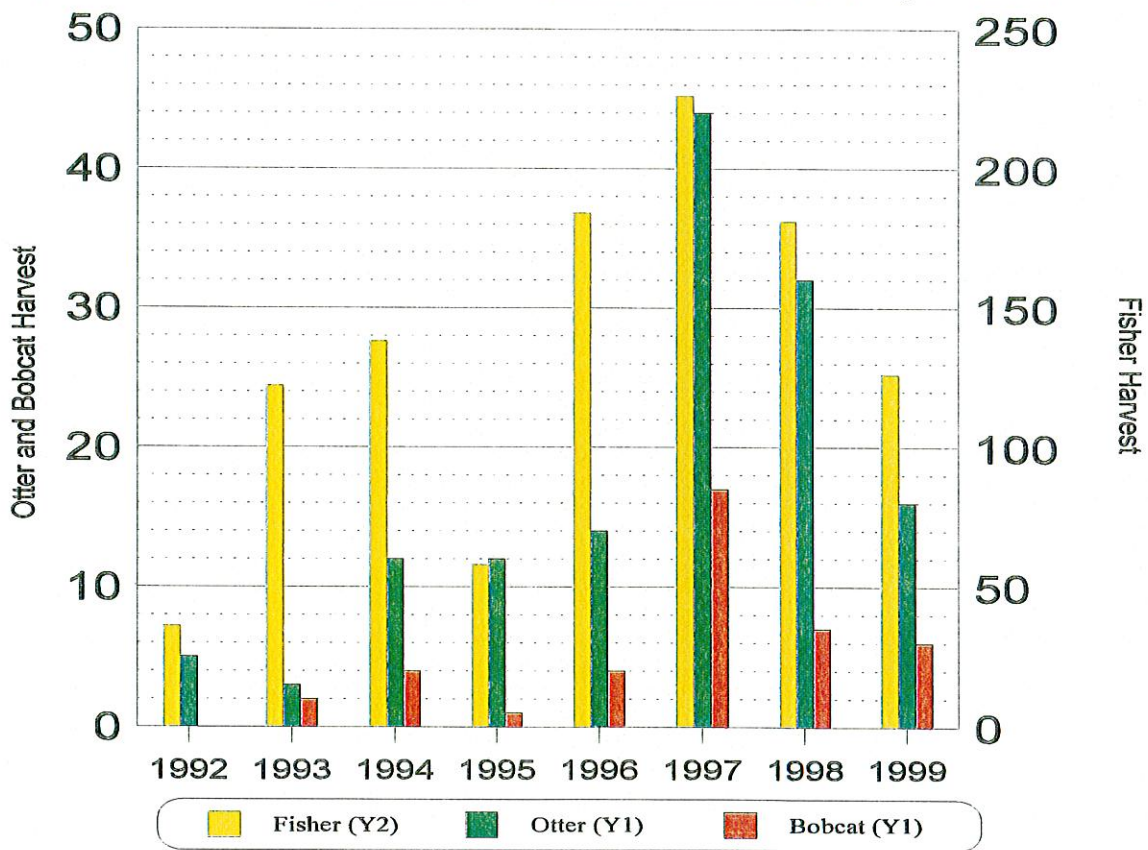
Season	Number of Licensed Trappers*	Fisher Harvest	Otter Harvest	Bobcat Harvest
1990 - 1991	408	24	4	0
1991 - 1992	248	27	4	0
1992 - 1993	512	36	5	0
1993 - 1994	704	122	3	2
1994 - 1995	736	138	12	4
1995 - 1996	966	58	12	1
1996 - 1997	1,125	184	14	4
1997-1998	1,449	226	44	17
1998-1999	1,570	181	32	7
1999 - 2000	1,539	126	16	6

* The number of licensed trappers reflects the number of tribal members validating their off-reservation treaty harvesting permit for trapping, whether or not they set any traps or received any other trapping tags. In 1997 - 98 through 1999-2000 this number included Mille Lacs members trapping in Minnesota.

Minnesota

This was the third off-reservation treaty trapping season in the 1837 ceded territory of Minnesota. The 1999-2000 treaty trapping seasons were concurrent with those in Wisconsin.

Figure 2. Tribal fisher, otter and bobcat harvests in Wisconsin, 1992-1999.



FISHER HARVEST

Wisconsin

The off-reservation treaty fisher season began on November 1, 1999 and extended to March 31, 2000. During this 151 day period a total of 126 fishers were harvested off-reservation by tribal members (Table 2). This represented a decrease of 55 fishers from the 1998-99 harvest (181) (Table 1).

