



**OCHIG (fisher), NIGIG (otter) AND
GIDAGAA-BIZHIW (bobcat) HARVESTS
DURING 2000 - 2001 IN THE 1837 AND
1842 CEDED TERRITORIES
IN WISCONSIN AND MINNESOTA**

by

Jonathan Gilbert
GLIFWC
Wildlife Section Leader

Admin Report 01-09
July 2001

**Great Lakes Indian Fish
& Wildlife Commission**

P. O. Box 9
Odanah, WI 54861
(715) 682 - 6619

OCHIG (fisher), NIGIG (otter) AND GIDAGAA-BIZHIW (bobcat) HARVESTS DURING 2000 - 2001 IN THE 1837 AND 1842 CEDED TERRITORIES IN WISCONSIN AND MINNESOTA

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide the results of the 2000 - 2001 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 (2001) but are included in totals in this report.

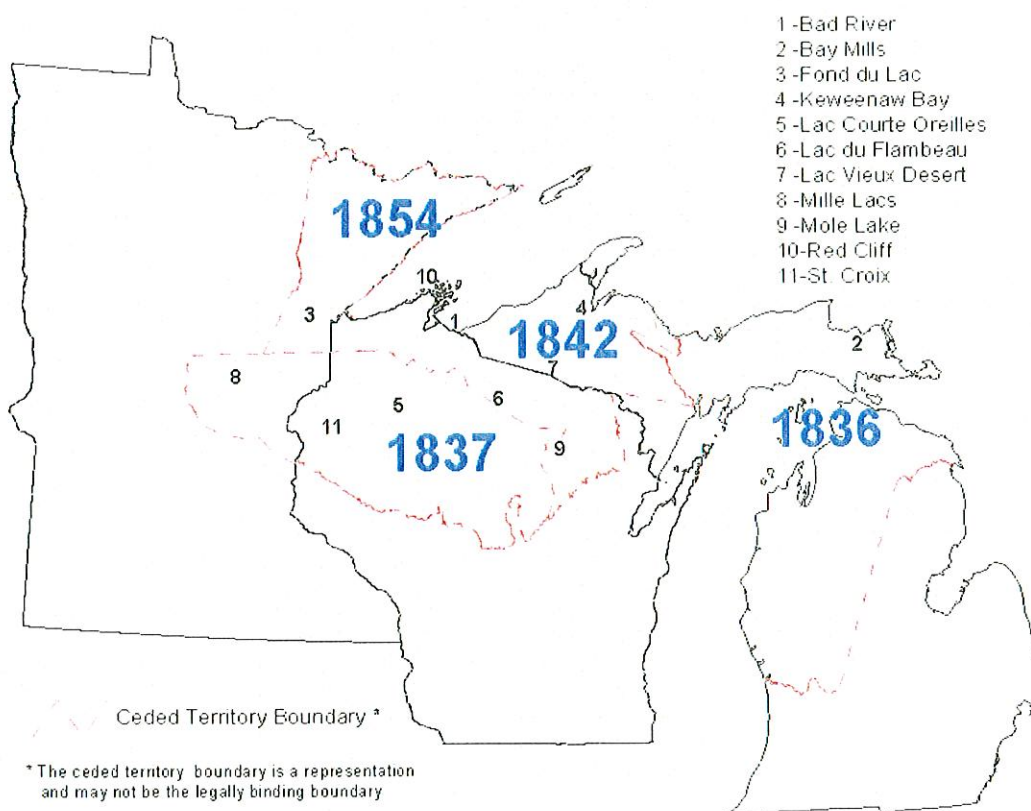


Figure 1. Location of GLIFWC member tribes in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Regulations and Annual 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 (2000 - 2001) fewer tribal members obtained a trapping permit than in 1999 - 2000 (Table 1 and Figure 2). The harvests of fisher, otter and bobcat all have declined in each of the past 4 seasons. 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 2000 - 2001.

