



**OCHIG (fisher), NIGIG (otter)
AND GIDAGAA-BIZHIW (bobcat)
HARVESTS DURING 2002 - 2003
IN THE 1837 AND 1842 CEDED TERRITORIES
IN WISCONSIN AND MINNESOTA**

by

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide the results of the 2002 - 2003 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 (2003) but are included in totals in this report.

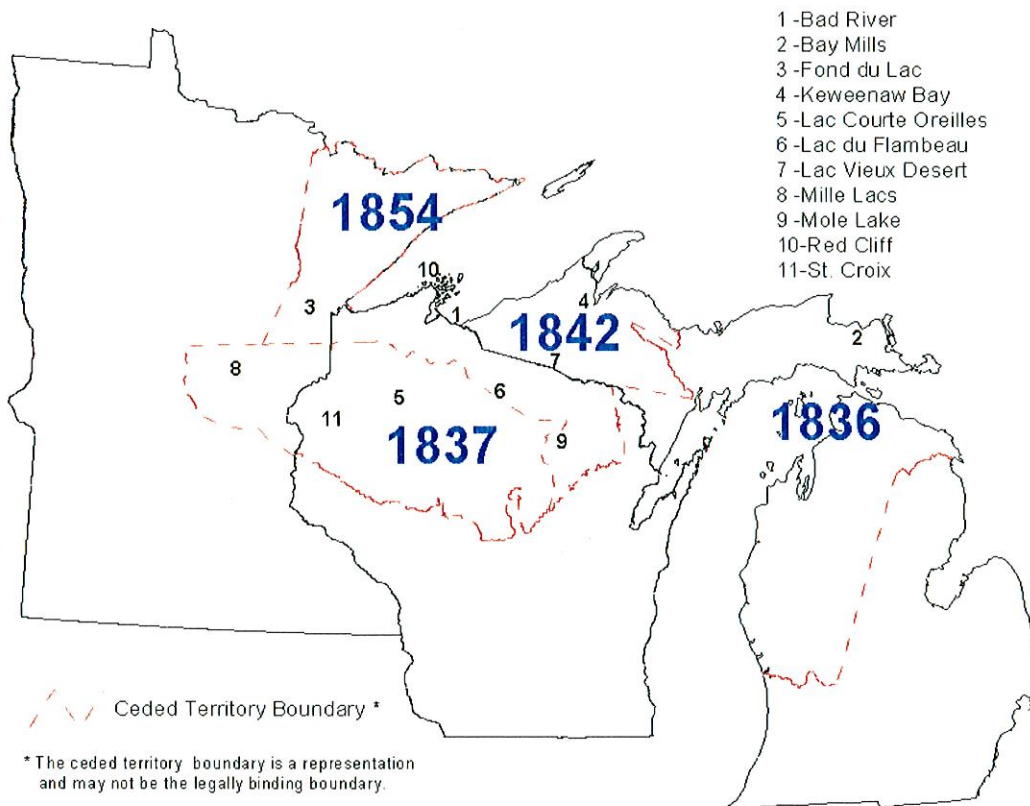


Figure 1. Location of GLIFWC member tribes in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota.

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 (2002 - 2003) fewer tribal members obtained a trapping permit than in 2001 - 2002 (Table 1 and Figure 2). However, the harvests of fisher and bobcat increased in 2002 - 2003 from the 2001 - 2002 levels, while otter harvest declined (Gilbert 2001).

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 2002 - 2003.

