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Study XV: Wildlife Harvests

Job No. 2: Fur harvest survey, 1987-88

By

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JOB COMPLETION REPORT

SURVEYS AND INVESTIGATIONS PROJECTS

STATE OF ILLINOIS

PROJECT NO. W-49-R-35

STUDY XV: Wildlife Harvests

JOB NO. 2: Fur harvest survey, 1987-88

ABSTRACT: The Illinois Department of Conservation licensed 250 individual fur buyers (230 residents; 20 non-residents) during 1987-88, a 1.6% decrease from 1986-87. The number of trapping licenses issued was estimated at 12,397, up 9.7%. A preliminary estimate indicated the number of raccoon hunters increased 2.9% to 35,081.

Reports required of all licensed fur buyers were used to determine the annual furbearer harvest and its value to fur-takers during the 1987-88 season. Based on a 99.60% response, the total harvest of the 10 open season furbearers was estimated at 638,032 pelts, a decrease of 15.3% from 1986-87. Total value of the harvest decreased 30.3% to \$5,620,222.70. Muskrats (*Ondatra zibethicus*) and raccoons (*Procyon lotor*) were the two most important species accounting for 87.64% of the total pelt harvest and 86.77% of its value. The harvest of 3 species increased and 7 decreased compared with the previous season. The harvest fluctuations for muskrat, raccoon, and possibly coyote (*Canis latrans*) were influenced by population changes. Other harvest changes except for striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) and weasel (*Mustela frenata*, *M. nivalis*) seemed to be the result of a decrease in harvest pressure associated with lower pelt prices and poorer weather-related harvest conditions compared with the 1986-87 season.

The following table summarizes the 1987-88 statewide harvest:

Species	Estimated harvest	Average pelt price per pelt	Estimated total value to fur-takers
Muskrat	297,737	\$ 4.00	\$ 1,190,948.00
Mink	14,009	\$23.05	\$ 322,907.45
Raccoon	261,418	\$14.10	\$ 3,685,993.80
Opossum	35,749	\$ 1.00	\$ 35,749.00
Red fox	7,939	\$16.75	\$ 132,978.25
Gray fox	2,944	\$25.05	\$ 73,747.20
Beaver	8,314	\$10.50	\$ 87,297.00
Striped skunk	233	\$ 1.40	\$ 326.20
Weasel	37	\$ 0.80	\$ 29.60
Coyote	9,652	\$ 9.35	\$ 90,246.20
Totals or mean	638,032	x = \$ 8.80	\$ 5,620,222.70

JOB COMPLETION REPORT

SURVEYS AND INVESTIGATIONS PROJECTS

STATE OF ILLINOIS

PROJECT NO. W-49-R-35

STUDY XV: Wildlife Harvests

JOB NO. 2: Fur harvest survey, 1987-88

OBJECTIVE:

To collect information on the annual fur-taker harvest of all open season furbearers in Illinois and its economic value.

PROCEDURES:

Numbers of wild fur pelts taken in Illinois and sold by fur-takers during the 1987-88 season were estimated from fur purchase reports required of all fur buyers licensed by the Department of Conservation (Fig. 1). Approximately 15 days before the muskrat trapping season opened, all buyers were mailed fur purchase report forms and written instructions to maintain records of their transactions throughout the season. The reports of raw furs purchased were to be submitted no later than 20 March 1988. Buyers failing to report by that date were mailed a reminder notice by 1st class mail on 15 April 1988. Only original pelt sales were used to avoid duplication. An adjustment factor of 4.86% was used to account for out-of-state pelt sales (Hubert 1988a). Average pelt prices for all sizes and grades were estimated from price data supplied by representative buyers during and after the open seasons. Numbers and distribution of fur buyer permittees and trapping pressure were determined from license sales records obtained from the License and Permit office, Illinois Department of Conservation. Fur hunting pressure was estimated from the number of raccoon, red fox (Vulpes vulpes), and coyote hunters in the post-season hunter harvest survey, Federal Aid Project W-49-R-35, Study XV, Job No. 1.

Information about the history of red fox harvest regulations was obtained from official Department of Conservation files. These records were supplemented by a review of the published Illinois Revised Statutes and Laws at the University of Illinois library. In addition, pertinent Department of Conservation publications were examined.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS:

1987-88 Fur Seasons

The 1987-88 fur-bearing mammal season varied from 35 to 365 days in length (Table 1). Trapping seasons for all species except beaver (Castor canadensis), red fox, gray fox (Urocyon cinereoargenteus) and coyote lasted 45 days.

Opening dates in the northern and southern management zones (Fig. 2) were 15 November 1987 and 25 November 1987, respectively. Red fox, gray fox, and coyote could be legally trapped for 35 days in the northern zone and 45 days in the southern zone starting 25 November 1987. Beaver trapping season was 96 or 106 days in length depending on zone and opened simultaneously with all other species except fox and coyote. A 56 or 58-day hunting season was in effect for raccoon and opossum (Didelphis marsupialis); opening dates varied by zone. The statewide hunting season lasted 65 days for fox, 361 days for striped skunk, and 365 days for coyote. No bag limits were in force for any furbearer.

The weather during the month of November was generally good for fur-taking. The statewide average monthly temperature was 4.4 degrees F above normal as temperatures ranged from 2 to 8 degrees F above normal around Illinois. Temperatures were near normal in midmonth when the northern zone seasons opened and then fell below normal in the third week. Minimum readings dropped into the 13 to 19 degree F range (the coldest night for most areas was 21 November). A warm trend developed during the fourth week, but lasted only a few days. Monthly precipitation averaged slightly above normal (1.25 cm above normal). Most areas of the state except the west and southeast sections were above normal. The largest above normal variation was in east-central Illinois (4.4 cm above normal). The largest below normal variation was in west-central Illinois (0.9 cm below normal). Scattered, light showers fell over the state during the first half of the month. During the latter half of the month when the furbearer seasons were open, greater amounts of rainfall were recorded. Also, during the latter half of the month, 2.5 to 5.0 cm of snow fell on the northern part of the state. This precipitation had little adverse impact on night hunters and trappers. The overall catch for the month appeared to be average throughout most of Illinois.

