



**OCHIG (fisher), NIGIG (otter)  
AND GIDAGAA-BIZHIW (bobcat)  
HARVESTS DURING 2001 - 2002  
IN THE 1837 AND 1842 CEDED TERRITORIES  
IN WISCONSIN AND MINNESOTA**

by

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## OCHIG (fisher), NIGIG (otter) AND GIDAGAA-BIZHIW (bobcat) HARVESTS DURING 2001 - 2002 IN THE 1837 AND 1842 CEDED TERRITORIES IN WISCONSIN AND MINNESOTA

### Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide the results of the 2001 - 2002 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 (2002) but are included in totals in this report.

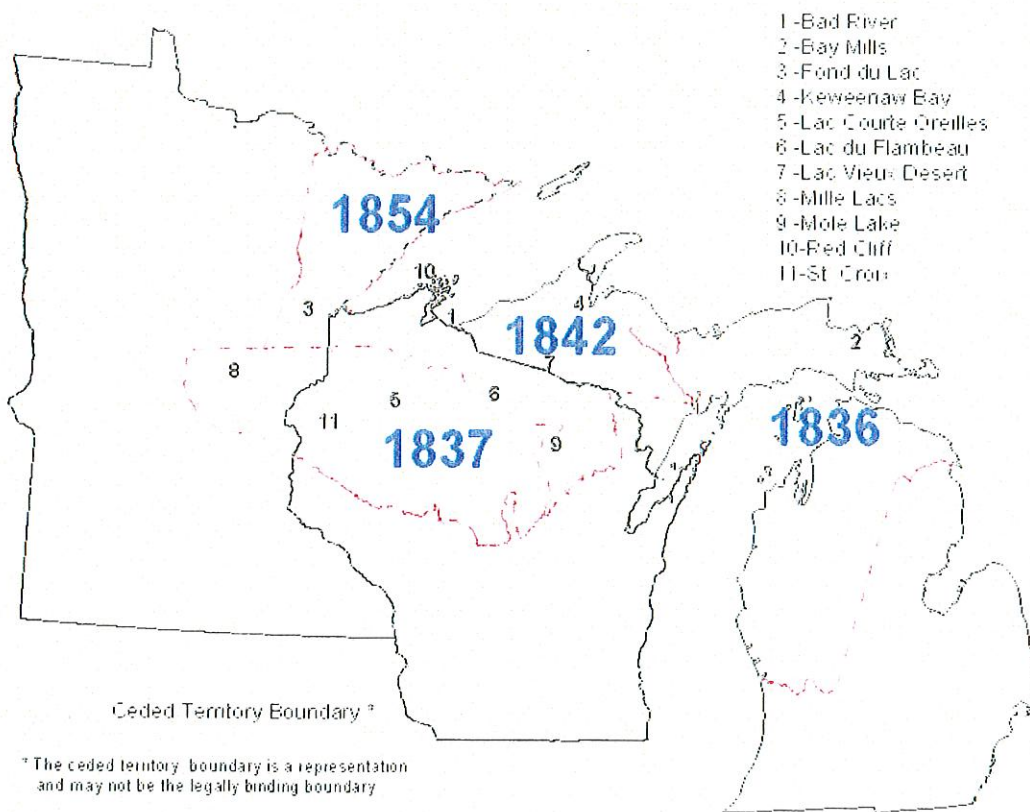


Figure 1. Location of GLIFWC member tribes in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota.

## 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 (2001 - 2002) fewer tribal members obtained a trapping permit than in 2000 - 2001 (Table 1 and Figure 2). However, the harvests of fisher, otter and bobcat all increased in 2001 - 2002 from the 2000 - 2001 levels (Gilbert 2001). The reasons for these increases are 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 1990 - 91 through 2001 - 2002.