There has been some evidence that fisher abundance was stabilizing or declining slightly prior to 1997. After the over-harvest of 1997 - 98, population levels were lower than in the past years (WDNR population modeling, Robert Rolley, pers. commun.). However, more recent modeling indicated that the population recovered from this over-harvest because of the low harvest levels in 1998 - 99. Trappers continued to report that greater amounts of time were required to capture the same number of fishers compared to previous years.

Table 2. Off-reservation treaty fisher harvest as reported by registration station for the 1999-2000 season.

Registration Station	Males	Females	Totals
Bad River	7	6	13
Lac Courte Oreilles	37	20	57
Lac du Flambeau	3	0	3
Mille Lacs	0	0	0
Mole Lake	0	1	1
Red Cliff	21	24	45
St. Croix	3	4	7
Totals	71	55	126

Minnesota

There were no fishers taken in the 1837 ceded territory of Minnesota.

Table 3. Off-reservation treaty fisher harvest and quota levels reported by management unit and zone for the 1999-2000 season in Wisconsin.

ZONE	UNIT	TRIBAL QUOTA	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
A	2	100	0	7	7
	3		14	11	25
	5		8	8	16
	7		4	4	8
	8		3	4	7
	11		1	0	1
	15		1	0	1
	16		1	0	1
	17		8	1	9
	SUBTOTAL		40	35	75
B	13	100	10	3	13
	18		15	15	30
	19		1	0	1
	23		2	1	3
	SUBTOTAL		28	19	47
C	29B	125	2	0	2
	35		1	0	1
	SUBTOTAL		3	0	3
D	43	110	0	1	1
	SUBTOTAL		0	1	1
TOTAL		435	71	55	126

Tribal trappers harvested fisher in all of the four fisher trapping zones (Table 3, Figures 3 and 4). Tribal members harvested 75% of their quota in Zone A, 47% in Zone B, 3% in Zone C, <1% in Zone D and 29% of the overall quota. As in past, tribal harvest was concentrated in a few management units in each zone. These management units are popular units for other wildlife harvests (Gilbert 2000).

The sex ratio of the 1999-2000 harvest favored males (56%). Research suggests that when the sex ratio of harvested fishers is equal or skewed towards males the harvest rate may not be excessive. However, when the sex ratio of the harvest is skewed towards females an over-harvest may be occurring. In units 3 and 5 in 1998-99 56% of the harvest was female (Gilbert 1999). However during the 1999 - 2000 harvest no unit experienced a harvest sex ratio favoring females, thus alleviating the concern raised last year.

Table 4. Off-reservation treaty fisher harvest totals reported by county for the 1999-2000 season in Wisconsin.

County	Males	Females	Totals
Ashland	4	4	8
Bayfield	22	26	48
Burnett	5	4	9
Chippewa	2	1	3
Langlade	0	1	1
Polk	1	0	1
Rusk	12	13	25
Sawyer	22	6	28
Vilas	3	0	3
Totals	71	55	126

Tribal harvest of fisher was distributed among 9 counties (Table 4) with 38% of the harvest taken from Bayfield County. Bayfield County also has a relatively high harvest of deer and bears (Gilbert 2000) and has been the county of highest fisher harvest during all of the past fisher trapping seasons. During the past three trapping seasons fisher harvest has increased in Sawyer County from almost none to relatively high numbers. This increase is due to increased registration at Lac Courte Oreilles and presumably increased trapping effort.