Conditions for fur-taking remained good during most of December. Temperatures statewide averaged from 4 to 5 degrees F above normal. Readings were well above the mean for the first two weeks, but then fell well below the mean for about a week. The remainder of the month had temperatures well above normal. Precipitation occurred throughout December with the entire state reporting above normal precipitation. The greatest departures were in southern Illinois where amounts ranged from 7.6 to 12.7 cm above normal. Much of this precipitation fell in the latter half of the month when fur-taking activities had started to decline. As in November, little snowfall was recorded. The fur harvest for December was average to slightly below average throughout most of Illinois. This was due more to a lack of interest on the part of fur-takers because of lower than anticipated pelt prices rather than adverse weather. However, the absence of snow in the northern zone resulted in less than the usual amount of canid hunting activity.

The weather in January varied from poor to good for harvesting furbearers depending on the species of interest. The statewide average monthly temperature was only 0.6 degrees F below normal. The central section was the warmest portion of the state and the coolest was the northwest. The month started with temperatures below normal as minimum readings fell below 0 degrees F. A warm trend developed in midmonth and again at the end of January as maximum temperatures climbed into the 50's in the north and 60's in the south. January precipitation averaged near normal. The largest above normal variation was in the east-central section (2.0 cm above normal) and the largest below normal variation was in the extreme southeast part of the state (2.2 cm below normal).

The first half of the month was dry. Moderate amounts of precipitation fell in the latter half of January. On 24 and 25 January the heaviest snowstorm of the month produced 2.5 to 15.2 cm of snow in many sections of the state. The northern zone received the greatest amounts. The snow had essentially no impact on night hunters and trappers because it fell after most of the seasons had closed. In contrast it helped canid hunters, but had little effect on the year's total fox and coyote harvest because it was present for only a few days. The January fur harvest was fair and thus kept the season catch totals at near average levels for most species.

The weather during the 1987-88 season can be summarized as average to above average for water trapping, land trapping, and night hunting, but canid hunting conditions were somewhat below average. The above normal temperatures in November and December enhanced the fur-taking efforts of night hunters and trappers. The heavy precipitation that was recorded in late December came after night hunting and trapping activities had started to taper off. Therefore, it had little impact on harvest. The general absence of snow cover throughout most of December and January likely reduced the success of canid hunters, particularly in the northern zone, but probably enhanced land trapping conditions. The overall catch of most species by night hunters and trappers appeared to be enhanced by the weather. However, weather conditions may have reduced the harvest by canid hunters to some extent. In February below normal temperatures and near normal precipitation were recorded. This apparently allowed late season coyote hunters and beaver trappers to operate with average success.

Trends in Fur License Sales

Records of fur buyer permits sold by the Commercial Permit office, Illinois Department of Conservation, for 1987-88 were compiled prior to mailing out fur purchase report forms and instructions. A total of 250 individuals purchased 254 fur buyer permits for 1987-88. This represents a 1.6% decrease from 1986-87 in the number of persons licensed. Of the 250 buyers, 230 were residents and 20 were non-residents. The 230 residents bought 234 permits (Table 2). Over 79% of all resident buyers were headquartered in the Northwest Hills, Mississippi Border-South, Western Prairie/Forest, Grand Prairie, and Southern Plain wildlife management units (Table 2, Fig. 3). Fur buyer distribution within the state is not indicative of furbearer or fur harvest distribution.

Trapping licenses issued statewide in 1987-88 numbered approximately 12,397 (12,373 resident, 24 non-resident - 1 July 1988 estimate), an increase of 9.7% from the previous year (1986-87 revised estimate of trapping license sales = 11,300). The increase occurred throughout the state and was not confined to specific management units. The increase may have been due in part to pre-season predictions of higher fur prices as well as the favorable weather for trapping which existed throughout much of the season. Preliminary estimates indicate raccoon hunter numbers increased 2.9% from 34,098 in 1986-87 to 35,081 in 1987-88 (Ellis, unpublished data). The change may be due to sampling variation, but good weather for night hunting may have increased activity in certain areas. As in earlier seasons, most of the night hunters were in the northern, western, and southern management units (Fig. 3). This is not surprising since these units contain more forested acres than the central and east-central units. Preliminary figures also indicate the number of red

fox hunters dropped 3.8% to an estimated 14,363, and the estimated number of coyote hunters declined 0.3% to 34,636 (Ellis, unpublished data). Both declines can be attributed to declining fur prices coupled with a general lack of suitable tracking snow throughout much of the season, especially in December. Opossum hunters were estimated at 11,948 or 1.9% less than the previous season (Ellis, unpublished data).

Fur Buyer Fur Purchase Survey

Reports of raw furs purchased had been submitted by 249 of the 250 (99.6%) individual fur buyers when the survey was closed out on 15 June 1988. Of these, 35 stated they did not buy any pelts during the 1987-88 season. The one buyer who failed to report was assumed to have purchased raw furs at the same rate as the buyers who submitted records of their activities.

An estimated total of 638,032 pelts was harvested and sold by Illinois fur-takers during the 1987-88 season (Table 3). This estimate includes an adjustment factor of 4.86% to account for out-of-state pelt sales (Hubert 1988a). No allowance was made for pelts harvested by hunters and trappers that were not sold.

Muskrats and raccoons were the two most important furbearers in terms of harvest and value (Table 3). Together these species accounted for 87.64% of the total pelt harvest and 86.77% of its value. Other top-ranking species included mink (Mustela vison) opossum, red fox, beaver, and coyote. The 1987-88 pelt harvest was valued to fur-takers at \$5,620,222.70, about \$2.4 million less than the previous year (Table 4).