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
2001 - 2002	1,065	182	35	6

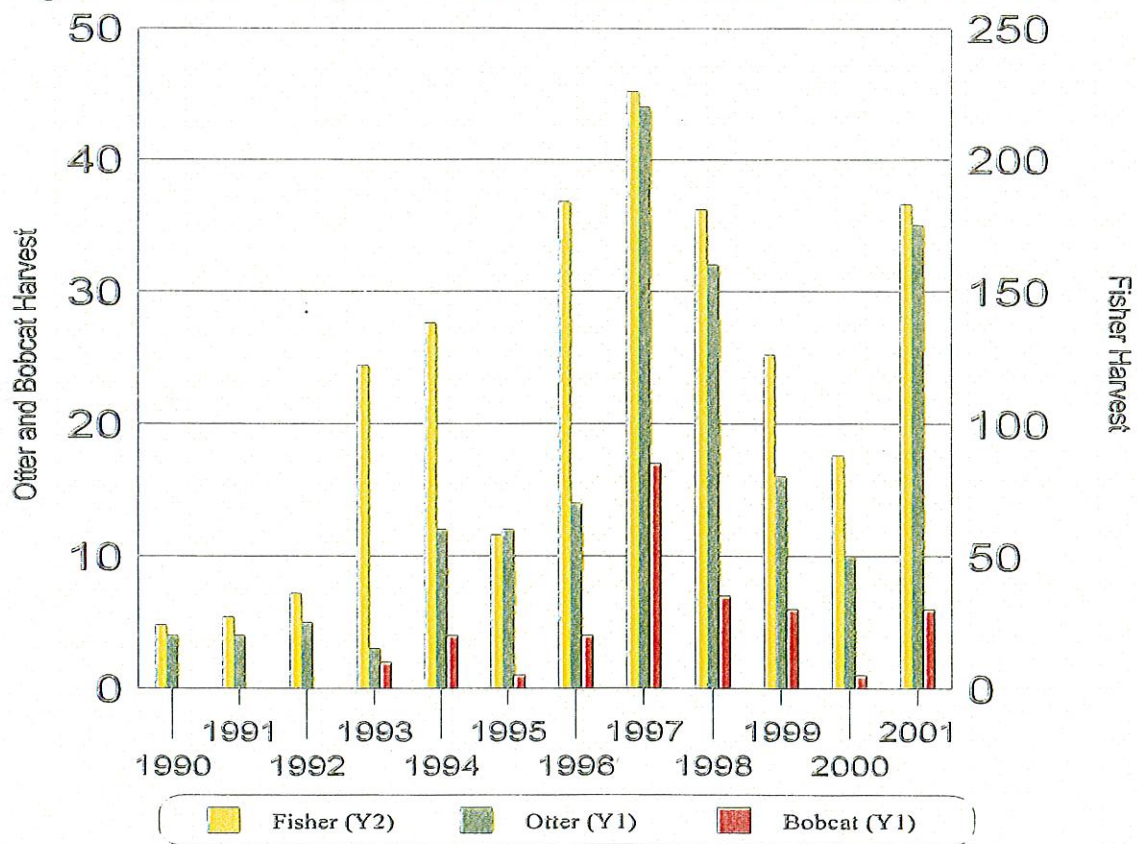
\* The number of licensed trappers reflects the number of tribal members validating their off-reservation treaty harvesting permit for trapping, whether or not they set any traps or received any other trapping tags. From 1997 - 98 through 2001 - 2002 this number included Mille Lacs members trapping in Minnesota.



## Minnesota

This was the fourth 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, 1990-2001.



## FISHER HARVEST

### Wisconsin

The off-reservation treaty fisher season began on November 1, 2001 and extended to March 31, 2002. During this 151 day period a total of 182 fishers were harvested off-reservation by tribal members (Table 2). This represented an increase of 94 fishers from the 2000 - 2001 harvest (88) (Table 1).

In 2001 the State of Tennessee requested live fishers from Wisconsin as part of a restoration effort. Red Cliff tribal trappers worked cooperatively with GLIFWC, Wisconsin DNR and Tennessee Wildlife Resource Division to live-trap 20 fishers from Unit 3 in Bayfield County. There were 10 females and 10 males which were captured and, after a health inspection, were flown to Tennessee and released. No fishers died as a result of this capture and movement.

