

FEASIBILITY STATEMENTS FOR MARTEN MANAGEMENT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

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Goal: Expand the range of marten into western WMU3 and maintain marten populations at no lower than current (1985) levels throughout their current occupied range.

Abundance Objective: Maintain spring (pre-birth) marten populations at no lower than 1985 levels throughout their current occupied range (estimated at 0.45/mi² habitat in WMU1, 1.0/mi² habitat in WMU 2, 0.5/mi² habitat in WMU 3, 0.35/mi² habitat in WMU 4, and 0.25/mi² habitat in WMU 5) through 1990 and expand range of marten into unoccupied sections of WMU 3 by 1990.

Harvest Objective: Maintain average harvest at no higher than 6,360 marten per year (or whatever the maximum allowable harvest is determined to be) and do not exceed the maximum allowable harvest in any Wildlife Management Unit through 1990.

Desirability: The abundance/distribution objective would probably be desirable to trappers who trap marten within their current range. This objective may be undesirable for trappers who would like to catch marten in areas currently with low marten population (all of WMU6, most of 5, parts of 3 and 4) and non-consumptive users. If land trapping closures are employed to assist with a reintroduction, local trappers may be dissatisfied.

The harvest objective may be desirable to trappers currently catching marten, as it allows maximum exploitation to occur. It would be particularly desirable to the few individuals who catch a lot of marten. The objective may be undesirable to non-consumptive users and to trappers who would like to see marten population and range increase.

Feasibility: As the proposed objective levels are now (1983-84) being met, the objectives are entirely feasible. However at current trapping levels, local over- and under-harvests are occurring, caused by non-uniform trapping effort. The abundance objective will be difficult to reach if local over-harvests continue. In addition, if 1985 harvest levels continue, abundance objectives will be unattainable. Establishment of marten populations in other parts of

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WMU 3 can be accomplished if trapping pressure in those sections is temporarily eliminated.

The harvest objective is only feasible if local over-harvests can be avoided. Harvest at maximum levels can be risky; however, risk can be lowered if a good measure of effort is available. It will be difficult to harvest at this level evenly, and thus some areas are likely to be over-trapped.

Capability of Habitat: Populations are well below carrying capacity in all units except for Unit 2, and there is no problem supporting objective populations in these areas throughout the planning period. Current habitat in WMU 2 will support desired populations, but projected habitat declines may mean reduced populations in this part of the state. If the habitat reductions projected by regional personnel take place, abundance and harvest goals for WMU 2 will have to be re-evaluated.

Possible Consequences: Local over-harvests will probably occur if the harvest of marten continues at the maximum allowable level. Trappers may react negatively to controls needed to adequately address this problem.

Expansion of marten into suitable habitat will necessitate increased program costs to fund a reintroduction. Local trappers may react to a closure of land trapping in these sites. Maintaining high harvest levels may prevent marten from naturally spreading to suitable habitat in other areas.

Non-consumptive users may react to maintaining higher than historical harvest levels out of concern for the population. Proper management at this catch level will require more information than currently collected and involve greater care and expense to monitor population trends and catch/effort data.