The total fur harvest for 1987-88 represented a 15.3% decrease in pelts taken compared with the 1986-87 season (Table 4). All changes were influenced by the decrease in allowance for out-of-state pelt sales in 1987-88. Also, as noted above, the weather conditions during the 1987-88 season were not as good for fur-harvesting activities as they were the previous year. Finally, average pelt prices declined almost 18% for the species surveyed.

A major increase (>25%) in the harvest of striped skunks occurred compared with the previous season (Table 4). A population increase was not involved (Hubert 1988b). Relatively few of the skunks taken each year are sold. The change can be attributed to a normal fluctuation in the number of skunk pelts sold. Fluctuations in the annual skunk harvest have little meaning since only a small percentage of the animals taken are marketed.

A minor increase (5 to 25%) in the coyote harvest was recorded in 1987-88 (Table 4). Population trend data for this species are limited, but a slight population increase appears possible. In 1987, 14.8% of the successful firearms deer hunters reported seeing coyotes compared with 12.7% during 1986 (Hubert, unpublished data). Also, the mean coyote pelt price declined over 30% between years and hunting conditions were not as good as they were in 1986-87.

The gray fox catch remained stable (<5% change) from 1986-87 to 1987-88 (Table 4). Population trend data for this species are non-existent except for harvest information. A major change in gray fox numbers between years is unlikely because the average pelt price and harvest pressure were relatively constant during both seasons.

Minor declines (5 to 25%) in the harvest of 7 of the 10 species surveyed occurred compared with the 1986-87 season (Table 4). Population declines may have involved for the muskrat and raccoon. Census data are not available, but field observations based on sex and age ratios indicated the 1987 muskrat population was probably lower than in 1986 (Hubert, unpublished data). Raccoon numbers were down from the previous year; Hubert (1987a) reported a 19.8% drop in raccoon sightings during the 1987 statewide spring spotlight census. Road-kill indexes for the opossum were somewhat higher in 1987 compared with 1986 (Hubert 1988c). Therefore, the decline in harvest for this species is probably associated with the decline in raccoon harvest rather than the result of a lower population. The situation regarding mink may be much the same, i.e. the reduction in mink harvest could be associated with the drop in the muskrat catch. Although population trend data for the red fox and beaver are limited to harvest information, a major change in numbers between years for either of these species seems unlikely. The change in weasel harvest from year to year is not meaningful because only a small number of weasels are trapped annually. Most weasels are taken incidentally to other species.

The total value of the 1987-88 fur harvest was \$2,442,783.55 (30.3%) less than the previous season (Table 4). The change was due to a combination of a decrease in total pelt harvest (especially for muskrat and raccoon) and a drop in the average prices paid (especially for raccoon). The average pelt prices for 6 of the 10 species surveyed decreased compared with a year earlier, and the overall average pelt price went down from \$10.70 to \$8.80 (Table 4). Several factors contributed to the pelt price declines noted in 1987-88. These included: 1) large harvests of most species during 1986-87 due to relatively high prices and favorable weather which resulted in large stocks of skins at the manufacturing level and in retail stores, 2) the stock market's "Black Monday" dried up the cash reserves of many large dealers and brokers and greatly impacted retail sales, 3) the continued instability of foreign and domestic economies, and 4) a relatively large harvest in the Northern regions which flooded storage facilities at the dealer and broker levels and caused many smaller buyers to cease operations prior to the season's end. Additional interest in the short-haired species was obvious as fashion trends continued to shift away from species like the raccoon, red fox, and coyote. After a period of greatly inflated pelt prices in the late 1970's, the market values for most North American wild furs have dropped to more realistic levels. Overall, the prices paid for all major species in Illinois remained generally good.

Distribution of Harvest Among Fur-takers

The distribution of the fur catch between hunters and trappers is traditionally a source of controversy. In addition, this aspect of the annual harvest is potentially important in the establishment of sound regulations and the evaluation of management programs. During the 1987-88 season, the percentage of animals harvested by hunters was monitored for the raccoon as part of certain furhouse studies in Federal Aid Project W-49-R-35. Also, the present survey requested licensed fur buyers to estimate the portion of pelts purchased from hunters for the six furbearers that could be legally harvested by hunting and trapping methods.

The percentage of total harvest taken by hunters for species which may be hunted or trapped under current regulations ranged from 2.7% for striped skunk to 76.4% for coyote (Table 5). By applying the estimates from furhouse investigations and fur buyer estimates for canids and skunks to the 1987-88 harvest figures, the number of pelts taken by hunters was estimated to be 196,155 or approximately 30.7% of the total harvest for the year. As stated earlier, there were an estimated 35,081 raccoon hunters and 12,397 licensed trappers during the 1987-88 season. Excluding fox hunters, coyote hunters, opossum hunters, and canid chasers, fur hunters made up 73.9% of all Illinois fur-takers. These hunters accounted for 30.7% of all pelts taken.

The average fur hunter harvested 5.6 pelts valued at \$70.35 compared with the average trapper who took 35.6 pelts worth \$254.27. The distribution of harvest emphasizes the greater efficiency of trappers as well as the higher monetary rewards of trapping. The 1987-88 distribution values are similar to previous seasons (Hubert 1985, 1986, 1987b).

1975-1987 Fur Harvest Trends

Statewide furbearer harvest trend data for the years 1975 through 1987 are presented in Tables 6 through 11. During the 13-year period, total estimated pelt harvests based on fur buyer surveys ranged from 423,538 in 1985 to 948,392 in 1979, and averaged 685,723. No allowances for out-of-state pelt sales were made in 1975 or 1976. Out-of-state sales adjustments for the last 11 seasons have averaged 4.6%. Since 1975, the harvests of most species have undergone major fluctuations.