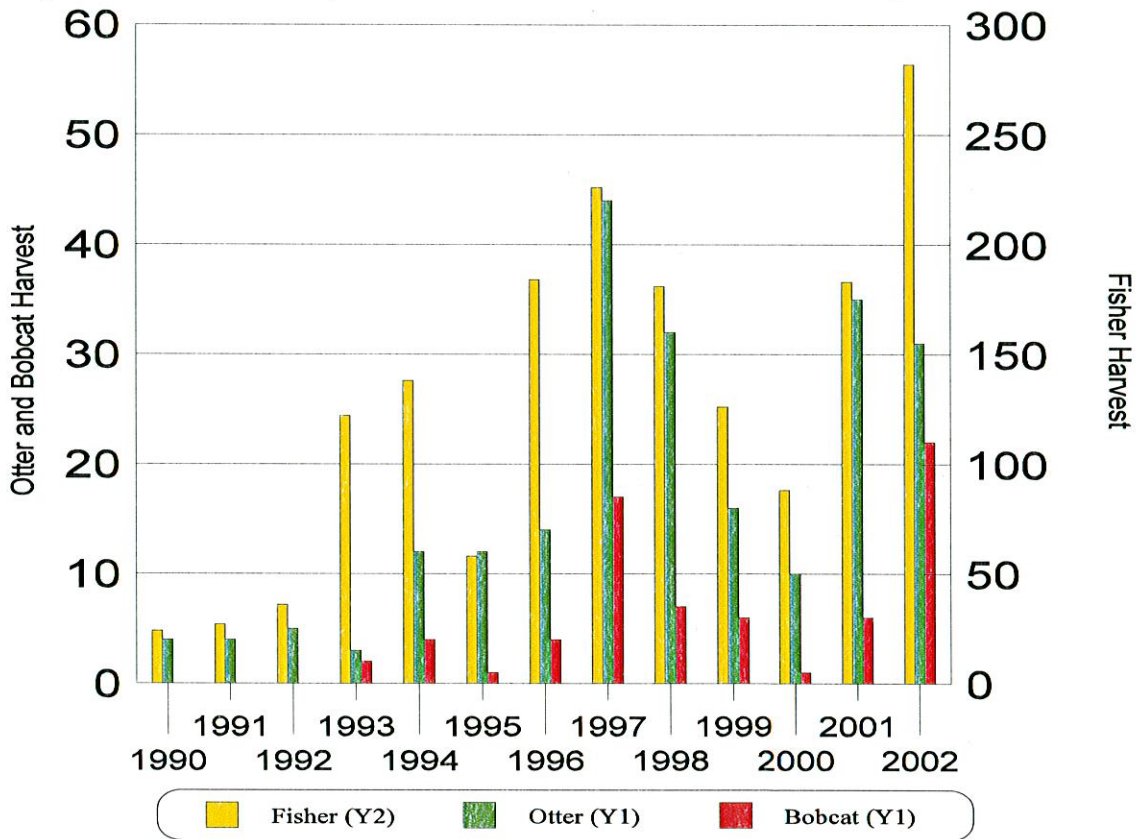
Season	Number of Licensed Trappers*	Fisher Harvest	Otter Harvest	Bobcat Harvest
1990 - 1991	408	24	4	0
1991 - 1992	248	27	4	0
1992 - 1993	512	36	5	0
1993 - 1994	704	122	3	2
1994 - 1995	736	138	12	4
1995 - 1996	966	58	12	1
1996 - 1997	1,125	184	14	4
1997-1998	1,449	226	44	17
1998-1999	1,570	181	32	7
1999 - 2000	1,539	126	16	6
2000 - 2001	1,125	88	10	1
2001 - 2002	1,065	182	35	6
2002 - 2003	1,013	282	31	22

* 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 2002 - 2003 this number included Mille Lacs members trapping in Minnesota.

Minnesota

This was the fifth off-reservation treaty trapping season in the 1837 ceded territory of Minnesota. The 2002 - 2003 treaty trapping seasons were concurrent with those in Wisconsin.

Figure 2. Tribal fisher, otter and bobcat harvests in Wisconsin, 1990-2002.



FISHER HARVEST

Wisconsin

The off-reservation treaty fisher season began on November 1, 2002 and extended to March 31, 2003. During this 151 day period a total of 282 fishers were harvested off-reservation by tribal members (Table 2). This represented an increase of 100 fishers from the 2001 - 2002 harvest (182) (Table 1).

In 2002 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 12 females and 8 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. These fishers were not counted against any tribal quota.

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.

Table 2. Off-reservation treaty fisher harvest as reported by registration station for the 2002 - 2003 season.

Registration Station	Males	Females	Totals
Bad River	47	34	81
Lac Courte Oreilles	66	49	115
Lac du Flambeau	7	4	11
Mille Lacs	0	0	0
Mole Lake	7	2	9
Red Cliff	29	25	54
St. Croix	8	4	12
Totals	164	118	282

Minnesota

There were 7 fishers taken in the from Permit Area 159 in the 1837 ceded territory of Minnesota (Schrage 2003).

Table 3. Off-reservation treaty fisher harvest and quota levels reported by management unit and zone for the 2002 - 2003 season in Wisconsin.