There has been some evidence that fisher abundance was stabilizing or declining slightly subsequent to 1997. After the over-harvest by state trappers 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 actions by the state to control its harvest in 1998 - 99 and beyond. After the 1997 - 98 season trappers reported that greater amounts of time were required to capture the same number of fishers compared to previous years. This trend continued in 2001 with one exception; LCO trappers reported large numbers of fishers and relative ease in their capture.

Table 2. Off-reservation treaty fisher harvest as reported by registration station for the 2001-2002 season.

Registration Station	Males	Females	Totals
Bad River	3	4	7
Lac Courte Oreilles	68	66	134
Lac du Flambeau	2	1	3
Mille Lacs	0	0	0
Mole Lake	1	0	1
Red Cliff	8	6	14
St. Croix	7	16	23
Totals	89	93	182

### 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 2001 - 2002 season in Wisconsin.

ZONE	UNIT	TRIBAL QUOTA	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
A	1	100	1	1	2
	2		0	3	3
	3		9	5	14
	4		1	0	1
	5		0	2	2
	8		6	12	18
	10		1	1	2
	11		0	3	3
	12		1	2	3
	15		1	0	1
	17		8	9	17
	SUBTOTAL		28	38	66
B	6	100	2	0	2
	13		16	10	26
	18		21	32	53
	19		19	11	30
	23		2	2	4
	SUBTOTAL		60	55	115
C	SUBTOTAL	75	0	0	0
D	43	75	1	0	1
	SUBTOTAL		1	0	1
E	SUBTOTAL	10	0	0	0
TOTAL		360	89	93	182

Tribal trappers harvested fisher in 3 of the 5 fisher trapping zones (Table 3, Figures 3 and 4). Tribal members harvested 66% of their quota in Zone A, 115% in Zone B, 0% in Zone C, 1% in Zone D, 0% in Zone E and 50% of the overall quota. Tribal harvest was concentrated in a few management units in each zone, however, the list of units harvested in Zone A increased from 5 in 2000 to 11 units in 2001. Many of these management units are popular units for other wildlife harvests (Gilbert 2002).

The sex ratio of the 2001 - 2002 harvest slightly favored females (51%). 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 Zone A the majority of the harvest was female. However because the harvest was low and the difference minor, concern about excessive harvest is not warranted.

Table 4. Off-reservation treaty fisher harvest totals reported by county for the 2001 - 2002 season in Wisconsin.

County	Males	Females	Totals
Ashland	2	0	2
Bayfield	9	10	19
Burnett	7	16	23
Chippewa	2	2	4
Douglas	2	1	3
Forest	1	0	1
Rusk	40	43	83
Sawyer	24	19	43
Washburn	2	2	4
Totals	89	93	182

Tribal harvest of fisher was distributed among 9 counties (Table 4) with 46% of the harvest taken from Rusk County. Bayfield County has been the county of highest fisher harvest during all of the past fisher trapping seasons. However, in 2001 a significant increase in harvest occurred in both Rusk and Sawyer Counties. This increase is due to increased registration at Lac Courte Oreilles and presumably increased trapping effort.