Deer Hide Purchases

During the 1987-88 season, licensed fur buyers were requested to report the number of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) hides that they bought from hunters. Purchases totaled an estimated 7,795 skins. Hubert (1987b) reported Illinois fur buyers purchased 6,371 deerskins in 1986-87. The average price paid in 1987-88 was \$3.90, so the total value to hunters was \$30,400.50. Since the 1987 firearms deer harvest in Illinois exceeded 43,000, less than 20% of the hides taken were sold. However, it is likely that a portion of the unsold skins are retained for personal use rather than discarded.

History of Red Fox Harvest Regulations

The red fox was first afforded protection by state statute in 1919 (Table 12). The first restricted harvest season was held from 1 November 1919 through 15 March 1920. Subsequent hunting and trapping seasons have ranged from 30 to 365 days in length. No red fox bag limits have ever existed. Overall, red fox harvest regulations have been relatively liberal except during the last 19 years. Since the early 1960's the red fox season has been closed during the firearms deer season to simplify law enforcement activities. The last continuous open season on this species was held in 1968-69.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This investigation provides the only source of harvest and value data for all 10 open season species of furbearers. The information serves as a base for assessment of population trends and regulatory management. The fur harvest survey should be continued.

No alterations in the length or timing of the current furbearer seasons or management zones are recommended based on the data contained in this report. The maintenance of stable seasons and zones permits more realistic year to year comparisons of harvest information and associated biological data are easier to interpret. However, additional recommendations for harvest regulations are contained in the job reports for certain related furbearer studies. Those recommendations should also be considered.

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DATA AND REPORTS:

Original and related reports in this investigation are on file in the Division of Wildlife Resources office, Illinois Department of Conservation, Springfield, Illinois 62706.

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Table 1. Illinois fur-bearing mammal season for 1987-88.

Species	^a Hunting seasons		Trapping seasons	
	Northern zone	Southern zone	Northern zone	Southern zone
Muskrat, Mink, Weasel	Closed	Closed	15 Nov-29 Dec	25 Nov- 8 Jan
Raccoon, Opossum	15 Nov-13 Jan	25 Nov-23 Jan	15 Nov-29 Dec	25 Nov- 8 Jan
Striped skunk	Continuous open season		15 Nov-29 Dec	25 Nov- 8 Jan
Beaver	Closed	Closed	15 Nov-28 Feb ^b	25 Nov-28 Feb
Red fox, Gray fox	25 Nov-31 Jan	25 Nov-31 Jan	25 Nov-29 Dec	25 Nov- 8 Jan
Coyote	Continuous open season		25 Nov-29 Dec	25 Nov- 8 Jan

^a
Raccoon, opossum, and striped skunk hunting closed 24 hrs. on 20 and 21 Nov. and 11 and 12 Dec. and until 6PM on 22 Nov. and 13 Dec. during firearms deer season. Red fox and gray fox hunting closed 24 hrs. on 11 and 12 Dec. and until 6PM on 13 Dec. during firearms deer season. Coyote hunting closed 24 hrs. on 20 and 21 Nov. and 11 and 12 Dec. and until 6PM on 22 Nov. and 13 Dec. during firearms deer season except to those individuals possessing unfilled firearm deer permits.

^b
Those portions of Carroll, Whiteside, and Rock Island counties lying west of Illinois Rt. 84 from Interstate-80 north to the Jo Daviess County line were open to beaver trapping from 15 Nov.-29 Dec. 1987 only.

Table 2. Summary of resident fur buyer permits issued in Illinois for the 1987-88 season.

Wildlife management unit	Number of individual permittees	License type	
		Retail	Wholesale
Northwest Hills	26 (11.3) ^a	25	2
Northeast Moraine	11 (4.0)	7	5
Mississippi Border-North	17 (7.4)	16	1
Mississippi Border-South	25 (10.9)	21	4
Western Prairie/Forest	25 (10.9)	23	3
Central Sand Prairie	6 (2.6)	6	0
Grand Prairie	55 (23.9)	43	12
Southern Plain	51 (22.2)	45	7
Wabash Border	13 (5.6)	11	2
Shawnee Hills	1 (0.4)	0	1
Totals	230 (100.0)	197	37

^a Numbers in parentheses are percentages of statewide total.

Table 3. Composition of estimated fur harvest in Illinois and value to fur-takers during 1987-88 season.

Species	^a Total pelts		Total value	
	Number	Percent	Dollars	Percent
Muskrat	297,737	46.67	\$1,190,948.00	21.19
Mink	14,009	2.20	322,907.45	5.75
Raccoon	261,418	40.97	3,685,993.80	65.58
Opossum	35,749	5.60	35,749.00	0.64
Red fox	7,939	1.24	132,978.25	2.37
Gray fox	2,944	0.46	73,747.20	1.31
Beaver	8,314	1.30	87,297.00	1.55
Striped skunk	233	0.04	326.20	-
Weasel	37	0.01	29.60	-
Coyote	9,652	1.51	90,246.20	1.61
Totals	638,032	100.00	\$5,620,222.70	100.00

^aIncludes 4.86% allowance for out-of-state pelt sales.

Table 4. Comparative fur harvest data for Illinois, 1986-87 vs. 1987-88.