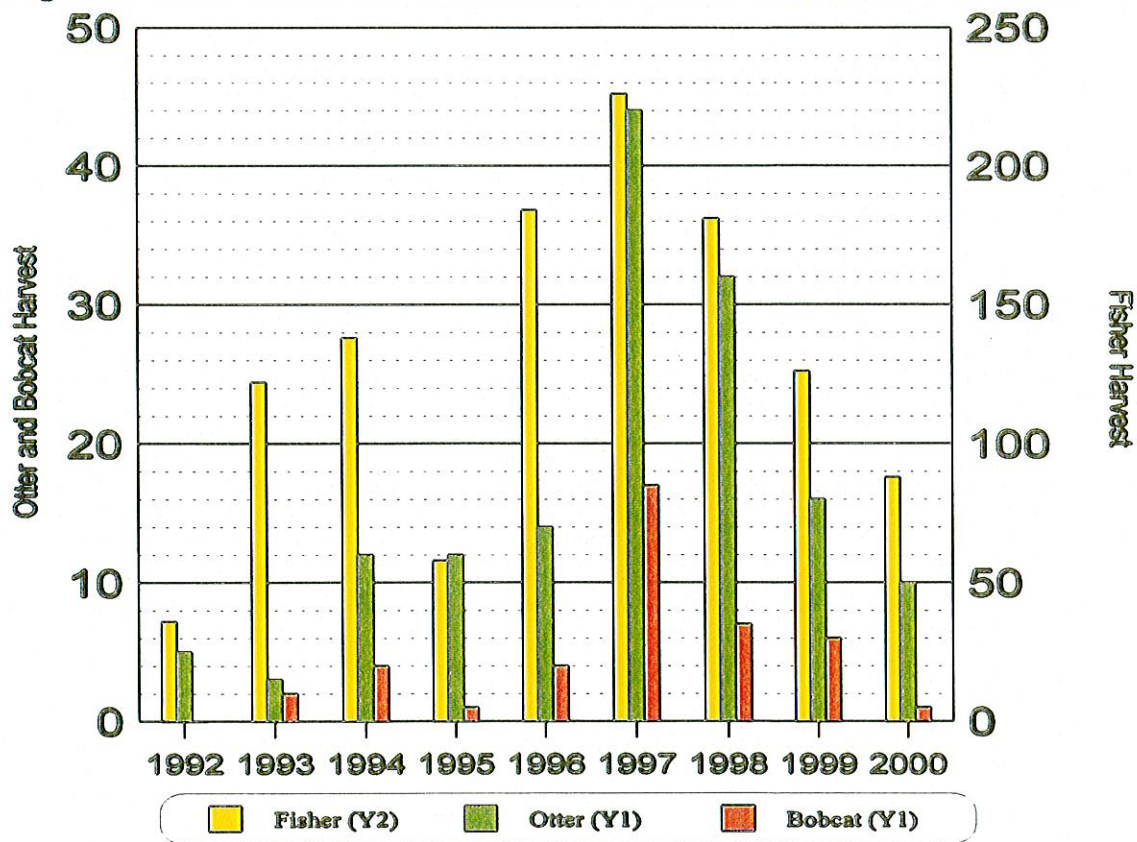
Season	Number of Licensed Trappers*	Fisher Harvest	Otter Harvest	Bobcat Harvest
1990 - 1991	408	24	4	0
1991 - 1992	248	27	4	0
1992 - 1993	512	36	5	0
1993 - 1994	704	122	3	2
1994 - 1995	736	138	12	4
1995 - 1996	966	58	12	1
1996 - 1997	1,125	184	14	4
1997-1998	1,449	226	44	17
1998-1999	1,570	181	32	7
1999 - 2000	1,539	126	16	6
2000 - 2001	1,125	88	10	1

* 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 2000 - 2001 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 2000 - 2001 treaty trapping seasons were concurrent with those in Wisconsin.

Figure 2. Tribal fisher, otter and bobcat harvests in Wisconsin, 1992-2000.



FISHER HARVEST

Wisconsin

The off-reservation treaty fisher season began on November 1, 2000 and extended to March 31, 2001. During this 151 day period a total of 88 fishers were harvested off-reservation by tribal members (Table 2). This represented a decrease of 38 fishers from the 1999 - 2000 harvest (126) (Table 1).

There has been some evidence that fisher abundance was stabilizing or declining slightly subsequent 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 and beyond. 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 2000 - 2001 season.

Registration Station	Males	Females	Totals
Bad River	13	13	26
Lac Courte Oreilles	24	21	45
Lac du Flambeau	1	0	1
Mille Lacs	0	0	0
Mole Lake	0	0	0
Red Cliff	8	8	16
St. Croix	0	0	0
Totals	46	42	88

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 2000 - 2001 season in Wisconsin.

