

**Meeting Date:** March 24th, 2022

**Agenda Item No. 6**

**Agenda Item:** Draft Furbearer Management Plan

**Bureau Chief Approval: JR**

**Prepared by:** Cory Mosby, Furbearer Staff Biologist

**Background:**

Furbearers are a diverse group of wildlife with ~19 species in Idaho that have been or are harvested for their fur. The opportunities provided by this group of animals reflect this diversity, with trapping, hunting, and wildlife viewing being popular activities for Idahoans statewide. Management of these species are primarily conducted through trapping and hunting. Their harvest creates a valued opportunity to license holders, provides data to track the population status of these species, and can help address wildlife human conflicts such as livestock depredation and/or damage to transportation and irrigation infrastructure.

With the last furbearer management plan being developed in 1990, much has changed in furbearer management priorities. During the development of this current plan, staff identified a variety of potential needs that could contribute to the conservation and management of these species, and provide abundant opportunity for license holders. From this extensive list, staff identified the most pressing items and listed them as the Department direction for furbearer management (2022-2027) in the plan. These items will guide annual work plan development and program prioritization related to furbearer management.

With Commission approval, the current draft will be posted on the department website to provide the public an opportunity to review and comment. After consideration of public input, a final plan will be prepared to present to the Commission for adoption in May.

**Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:**

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission administers state wildlife policy through supervision and management of the Department (Idaho Code 36-104). Species management plans are the guiding documents to manage wildlife and are a direct reflection of the Department Strategic Plan. The Furbearer Management Plan will function as the action plan for furbearer management in Idaho.

**Public Involvement Process:**

To inform management guidance for this furbearer management planning process, the Department conducted an opinion survey of all trapping license holders from 2017 to 2021. The Department mailed questionnaires to 4,305 individuals and received responses from 1600 individuals (37% response).

With approval from the Commission, the Furbearer Management Plan will be posted on the Department website in late March for a three week period to provide opportunity for public review and comment.

**Justification:**

The Commission sets policy and provides direction, considers input from the public, and has the authority to adopt, amend, or reject Department-recommended plans.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff recommends the Commission approve the release of the draft Furbearer Management Plan to solicit public comment.