Species	Number of pelts taken		Change in harvest from		Average pelt price per pelt		Total value to fur-takers (dollars)		Change in value from	
	1986-87 ^a	1987-88 ^b	1986-87	1987-88	1986-87	1987-88	1986-87	1987-88	1986-87	1987-88
Muskrat	360,499	297,737	-62,762 (-17.4) ^c	\$4.00	1,333,846.30	1,190,948.00	-142,898.30	(-10.7) ^c		
Mink	18,391	14,009	-4,382 (-23.8)	\$23.05	387,130.55	322,907.45	-64,223.10	(-16.6)		
Raccoon	306,261	261,418	-44,843 (-14.6)	\$14.10	5,803,645.95	3,685,993.80	-2,117,652.15	(-36.5)		
Opossum	38,502	35,749	-2,753 (-7.2)	\$1.15	44,277.30	35,749.00	-8,528.30	(-19.3)		
Red fox	8,531	7,939	-592 (-6.9)	\$16.75	188,961.65	132,978.25	-55,983.40	(-29.6)		
Gray fox	2,915	2,944	+29 (+1.0)	\$23.40	68,211.00	73,747.20	+5,536.20	(+8.1)		
Beaver	8,960	8,314	-646 (-7.2)	\$12.40	111,104.00	87,297.00	-23,807.00	(-21.4)		
Striped skunk	119	233	+114 (+95.8)	\$1.40	220.15	326.20	+106.05	(+48.2)		
Weasel	39	37	-2 (-5.1)	\$0.55	21.45	29.60	+8.15	(+38.0)		
Coyote	9,167	9,652	+485 (+5.3)	\$9.35	125,587.90	90,246.20	-35,341.70	(-28.1)		
Totals	753,384	638,032	-115,352 (-15.3)	$\bar{x} = \$10.70$	8,063,006.25	5,620,222.70	-2,442,783.55	(-30.3)		

^a Includes 5.9% allowance for out-of-state sales (Hubert 1987b).

^b Includes 4.86% allowance for out-of-state sales (Hubert 1988a).

^c Numbers in parentheses indicate percent change between years.

Table 5. Estimated percentage of annual harvest taken by hunters for selected furbearers in Illinois, 1987-88.

Species	Estimated percentage of harvest taken by hunters	
	Furhouse studies	Fur buyer estimates ^a
Raccoon	62.0 (Hubert 1988b) ^b	56.7
Opossum	61.0 (Hubert 1988c)	35.3
Red fox	-	46.3
Gray fox	-	41.2
Striped skunk	-	2.7
Coyote	-	76.4

^a Based on present study.

^b Authority listed in parentheses.

Table 6. Muskrat, mink, and weasel trapping seasons, harvests, and pelt price data for Illinois, 1975-1987.

Year	Season opening date (season length in days)		Estimated harvest			Average price per pelt (dollars)		
	Northern zone	Southern zone	Muskrat	Mink	Weasel	Muskrat	Mink	Weasel
1975	8 Nov (69)	15 Nov (70)	445,737	18,009	181	2.90	6.00	0.50
1976	13 Nov (55)	20 Nov (55)	256,315	14,253	311	4.44	13.95	0.54
1977	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	300,314	12,910	147	5.10	13.20	0.60
1978	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	422,354	19,814	147	5.00	15.20	0.65
1979	10 Nov (30)	20 Nov (30)	460,674	22,971	145	6.35	20.15	0.50
1980	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	421,585	26,607	85	6.50	18.90	0.60
1981	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	325,415	24,478	53	4.30	17.45	0.50
1982	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	297,872	17,768	74	2.75	13.90	0.50
1983	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	248,146	16,056	60	3.15	15.15	0.65
1984	13 Nov (47)	25 Nov (45)	225,629	18,068	37	3.55	16.60	0.55
1985	13 Nov (47)	25 Nov (45)	170,025	10,021	22	2.50	14.70	0.45
1986	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	360,499	18,391	39	3.70	21.05	0.55
1987	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	297,737	14,009	37	4.00	23.05	0.80
13-year averages			325,562	17,950	103	4.15	16.10	0.55

Table 7. Beaver trapping seasons, harvests, and pelt price data for Illinois, 1975-1987.

Year	Season opening date (season length in days)		Estimated harvest	Average price per pelt (dollars)
	Northern zone	Southern zone		
1975	6 Dec (85)	6 Dec (85)	2,337	4.50
1976	18 Dec (80)	18 Dec (80)	1,548	7.00
1977	15 Nov (60)	25 Nov (60)	2,425	6.60
1978	15 Nov (90)	25 Nov (90)	3,386	7.25
1979	10 Nov (111)	20 Nov (101)	7,345	14.40
1980	15 Nov (106)	25 Nov (96)	7,338	10.60
1981	15 Nov (106)	25 Nov (96)	4,145	6.40
1982	15 Nov (106)	25 Nov (96)	2,517	4.95
1983	15 Nov (106)	25 Nov (96)	2,742	5.45
1984	13 Nov (108)	25 Nov (96)	3,683	6.80
1985	13 Nov (108)	25 Nov (96)	3,857	9.45
1986	15 Nov (106)	25 Nov (96)	8,960	12.40
1987	15 Nov (106)	25 Nov (96)	8,314	10.50
13-year averages			4,507	8.15

Table 8. Raccoon and opossum hunting and trapping seasons, harvest and pelt price data for Illinois, 1975-1987.

Year	Hunting season opening date (season length in days) ^a		Trapping season opening date (season length in days)		Estimated harvest		Average price per pelt (dollars)	
	Southern zone		Northern zone		Southern zone		Northern zone	
	Southern zone	Northern zone	Southern zone	Northern zone	Raccoon	Opossum	Raccoon	Opossum
1975	8 Nov (63)	15 Nov (64)	8 Nov (69)	15 Nov (70)	310,593	49,874	14.00	1.10
1976	13 Nov (54)	13 Nov (64)	13 Nov (55)	20 Nov (55)	187,377	42,153	17.17	1.21
1977	15 Nov (60)	25 Nov (60)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	237,315	46,198	18.00	2.05
1978	15 Nov (60)	25 Nov (60)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	292,728	25,097	27.25	2.65
1979	10 Nov (34)	20 Nov (37)	10 Nov (30)	20 Nov (30)	381,006	38,626	25.20	3.35
1980	15 Nov (56)	25 Nov (58)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	314,777	46,710	19.40	1.45
1981	15 Nov (56)	25 Nov (58)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	314,963	55,729	22.50	1.05
1982	15 Nov (56)	25 Nov (58)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	292,189	35,548	14.55	0.95
1983	15 Nov (56)	25 Nov (58)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	203,633	22,289	13.15	0.85
1984	13 Nov (58)	25 Nov (58)	13 Nov (47)	25 Nov (45)	269,991	28,204	17.25	0.95
1985	13 Nov (58)	25 Nov (58)	13 Nov (47)	25 Nov (45)	206,278	17,633	13.80	0.95
1986	15 Nov (56)	25 Nov (58)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	306,261	38,502	18.95	1.15
1987	15 Nov (56)	25 Nov (58)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	261,418	35,749	14.10	1.00
13-year Averages					275,271	37,101	18.10	1.45

^a Hunting season closed during firearms deer season.

