

2015 WILDLIFE HARVEST RECORD FOR THE FOND DU LAC BAND OF LAKE SUPERIOR CHIPPEWA

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INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this report is to document seasons, limits and harvest of deer, bear, moose, turkey, sandhill cranes and furbearers by the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa (FDL) on their Reservation and the 1854 and 1837 Ceded Territories of Minnesota where FDL members do the majority of their hunting and trapping. Harvest data from the 1837 and 1842 Ceded Territories of Wisconsin and Michigan is provided in summary form. More detailed harvest information for the 1837 and 1842 Ceded Territories is provided by the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC).

Under the Treaties of 1837, 1842 and 1854 the FDL Band retained hunting, fishing and gathering rights on approximately 28 million acres across Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan. In addition, FDL members hunt, fish and gather on their reservation of 100,000 acres near Cloquet, Minnesota (Fig. 1).

In 1977 the FDL Band developed and implemented the Reservation Conservation Code and in 1988 the Band implemented a conservation code that defined legal methods of take in the 1854 Ceded Territory. The Minnesota 1837 Conservation Code was first implemented in 1997. In 2012, the Band implemented conservation codes for the 1837 and 1842 Ceded Territories of Wisconsin and Michigan. Seasons and bag limits are determined on an annual basis.

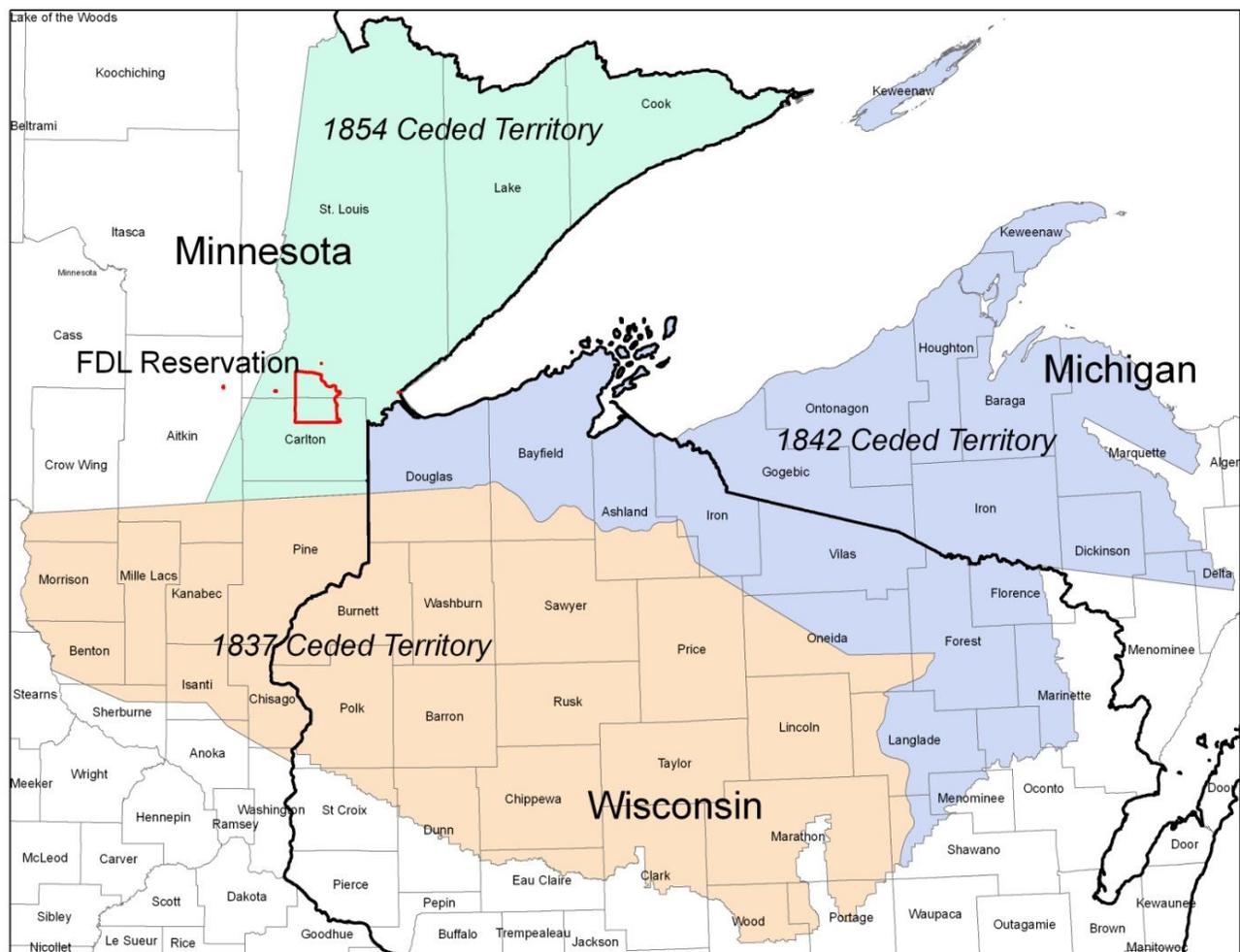


Figure 1. The Fond du Lac Reservation and the 1837, 1842 and 1854 Ceded Territories of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan.

LICENSES, TAGS AND CARCASS REGISTRATION

FDL members exercising their treaty rights are required to have a Hunting, Fishing and Gathering License and the proper permits and carcass tags in their possession while in the field. The FDL Band issues a single license to members which covers all hunting, fishing and gathering activities on the Reservation and in the ceded territories. The Native American Game and Fish Applications® (NAGFA) program was utilized to record license and carcass tag information for FDL members. This enabled license and tag information to be compatible with established GLIFWC procedures while enabling FDL members to cross borders with the same carcass tags.