ZONE	UNIT	TRIBAL QUOTA	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
A	3	150	44	47	91
	5		22	8	30
	8		6	1	7
	10		1	0	1
	11		2	3	5
	17		17	6	23
	SUBTOTAL		92	65	157
B	6	200	9	4	13
	7		1	0	1
	13		9	6	15
	18		32	28	60
	19		0	1	1
	23		7	8	15
	29A		0	1	1
	SUBTOTAL		58	48	106
C	29B	75	5	2	7
	37		1	1	2
	SUBTOTAL		6	3	9
D	39	75	2	0	2
	43		0	1	1
	44		5	1	6
	SUBTOTAL		7	2	9
E	SUBTOTAL	10	0	0	0
Unknown			1	0	1
TOTAL		510	164	118	282

Tribal trappers harvested fisher in 4 of the 5 fisher trapping zones (Table 3, Figures 3 and 4). Tribal members harvested 105% of their quota in Zone A, 53% in Zone B, 12% in Zone C, 12% in Zone D, 0% in Zone E and 55% of the overall quota. Tribal harvest was concentrated in a few management units in each zone. Many of these management units are popular units for other wildlife harvests (Gilbert 2002).

The sex ratio of the 2002 - 2003 harvest favored males (58%). 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 all zones the majority of the harvest was male.

Table 4. Off-reservation treaty fisher harvest totals reported by county for the 2002 - 2003 season in Wisconsin.

County	Males	Females	Totals
Ashland	6	1	7
Bayfield	71	58	129
Burnett	8	4	12
Chippewa	7	8	15
Forest	7	1	8
Langlade	0	1	1
Oneida	2	1	3
Rusk	32	29	61
Sawyer	26	12	38
Vilas	5	3	8
Totals	164	118	282

Tribal harvest of fisher was distributed among 10 counties (Table 4) with 46% of the harvest taken from Bayfield County. Rusk County was the county of highest fisher harvest during the 2001 - 2002 fisher trapping season (Gilbert 2002).