Table 9. Red and gray fox hunting and trapping seasons, harvest, and pelt price data for Illinois, 1975-1987.

Year	Hunting season opening date (season length in days) ^a		Trapping season opening date (season length in days)		Estimated harvest		Average price per pelt (dollars)	
	Southern zone		Northern zone		Red fox	Gray fox	Red fox	Gray fox
	date	length	date	length	harvest	harvest	price	price
1975	8 Nov (63)	15 Nov (64)	8 Nov (69)	15 Nov (70)	11,247	7,132	34.00	16.00
1976	20 Dec (45)	17 Nov (52)	27 Nov (41)	4 Dec (41)	7,206	6,166	45.61	27.67
1977	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	9,715	9,086	47.45	31.05
1978	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	13,582	9,525	61.50	42.95
1979	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	14,136	10,547	48.40	43.80
1980	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	13,965	8,716	44.80	36.40
1981	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	13,533	7,649	46.75	28.75
1982	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	9,780	5,943	30.40	26.35
1983	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	8,719	4,152	30.90	27.35
1984	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (45)	8,835	3,902	27.20	24.10
1985	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (45)	6,240	2,757	17.55	16.15
1986	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (45)	8,531	2,915	22.15	23.40
1987	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (45)	7,939	2,944	16.75	25.05
13-year Averages					10,264	6,264	36.40	28.40

^a Hunting season closed during firearms deer season.

Table 10. Striped skunk hunting and trapping seasons, harvest, and pelt price data for Illinois, 1975-1987.

Year	Hunting season opening date (season length in days) ^a		Trapping season opening date (season length in days)		Estimated harvest	Average price per pelt (dollars)
	Northern zone	Southern zone	Northern zone	Southern zone		
1975	8 Nov (63)	15 Nov (64)	8 Nov (69)	15 Nov (70)	-	1.00
1976	Closed	Closed	13 Nov (55)	20 Nov (55)	821	2.25
1977	15 Nov (60)	25 Nov (60)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	1,503	2.20
1978	15 Nov (60)	25 Nov (60)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	1,633	2.55
1979	10 Nov (34)	20 Nov (37)	10 Nov (30)	20 Nov (30)	3,111	2.60
1980	15 Nov (56)	25 Nov (58)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	1,625	2.00
1981	15 Nov (56)	25 Nov (58)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	840	2.15
1982	Continuous (361)	Continuous (361)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	341	1.50
1983	Continuous (361)	Continuous (361)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	137	1.55
1984	Continuous (361)	Continuous (361)	13 Nov (47)	25 Nov (45)	232	1.05
1985	Continuous (361)	Continuous (361)	13 Nov (47)	25 Nov (45)	358	2.50
1986	Continuous (361)	Continuous (361)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	119	1.85
1987	Continuous (361)	Continuous (361)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	233	1.40
13-year Averages						1.90

^aHunting season closed during firearms deer season.

Table 11. Coyote hunting and trapping seasons, harvests, and pelt price data for Illinois, 1975-1987.

Year	Hunting season opening date (season length in days) ^a		Trapping season opening date (season length in days)		Estimated harvest	Average price per pelt (dollars)
	Statewide		Northern zone	Southern zone		
1975	1 Sep (175)		8 Nov (69)	15 Nov (70)	2,833	8.00
1976	1 Sep (175)		27 Nov (41)	4 Dec (41)	3,882	16.07
1977	1 Sep (175)		1 Sep (45) ^b 30 Nov (30)	1 Sep (45) ^b 30 Nov (30)	7,678	16.75
1978	1 Sep (175)		30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	9,891	31.35
1979	Continuous (359)		30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	9,831	22.85
1980	Continuous (359)		30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	8,412	19.25
1981	Continuous (359)		30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	10,390	24.45
1982	Continuous (359)		30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	8,180	13.85
1983	Continuous (359)		30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	7,289	9.40
1984	Continuous (359)		25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (45)	6,847	8.30
1985	Continuous (365)		25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (45)	6,347	9.25
1986	Continuous (365)		25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (45)	9,167	13.70
1987	Continuous (365)		25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (45)	9,652	9.35
13-year Averages					7,723	15.60

^a Hunting season closed during firearms deer season except in 1985, 1986 and 1987 when holders of unfilled firearm deer permits could harvest coyotes.

^b Split trapping season; season total length = 75 days.

Table 12. Red fox hunting and trapping regulations in Illinois, 1915-1987.