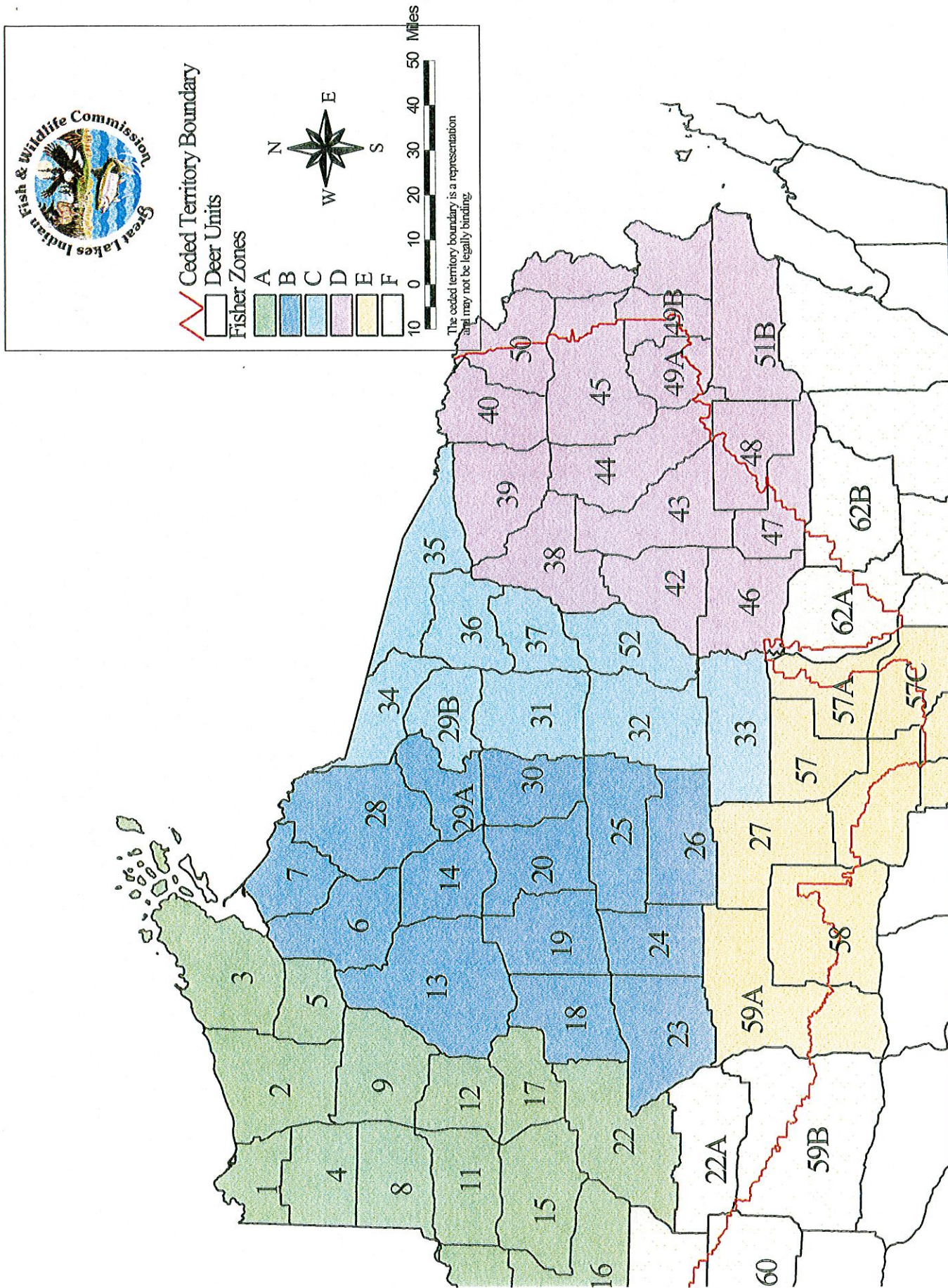


Figure 3. Location of fisher management zones, comprised of deer management units, in Wisconsin.