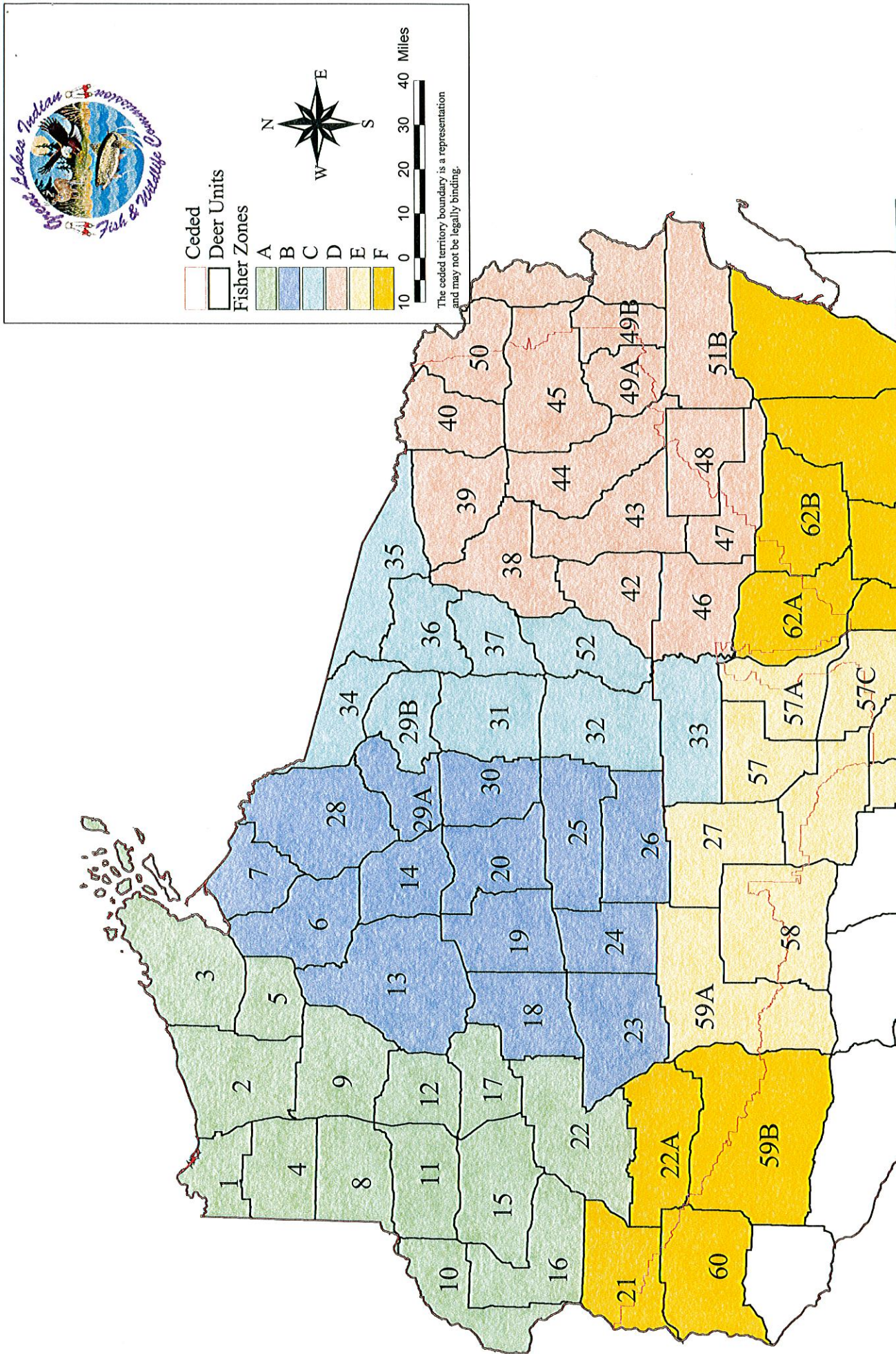


Figure 3. Location of fisher management zones, comprised of deer management units, in Wisconsin.



Ceded Territory

Fisher Harvest

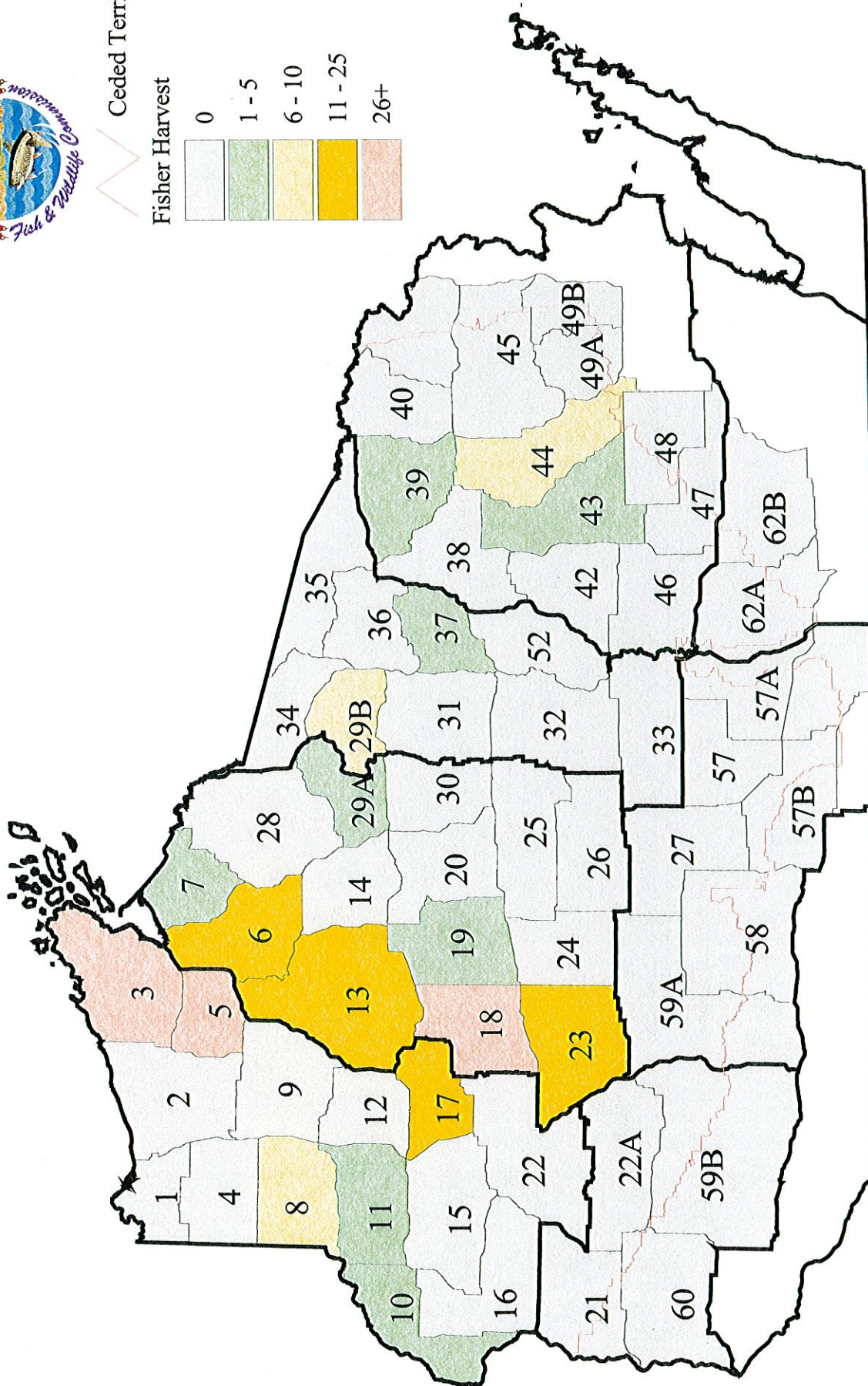
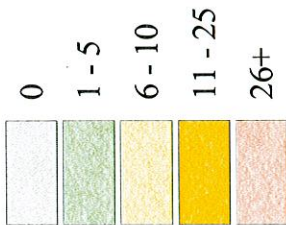