1854 and 1837 Ceded Territories of Minnesota and the FDL Reservation

The Fond du Lac Resource Management Division (RMD) maintained registration stations at its office on the FDL Reservation, and locally with Country Corner Tavern, Sawyer Store and with RMD wildlife and enforcement staff in the field. In addition, online and phone registration systems were available to FDL members. The phone system was maintained through the FDL MIS Division and the online system utilized Google Docs®. After testing these systems in 2011 with deer, the phone and online systems were expanded to include fall turkey, moose and bear in 2012 and spring turkey and sandhill cranes in 2013. The registered furbearers – marten, fisher, bobcat and otter – could only be registered at the RMD office. A breakdown of how FDL hunters registered animals in 2015 is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Registration stations and methods used by FDL hunters for 2015.

	Total Registrations	Percentage of total
RMD Office	56	34%
Online	77	46%
Phone	23	14%
Sawyer Store	6	4%
RMD field staff	0	0%
Country Corner Tavern	2	1%
Conservation Officers	2	1%
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1837 and 1842 Ceded Territories of Wisconsin and Michigan

Deer, bear, turkey, fisher, bobcat and otter harvested by FDL members in the 1837 and 1842 Ceded Territories of Wisconsin and Michigan were registered using the NAGFA system. Access to NAGFA was available at the RMD office and other tribal offices in the 1837 and 1842 Ceded Territories. Cranes were registered by phone.

TURKEY

1854 and 1837 Ceded Territories of Minnesota and the FDL Reservation

The 2015 spring turkey season was April 11 - May 28 and the fall season September 8 - December 31 for the Reservation and open portions of the Minnesota 1837 and 1854 Ceded Territories (Fig. 2). A single tag was available initially to each FDL member with additional tags possible following registration of a bird. The tag could be used either in the ceded territories or on the Reservation. Birds of either sex could be taken, and all birds had to be registered with reference to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) turkey

units or the FDL Reservation within 3 business days of harvest (Fig. 2).

