

SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING FURBEARER REPORT

IN REPLY REFER TO:
FWS/DMA/CEP 1-07

OMB No. 1018-
Expires

Dear:

This letter is our annual request for information on your state's implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) furbearer export program. Since September 2003, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has been working with the states and the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) in a work group to evaluate and identify potential improvements to the CITES U.S. furbearer export program.

I have previously reported changes that we have made to reduce the paperwork and other administrative burdens of the tagging program on the States and tribes, while also meeting the Service's responsibility to implement the CITES treaty. Since then, we have made additional significant changes to the program via a nationwide non-detriment finding for bobcat (*Lynx rufus*). Also, we have begun to prepare the groundwork for the Service to seek regulatory flexibility to fulfill our CITES obligations without necessarily having to rely on state tagging systems to export certain CITES-listed U.S. furbearers. The final report and action plan presented at the upcoming IAFWA Annual Meeting will provide details on this matter.

The Service has a legal obligation to ensure that export levels of species listed in Appendix II of CITES will not be detrimental to the survival of the species. For bobcat and river otter (*Lontra canadensis*), we made these findings for certain state and Indian tribal export programs in a series of rulemakings between 1984 and 1999, and for subsequent years, in administrative findings. In July 2005, the Division of Scientific Authority (DSA) advised the Division of Management Authority (DMA) that the export of bobcat taken in the contiguous 48 states of the United States will not be detrimental to the survival of the species. As a result of this finding, unapproved States or tribes requesting export authority for bobcat will not be required to provide population assessments of bobcat within their jurisdictions. However, legal acquisition requirements will still have to be met in order for a State or tribe to be approved for CITES bobcat export authority. DSA will continue to monitor the status of bobcats in the wild on a range-wide basis, with the understanding that the non-detriment finding may be modified if deemed necessary based on any new information that we may receive. Information requested in this letter will support this monitoring.

In order to fulfill our treaty obligations necessary to allow the continued export of bobcat and river otter, we are requesting information for the 2005-2006 seasons and ask that you submit this information to us by _____. In your review of the 2006-2007 season, and based on your most current information on bobcat and river otter that are approved for export from your State, we would appreciate it if you would provide the following information:

1. For each CITES-listed furbearer species harvested during the last season:
 - Number of animals tagged.
 - If known, total number of animals taken.
2. A statement giving your professional assessment of the status of each of these species in your state:

Is the population stable, increasing or decreasing (and at what rate if known)?
3. Have there been any changes to legislation or regulation enabling your tagging program?

Although not required, we appreciate any copies of reports on any CITES-listed furbearer species that you have prepared this year as part of your management program, or web addresses where this information is posted electronically (please note that we are not asking for any new reports or information, but rather reports that you may already have available).

Please send replies to _____, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Management Authority, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Room 700, Arlington, VA 22203 (fax 703-358-2298) or by E-mail to _____@fws.gov. Please note that this is a combined request for information from both the Division of Scientific Authority and the Division of Management Authority.

Thank you for your continuing cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact _____ of my staff at 703-358-1908.

Sincerely,

Chief, Division of Management Authority

Notice

Information requested herein is purely voluntary. However, submission of requested information is required in order to maintain program approval. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number is displayed. The OMB Control Number for this information collection is 1018-XXXX, which expires _____.

The reporting burden on the applicant for this information collection is 1 hour. This burden estimate includes time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data and completing and reviewing the report. You may direct comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of the information collection to the Service Information Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mail Stop 222, Arlington Square, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington D.C. 20240.