ZONE	UNIT	TRIBAL QUOTA	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
A	3	115	3	7	10
	5		13	13	26
	7		5	1	6
	12		1	0	1
	17		2	1	3
	SUBTOTAL		24	22	46
B	13	150	6	4	10
	18		11	13	24
	23		4	3	7
	SUBTOTAL		21	20	41
C	29B	125	1	0	1
	SUBTOTAL		1	0	1
D	SUBTOTAL	110	0	0	0
E	SUBTOTAL	10	0	0	0
TOTAL		510	46	42	88

Tribal trappers harvested fisher in 3 of the 5 fisher trapping zones (Table 3, Figures 3 and 4). Tribal members harvested 40% of their quota in Zone A, 27% in Zone B, <1% in Zone C, 0% in Zones D and E and 17% 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 2000 - 2001 harvest favored males (52%). 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 18 the majority of the harvest was female. However because the harvest was low or the difference minor concern about excessive harvest is not warranted.

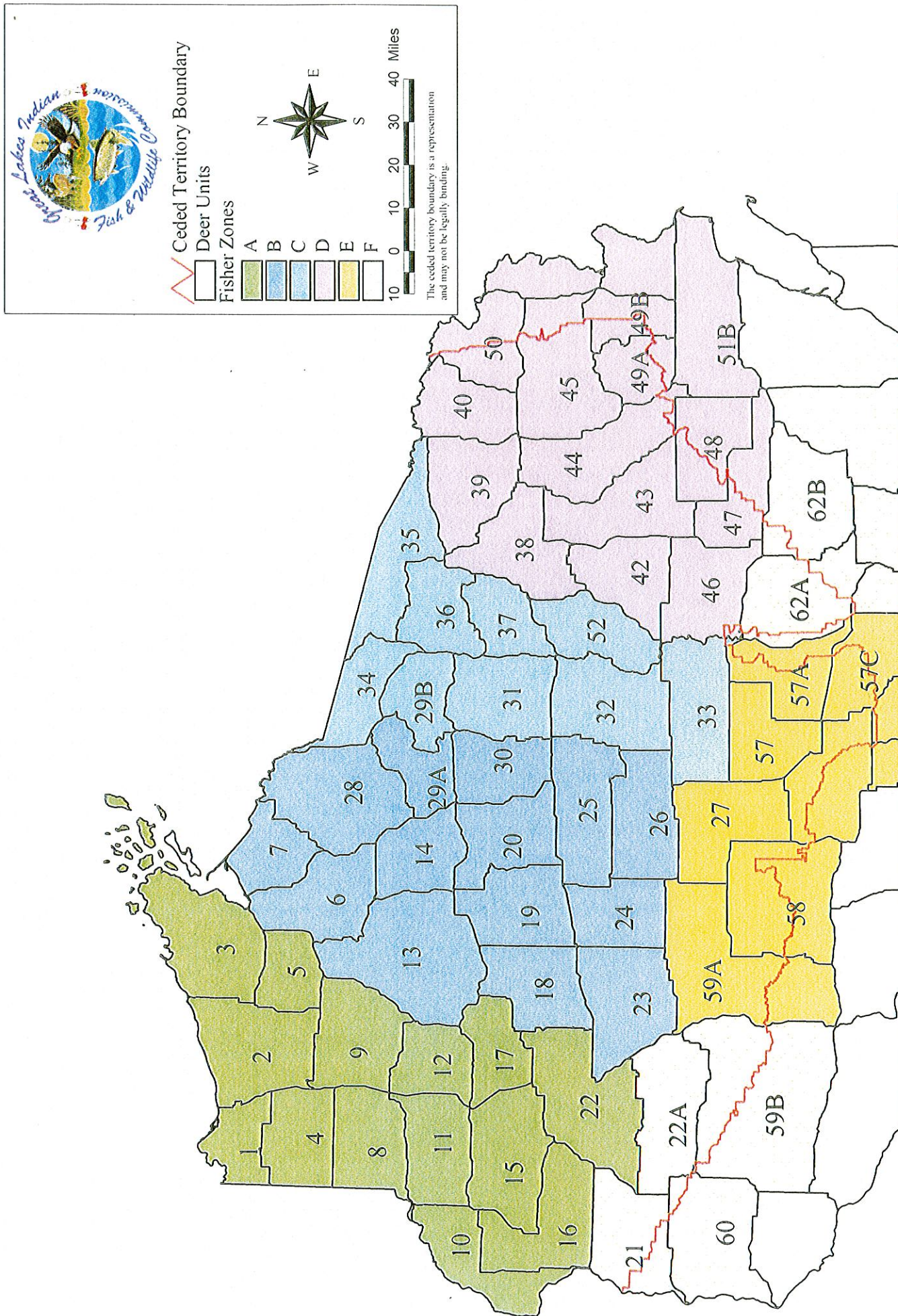


Figure 3. Location of fisher management zones, comprised of deer management units, in Wisconsin.

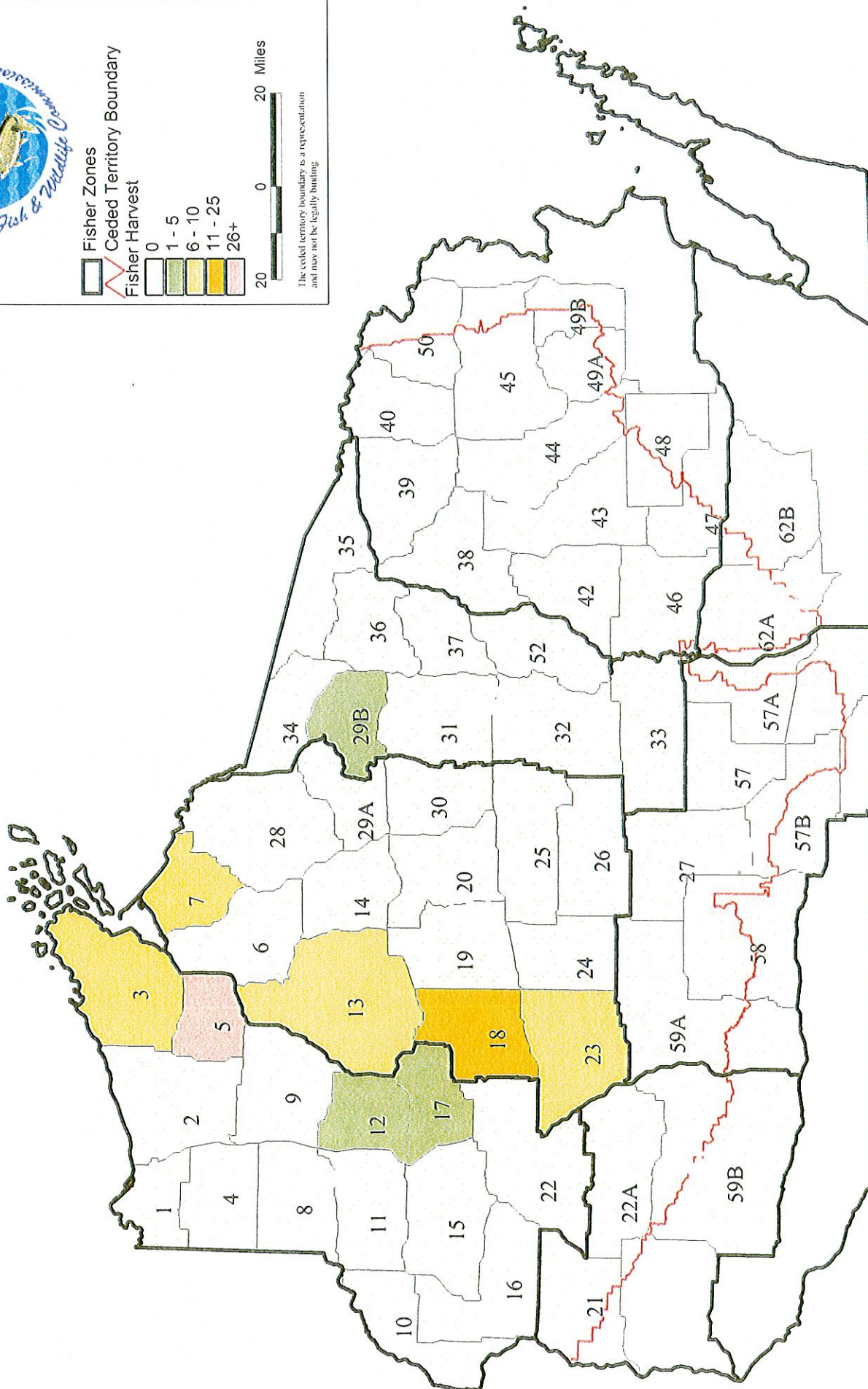
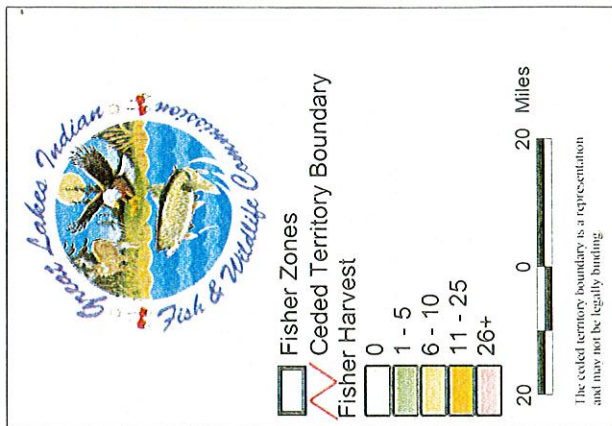