Season	Zone ^a	Season length (days)		Special regulations
		Hunting	Trapping	
1915-16 through 1918-19	Statewide	Continuous open season	Continuous open season	Not protected by state statute.
1919-20	Statewide	1 Nov-15 Mar(136)	1 Nov-15 Mar(136)	Protected by state statute.
1920-21 through 1922-23	Statewide	1 Nov-15 Mar(135)	1 Nov-15 Mar(135)	Protected by state statute.
1923-24 through 1932-33	Northern Central Southern	1 Nov-15 Feb(107) 15 Nov- 1 Feb (79) 15 Nov-15 Jan (62)	1 Nov-15 Feb(107) 15 Nov- 1 Feb (79) 15 Nov-15 Jan (62)	Protected by state statute.
1933-34 through 1934-35	Northern Central Southern	15 Nov-15 Mar(121) 1 Dec- 1 Feb (63) 1 Dec-15 Jan (46)	15 Nov-15 Mar(121) 1 Dec- 1 Feb (63) 1 Dec-15 Jan (46)	Protected by state statute.
1935-36	Northern Central Southern	15 Nov-15 Mar(122) 1 Dec- 1 Feb (63) 1 Dec-15 Jan (46)	15 Nov-15 Mar(122) 1 Dec- 1 Feb (63) 1 Dec-15 Jan (46)	Protected by state statute.
1936-37	Northern Central Southern	15 Nov-15 Mar(121) 1 Dec- 1 Feb (63) 1 Dec-15 Jan (46)	15 Nov-15 Mar(121) 1 Dec- 1 Feb (63) 1 Dec-15 Jan (46)	Protected by state statute.
1937-38 through 1938-39	Northern Central Southern	Continuous open Continuous open 15 Nov-15 Jan (62)	Continuous open Continuous open 15 Nov-15 Jan (62)	Protected by state statute.
1939-40 through 1942-43	Northern Central Southern	Continuous open 15 Nov-15 Jan (62) 1 Dec-15 Jan (46)	Continuous open 15 Nov-15 Jan (62) 1 Dec-15 Jan (46)	Protected by state statute.
1943-44 through 1944-45	Northern Central Southern	Continuous open 15 Nov-31 Jan (78) 15 Nov-31 Jan (78)	Continuous open 15 Nov-31 Jan (78) 15 Nov-31 Jan (78)	Protected by state statute.
1945-46 through 1948-49	Northern Central Southern	Continuous open Continuous open 15 Nov-15 Jan (62)	Continuous open Continuous open 15 Nov-15 Jan (62)	Protected by state statute.
1949-50 through 1950-51	Statewide	Continuous open season	Continuous open season	Not protected by state statute.

Table 12. Continued.

Season	Zone ^a	Season length (days)		Special regulations
		Hunting	Trapping	
1951-52 through 1956-57	Statewide	Continuous open season	Continuous open season	Protected by state statute.
1957-58 through 1958-59	Northern Southern	Continuous open Continuous open	1 Nov- 1 Mar (121) 1 Dec-15 Mar (105)	Protected by state statute.
1959-60	Northern Southern	Continuous open Continuous open	1 Nov- 1 Mar (122) 1 Dec-15 Mar (106)	Protected by state statute.
1960-61	Northern Southern	Continuous open Continuous open	1 Nov- 1 Mar (121) 1 Dec-15 Mar (105)	Protected by state statute.
1962-63 through 1962-63	Statewide	Continuous open season	Continuous open season	Protected by state statute.
1963-64 through 1966-67	Statewide	Continuous open season	Continuous open season	Hunting season closed during deer season (6 days).
1967-68	Statewide except 12 _b counties	Continuous open season	Continuous open season	Hunting season closed during deer season (6 days).
1968-69	Statewide	Continuous open season	Continuous open season	Hunting season closed during deer season (6 days).
1969-70	Northern Southern	1 Nov-31 Jan (86) 1 Nov-31 Jan (86)	15 Nov-31 Dec (47) 25 Nov- 5 Jan (42)	Hunting season closed during deer season (6 days).
1970-71	Northern Southern	1 Nov-15 Mar(135) 1 Nov-15 Mar(135)	16 Nov-31 Dec (46) 25 Nov- 5 Jan (42)	Hunting season closed during deer season (6 days).
1971-72	Northern Southern	1 Nov-29 Feb(115) 1 Nov-29 Feb(115)	15 Nov-31 Dec (47) 24 Nov- 4 Jan (42)	Hunting season closed during deer season (6 days).
1972-73	Statewide	11 Nov-31 Jan (76)	11 Nov-31 Jan (82)	Hunting season closed during deer season (6 days).

Table 12. Continued.

Season	Zone ^a	Season length (days)		Special regulations
		Hunting	Trapping	
1973-74	Statewide	10 Nov-31 Jan (77)	10 Nov-31 Jan (83)	Hunting season closed during deer season (6 days).
1974-75	Statewide	9 Nov-31 Jan (78)	9 Nov-31 Jan (84)	Hunting season closed during deer season (6 days).
1975-76	Northern	8 Nov-15 Jan (63)	8 Nov-15 Jan (69)	Hunting season closed during deer season (6 days).
	Southern	15 Nov-23 Jan (64)	15 Nov-23 Jan (70)	
1976-77	Northern	20 Dec- 2 Feb (45)	27 Nov- 6 Jan (41)	Hunting season closed during deer season (6 days).
	Southern	17 Nov-13 Jan (52)	4 Dec-13 Jan (41)	
1977-78 through 1983-84	Statewide	30 Nov-31 Jan (60)	30 Nov-29 Dec (30)	Hunting season closed during deer season (3 days).
1984-85 through 1987-88	Northern	25 Nov-31 Jan (65)	25 Nov-29 Dec (35)	Hunting season closed during deer season (3 days).
	Southern	25 Nov-31 Jan (65)	25 Nov- 8 Jan (45)	

^a From 1923-24 through 1942-43 the northern zone included the area north of the southern boundaries of Henderson, Warren, Knox, Peoria, Woodford, Livingston, Kankakee, and Iroquois counties; the southern zone included the area south of the northern boundaries of Madison, Bond, Fayette, Effingham, Jasper, and Crawford counties; and the central zone included the remainder of the state.

From 1955-56 through 1964-65 the northern zone included the area north of the southern boundaries of Pike, Greene, Macoupin, Montgomery, Shelby, Cumberland, and Clark counties.

From 1965-66 through 1972-73 and 1979-80 through 1987-88 the northern zone included the area north of US Route 36.

From 1975-76 through 1978-79 the northern zone included the area north of US Route 36 from the Indiana state line to Springfield, Route 29 from Springfield to Pekin, and Route 9 from Pekin to Dallas City, then due west to the Mississippi River.

^b Continuous closed season in Bond, Clay, Clinton, Crawford, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, Lawrence, Madison, Marion, Richland, and St. Clair counties for both hunting and trapping.