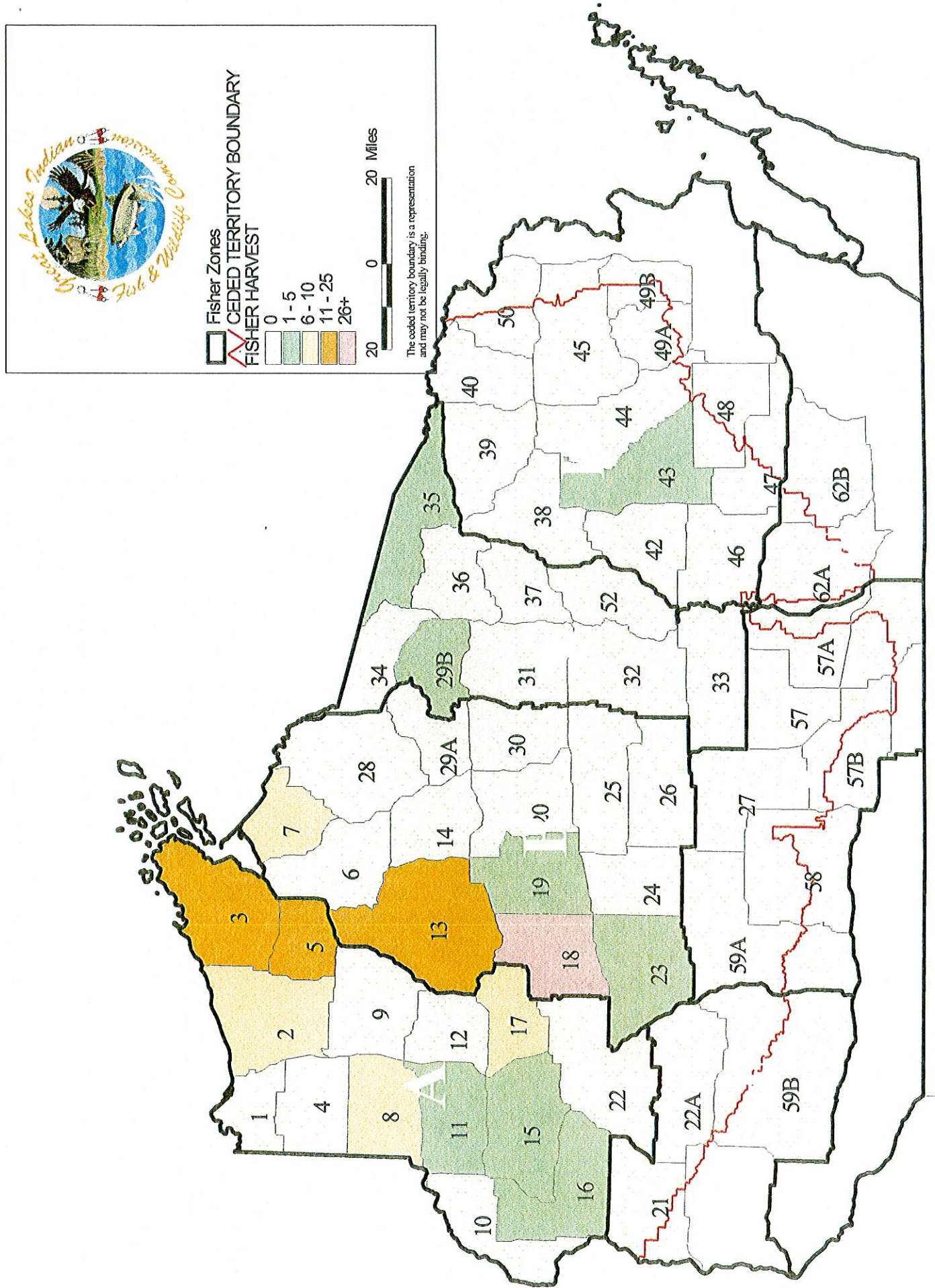


Figure 4. Distribution of tribal off-reservation treaty fisher harvest in the Wisconsin ceded territories during the 1999-2000 trapping season.

OTTER HARVEST

Wisconsin

Sixteen (16) otters were harvested off-reservation by tribal members during the 1999-2000 trapping season (Tables 5, 6 and 7), which was held concurrent with the fisher trapping season. This is fewer otters than were harvested during the previous season (32) (Table 1). No distinct patterns of harvest have been observed.

Table 5. Off-reservation treaty otter harvest as reported by registration station for the 1999-2000 season in Wisconsin.

Registration Station	Males	Females	Totals
Bad River	0	0	0
Lac Courte Oreilles	7	2	9
Lac du Flambeau	0	0	0
Mille Lacs	0	0	0
Mole Lake	0	0	0
Red Cliff	5	2	7
St. Croix	0	0	0
Totals	12	4	16

Minnesota

No otters were registered in the Minnesota portion of the 1837 ceded territory by tribal members.

Table 6. Off-reservation treaty otter harvest reported by management unit for the 1999-2000 season in Wisconsin.

Deer Management Unit	Males	Females	Totals
3	1	0	1
5	1	1	2
13	2	1	3
17	5	0	5
18	0	1	1
62B	3	1	4
Totals	12	4	16

Table 7. Off-reservation treaty otter harvest as reported by county for the 1999-2000 season in Wisconsin.

County	Males	Females	Totals
Bayfield	2	1	3
Sawyer	7	2	9
Shawano	3	1	4
Total	12	4	16

BOBCAT HARVEST

Wisconsin

Six (6) bobcats were harvested during the 1999-2000 off-reservation treaty trapping season, which began October 1, 1999 and extended through March 31, 2000 (Table 8). LCO registered 4 bobcats while Mole Lake and Lac du Flambeau registered 1 each.

Table 8. The off-reservation treaty bobcat harvest as reported by management units during the 1999-2000 trapping season.

UNIT	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
11	0	1	1
13	1	0	1
18	1	0	1
19	0	2	2
30	0	1	1
Total	2	4	6

Minnesota

No bobcats were harvested by tribal members in the Minnesota portion of the 1837 ceded territory.

LITERATURE CITED

- Gilbert, J. H. 1999. Fisher (ochig), otter (nigig), and bobcats (gidagaa-bizhiw) harvests during 1998 - 1999 in the 1837 and 1842 ceded territories in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission Admin. Report 99-12. July 1999.
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- Schrage, M. 2000. Furbearer Harvest. Memorandum. Fond du Lac Band. Minnesota.