Figure 4. Distribution of tribal off-reservation treaty fisher harvest in the Wisconsin ceded territories during the 2000 - 2001 trapping season.

Table 4. Off-reservation treaty fisher harvest totals reported by county for the 2000 - 2001 season in Wisconsin.

County	Males	Females	Totals
Ashland	5	1	6
Bayfield	16	20	36
Chippewa	4	3	7
Rusk	9	13	22
Sawyer	10	5	15
Vilas	1	0	1
Washburn	1	0	1
Totals	46	42	88

Tribal harvest of fisher was distributed among 7 counties (Table 4) with 41% of the harvest taken from Bayfield County. Bayfield County also has a relatively high harvest of deer and bears (Gilbert 2001) and has been the county of highest fisher harvest during all of the past fisher trapping seasons. During the past four trapping seasons fisher harvest has increased in Sawyer and Rusk counties from almost none to relatively high numbers. This increase is due to increased registration at Lac Courte Oreilles and presumably increased trapping effort.

OTTER HARVEST

Wisconsin

Ten (10) otters were harvested off-reservation by tribal members during the 2000 - 2001 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 6 seasons (Table 1). No distinct patterns of harvest have been observed.

Table 5. Off-reservation treaty otter harvest as reported by registration station for the 2000 - 2001 season in Wisconsin.

Registration Station	Males	Females	Totals
Bad River	2	0	2
Lac Courte Oreilles	3	3	6
Lac du Flambeau	0	0	0
Mille Lacs	0	0	0
Mole Lake	0	0	0
Red Cliff	1	1	2
St. Croix	0	0	0
Totals	6	4	10

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 2000 - 2001 season in Wisconsin.

Deer Management Unit	Males	Females	Totals
3	1	1	2
7	2	0	2
13	1	2	3
18	1	1	2
23	1	0	1
Totals	6	4	10

Table 7. Off-reservation treaty otter harvest as reported by county for the 2000 - 2001 season in Wisconsin.

County	Males	Females	Totals
Ashland	2	0	2
Bayfield	1	1	2
Chippewa	1	0	1
Rusk	1	1	2
Sawyer	1	2	3
Total	6	4	10

BOBCAT HARVEST

Wisconsin

Only 1 bobcat was harvested during the 2000 - 2001 off-reservation treaty trapping season, which began October 1, 1999 and extended through March 31, 2000 (Table 8). This bobcat was registered at LCO and was harvested in deer management unit 12 in Washburn County.

Minnesota

One bobcat was harvested by tribal members in the Minnesota portion of the 1837 ceded territory. This bobcat was registered at Fond du Lac and was harvested from deer permit area 157 (Schrage 2001).

LITERATURE CITED

- Gilbert, J. H. 2001 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 01 - 04. April 2001.
- Gilbert, J. H. 2001. Results of the 2000 off reservation treaty deer (wawashkishi) and bear (makwa) hunting seasons. Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission Admin. Report 01-06. April 2001.
- Schrage, M. 2001. Furbearer Harvest. Memorandum. Fond du Lac Band. Minnesota.