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
 DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES
 FURBARRER PROGRAM

SEASON OF 1987-88 WHU (FOR OFFICE USE)
 FUR BUYER LICENSE NUMBER(S) _____ () RESIDENT () NON-RESIDENT

	MUSKRAT	MINK	BACCOON	OPOSSUM	RED FOX	GRAY FOX	BEAVER	SKUNK	WEASEL	COYOTE	DEER	OTHER (LIST)
1. RAW FURS BOUGHT FROM ILLINOIS HUNTERS AND TRAPPERS												
2. RAW FURS BOUGHT FROM OTHER ILLINOIS FUR BUYERS												
3. RAW FURS BOUGHT FROM OUTSIDE OF ILLINOIS												

APPROXIMATELY WHAT PERCENT OF THE ILLINOIS BACCOONS WERE BOUGHT FROM HUNTERS? 2 SIGNED _____
 APPROXIMATELY WHAT PERCENT OF THE ILLINOIS OPOSSUMS WERE BOUGHT FROM HUNTERS? 2 FIRM NAME _____
 APPROXIMATELY WHAT PERCENT OF THE ILLINOIS RED FOXES WERE BOUGHT FROM HUNTERS? 2 ADDRESS _____
 APPROXIMATELY WHAT PERCENT OF THE ILLINOIS GRAY FOXES WERE BOUGHT FROM HUNTERS? 2 DATE _____
 APPROXIMATELY WHAT PERCENT OF THE ILLINOIS SKINKS WERE BOUGHT FROM HUNTERS? 2 ZIP CODE _____
 APPROXIMATELY WHAT PERCENT OF THE ILLINOIS COYOTES WERE BOUGHT FROM HUNTERS? 2

Figure 1. Report of raw furs purchased form used for the 1987-88 season.



Figure 2. Furbearer management zones for the 1987-88 season.

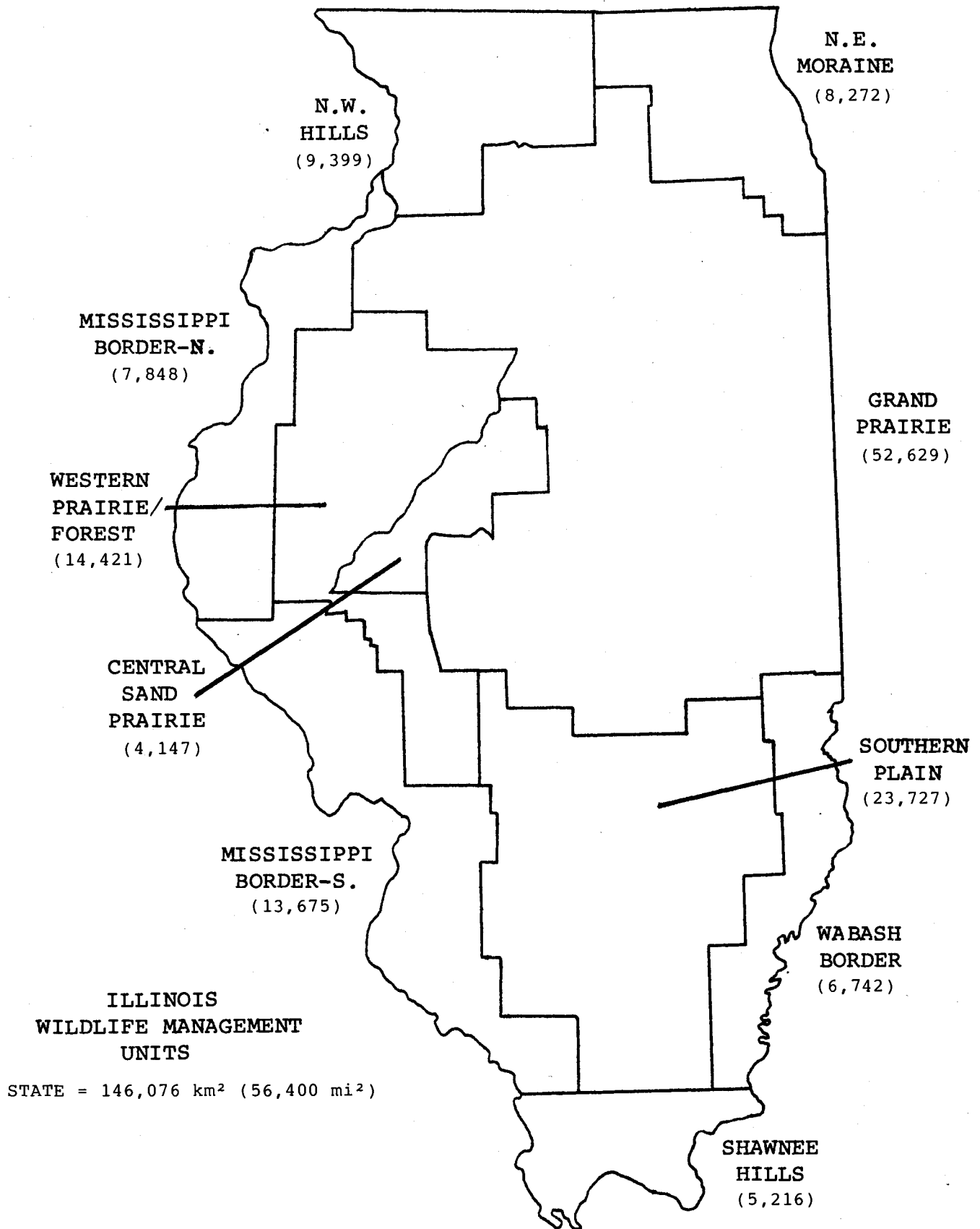


Figure 3. Area (km²) of wildlife management units in Illinois.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
1109773F966 C001
FOR INVEST SURVEY SPRINGFIELD, ILL.
1987/88



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