Figure 4. Distribution of tribal off-reservation treaty fisher harvest in the Wisconsin ceded territories during the 2002 - 2003 trapping season.

OTTER HARVEST

Wisconsin

Thirty one (31) otters were harvested off-reservation by tribal members during the 2002 - 2003 trapping season (Tables 5, 6 and 7), which was held concurrent with the fisher trapping season. This was the second 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 2002 - 2003 season in Wisconsin.

Registration Station	Males	Females	Totals
Bad River	7	4	11
Lac Courte Oreilles	9	9	18
Lac du Flambeau	0	0	0
Mille Laes	0	0	0
Mole Lake	0	0	0
Red Cliff	0	1	1
St. Croix	1	0	1
Totals	17	14	31

Minnesota

There was one otter registered in Permit Area 159 of the 1837 ceded territory by tribal members (Schrage 2003).

Table 6. Off-reservation treaty otter harvest reported by management unit for the 2002 - 2003 season in Wisconsin.

Deer Management Unit	Males	Females	Totals
3	2	2	4
5	1	1	2
6	3	0	3
7	0	1	1
11	1	0	1
12	3	3	6
13	3	0	3
17	1	3	4
18	2	3	5
28	1	1	2
Totals	17	14	31

Table 7. Off-reservation treaty otter harvest as reported by county for the 2002 - 2003 season in Wisconsin.

County	Males	Females	Totals
Ashland	3	0	3
Bayfield	3	4	7
Burnett	1	0	1
Iron	1	1	2
Sawyer	6	6	12
Washburn	3	3	6
Total	17	14	31

BOBCAT HARVEST

Wisconsin

There were 22 bobcats harvested during the 2002 - 2003 off-reservation treaty trapping season, which began October 1, 2002 and extended through March 31, 2003 (Tables 8, 9 and 10).

Table 8. Off-reservation treaty bobcat harvest as reported by registration station for the 2002 - 2003 season in Wisconsin.

Registration Station	Males	Females	Total
Bad River	1	3	4
Lac Courte Oreilles	2	6	8
Lac du Flambeau	1	0	1
Mille Lacs	0	0	0
Mole Lake	4	3	7
Red Cliff	0	2	2
St. Croix	0	0	0
Total	8	14	22

Table 9. Off-reservation treaty bobcat harvest reported by management unit for the 2002 - 2003 season in Wisconsin.

Deer Management Unit	Males	Females	Total
3	0	1	1
5	1	0	1
6	0	2	2
18	2	5	7
28	0	3	3
31	1	0	1
39	4	0	4
40	0	2	2
44	0	1	1
Total	8	14	22

Table 10. Off-reservation treaty bobcat harvest as reported by county for the 2002 - 2003 season in Wisconsin.

County	Males	Females	Total
Ashland	0	1	1
Bayfield	1	2	3
Forest	4	3	7
Iron	0	3	3
Oneida	1	0	1
Rusk	2	5	7
Total	8	14	22

Minnesota

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

LITERATURE CITED

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