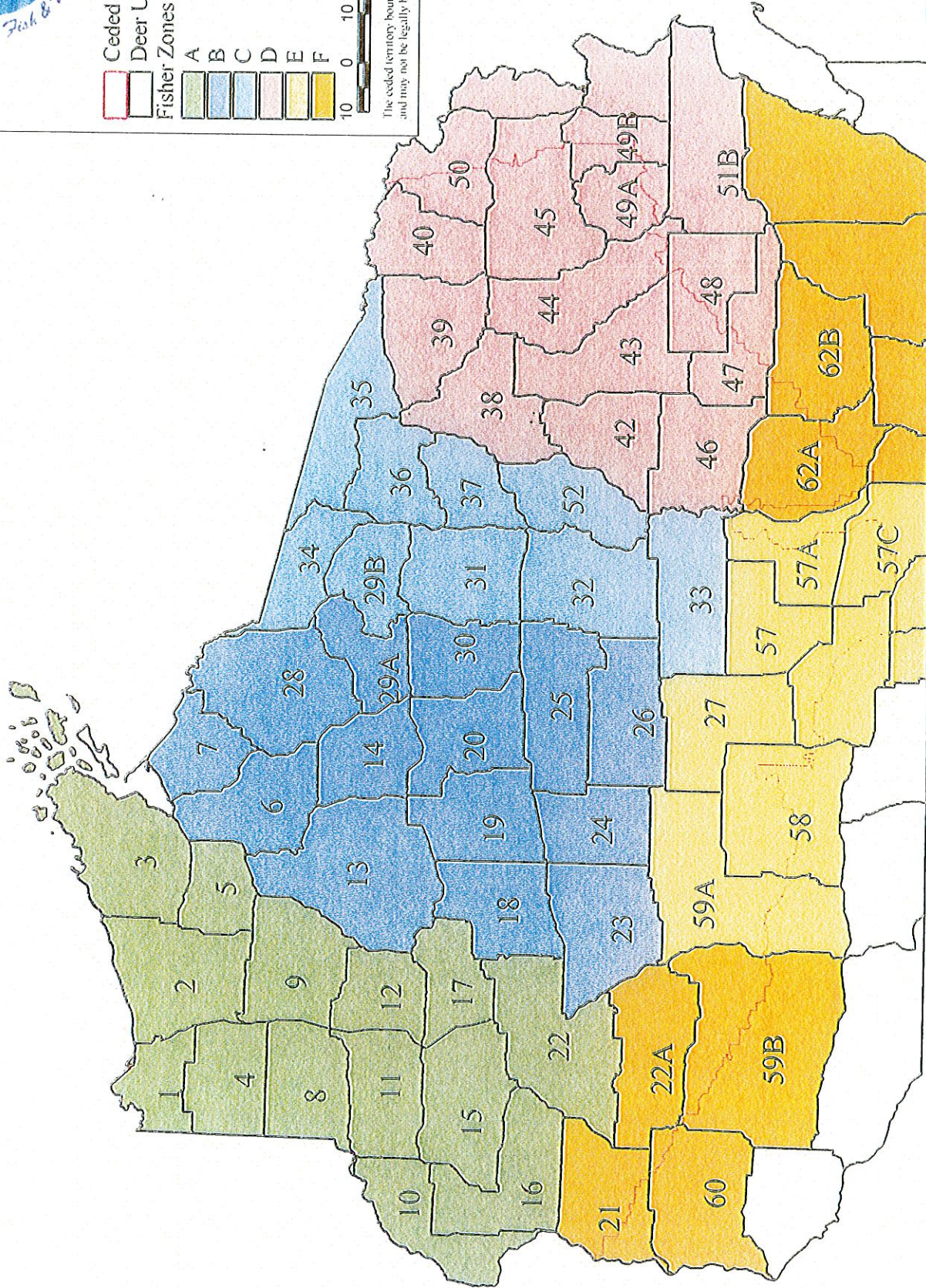
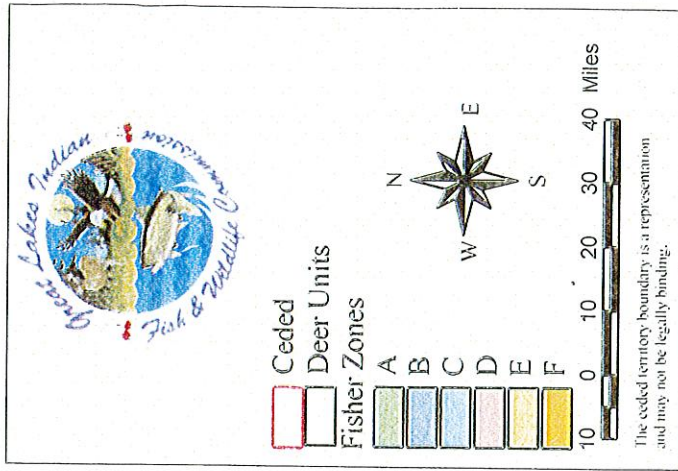


Figure 3. Location of fisher management zones, comprised of deer management units, in Wisconsin.





