

FEASIBILITY STATEMENTS FOR FISHER GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1985

Goal: Maintain fisher population at no lower than current (1985) levels throughout the State.

Abundance Objective: Maintain preharvest fisher populations at no lower than 1985 levels in all WMU's (estimated at 0.8/mi² habitat in WMU 7, 0.6/mi² habitat in WMUs 1 and 8, 0.51/mi² in WMU 4, 0.3/mi² habitat in WMU 3, 0.2/mi² habitat in WMU 2, 0.08/mi² habitat in WMU 5, and 0.03/mi² habitat in WMU 6) through 1990.

Harvest Objective: Maintain average harvest at 1,900 fisher per year or whatever level needed to stabilize the population (allow harvest to increase if population increases) and maintain use-opportunity (season length and timing) at current levels through 1990.

Desirability: The abundance objective would be desirable to trappers who want to harvest fisher on a long-term basis. Individuals who would like more fisher in low population areas (WMUs 5 and 6) may view this as undesirable.

The harvest objective would be desirable for trappers who want to harvest fisher, but undesirable for individuals wanting longer (or earlier) trapping seasons for other species (coyote and red fox).

Feasibility: The abundance objective can be accomplished if excessive harvests or habitat degradation due to development do not decrease fisher populations. Populations could increase in most units if estimates of population carrying capacity are reasonably accurate.

The harvest portion of the harvest objective can be accomplished if major decreases in population do not occur. If the pelt price of fisher remains high while the value of other furs declines further, harvest levels could increase beyond current levels. If populations increase, harvest could also increase over current levels. Harvests in WMUs 4, 7, and 8 could decrease due to access problems if land posting continues to increase.

The use opportunity part (maintain current seasons) of the harvest objective can be accomplished if populations do not decline, excessive harvests do not occur, or season restrictions are not required to limit the harvest of other species (marten and bobcat).

Fisher Feasibility Statements

Capability of Habitat: The habitat is capable of supporting fisher populations at current levels in all WMUs. The population in WMU 7 is near carrying capacity and if habitat declines, population levels may not be maintained. If development continues to increase in WMU 8, habitat quantity and quality will be degraded resulting in lowered carrying capacity and population.

Possible Consequences: This goal and its accompanying objectives appear to have few consequences. There will be some negative feeling from individuals who would like longer seasons for coyote and red fox. To maintain populations in WMUs 7 and 8 may require more emphasis on habitat protection and improvement.

There may be negative reactions from individuals in WMUs 5 and 6 where fisher populations are low and from individuals who want a more active program to increase populations in these areas.

Continuing high prices for fisher without accompanying increases in pelt prices of other furbearer species may necessitate some harvest restrictions.