Ceded Territory

Fisher Harvest

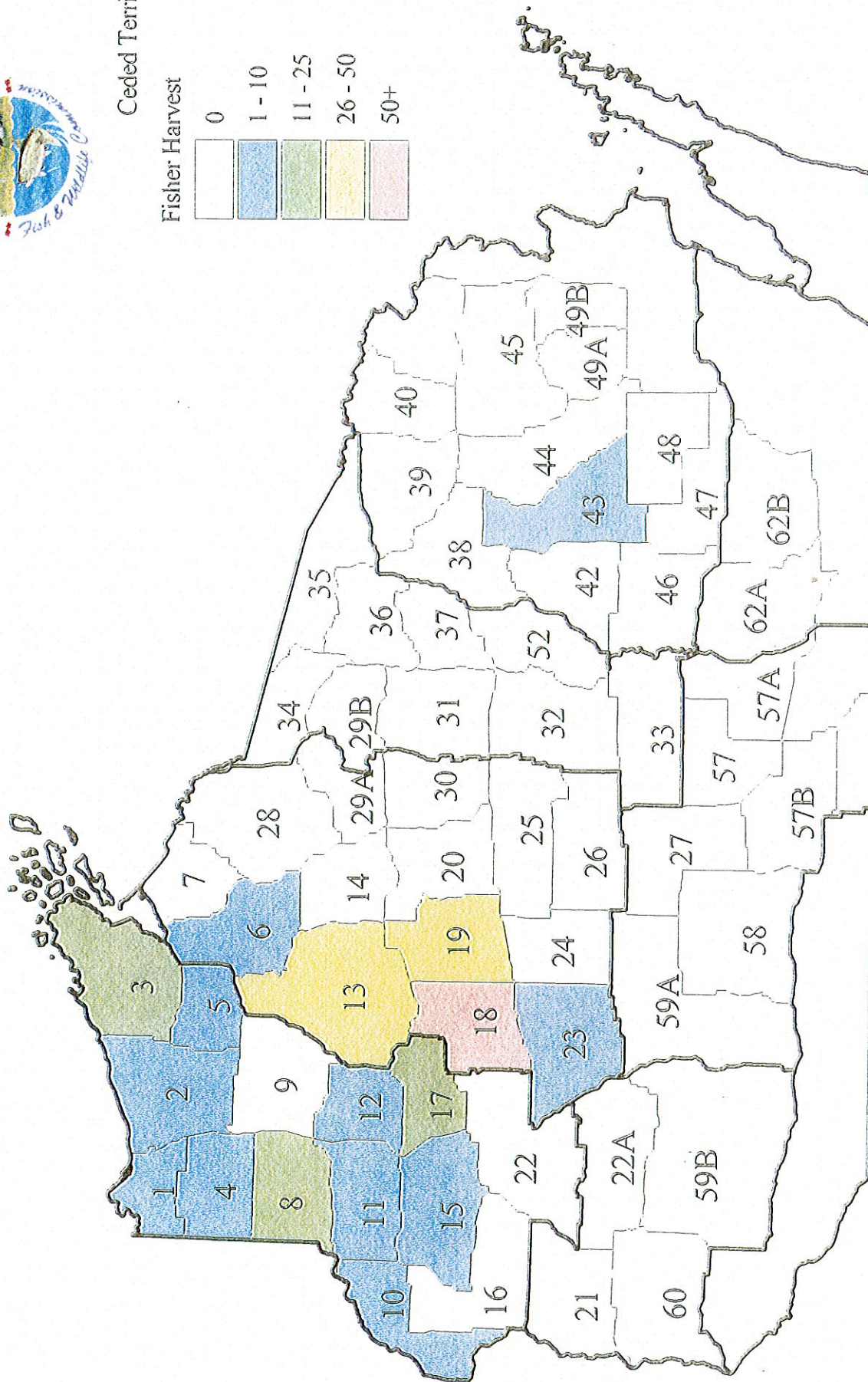
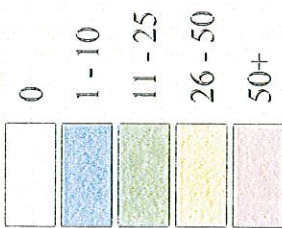


Figure 4. Distribution of tribal off-reservation treaty fisher harvest in the Wisconsin ceded territories during the 2001 - 2002 trapping season.

## OTTER HARVEST

### Wisconsin

Thirty five (35) otters were harvested off-reservation by tribal members during the 2001 - 2002 trapping season (Tables 5, 6 and 7), which was held concurrent with the fisher trapping season. This was the highest number of otters harvested since 1997 (Table 1). No distinct patterns of harvest have been observed.

Table 5. Off-reservation treaty otter harvest as reported by registration station for the 2001 - 2002 season in Wisconsin.

Registration Station	Males	Females	Totals
Bad River	3	1	4
Lac Courte Oreilles	18	9	27
Lac du Flambeau	0	0	0
Mille Lacs	0	0	0
Mole Lake	0	0	0
Red Cliff	4	0	4
St. Croix	0	0	0
Totals	25	10	35

### 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 2001 - 2002 season in Wisconsin.

Deer Management Unit	Males	Females	Totals
3	4	0	4
5	1	1	2
6	2	0	2
12	3	6	9
13	5	1	6
17	4	0	4
18	5	2	7
19	1	0	1
Totals	25	10	35

Table 7. Off-reservation treaty otter harvest as reported by county for the 2001 - 2002 season in Wisconsin.

County	Males	Females	Totals
Ashland	2	0	2
Bayfield	5	1	6
Rusk	5	2	7
Sawyer	10	1	11
Washburn	3	6	9
Total	25	10	35



## BOBCAT HARVEST

### Wisconsin

There were 6 bobcats harvested during the 2001 - 2002 off-reservation treaty trapping season, which began October 1, 2001 and extended through March 31, 2002 (Tables 8, 9 and 10).

Table 8. Off-reservation treaty bobcat harvest as reported by registration station for the 2001 - 2002 season in Wisconsin.

Registration Station	Males	Females	Total
Bad River	1	0	1
Lac Courte Oreilles	3	1	4
Lac du Flambeau	0	0	0
Mille Lacs	0	0	0
Mole Lake	0	0	0
Red Cliff	0	0	0
St. Croix	1	0	1
Total	5	1	6

Table 9. Off-reservation treaty bobcat harvest reported by management unit for the 2001 - 2002 season in Wisconsin.

Deer Management Unit	Males	Females	Total
6	1	0	1
8	1	0	1
13	1	0	1
18	0	1	1
28	2	0	2
Total	5	1	6

Table 10. Off-reservation treaty bobcat harvest as reported by county for the 2001 - 2002 season in Wisconsin.

County	Males	Females	Total
Ashland	1	0	1
Burnett	1	0	1
Iron	2	0	2
Rusk	0	1	1
Sawyer	1	0	1
Total	5	1	6

#### Minnesota

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

## LITERATURE CITED

- Gilbert, J. H. 2001 Fisher (ochig), otter (nigig), and bobcats (gidagaa-bizhiw) harvests during 2000 - 2001 in the 1837 and 1842 ceded territories in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission Admin. Report 01 - 04. April 2001.
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- Schrage, M. 2002. Furbearer Harvest. Memorandum. Fond du Lac Band. Minnesota.