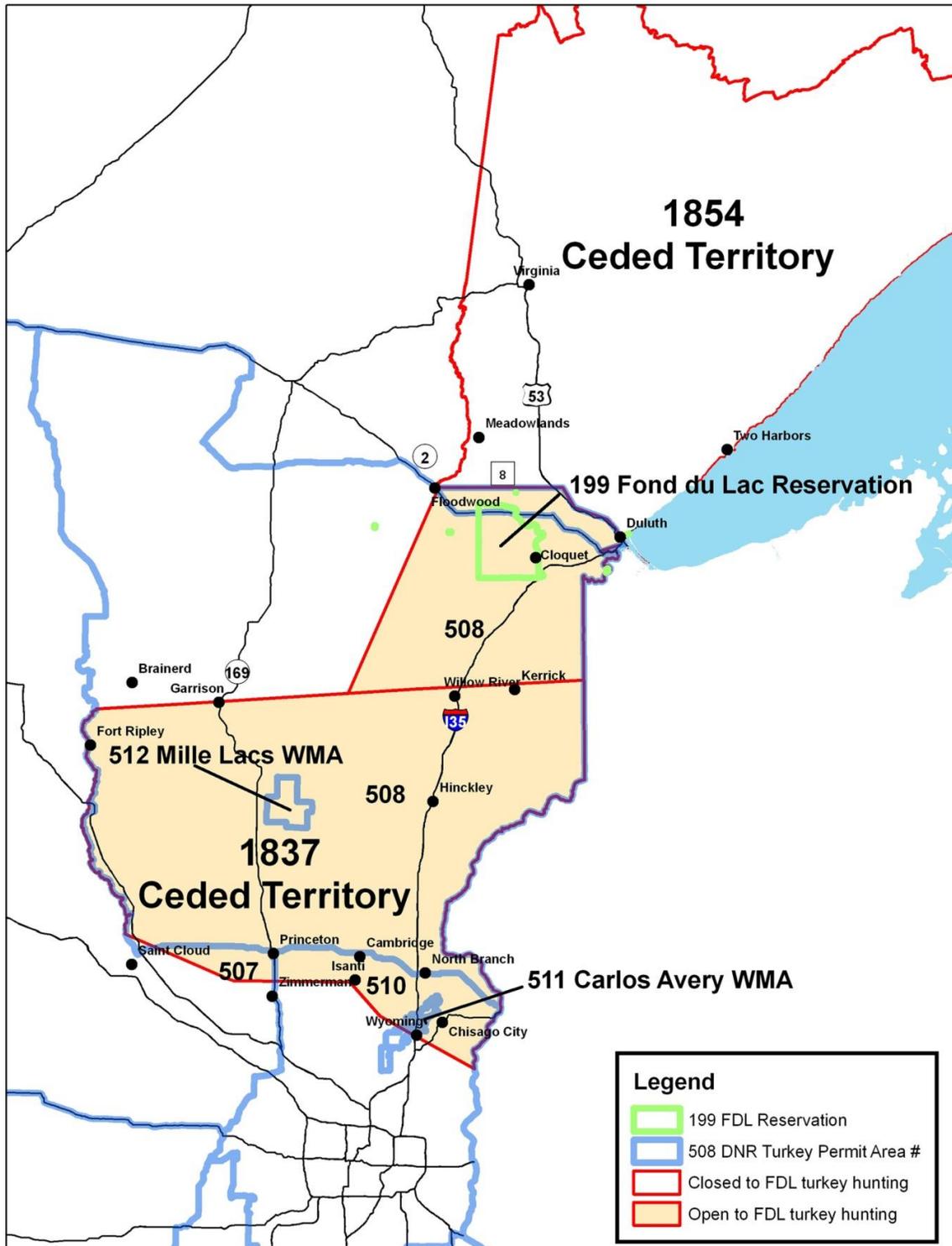


Figure 2. The FDL Reservation, DNR turkey units and areas open to FDL spring and fall turkey hunting.

Twenty-seven FDL members got tags for the spring season and 255 members got tags for the fall season. In addition, 16 members of other recognized tribes who reside on the FDL Reservation were issued

licenses and turkey tags to hunt on the FDL Reservation. One hunter registered a gobbler from unit 508 in the spring season and two hunters each registered a gobbler from unit 508 in the fall season.

1837 and 1842 Ceded Territories of Wisconsin and Michigan

The spring season was April 15 - May 26 in Wisconsin and Michigan. The fall season was September 8 - December 31. No FDL members registered a turkey from the 1837 or 1842 Ceded Territories of Wisconsin and Michigan in 2015.

BEAR

Two tags at a time were available to FDL members to hunt bear with additional tags possible after a bear was registered. Tags could be utilized either on the FDL Reservation or any of the ceded territories. An individual hunter's limit was 4 bears. A total of 173 FDL members requested bear tags. Cubs and sows with cubs were protected from harvest.

1854 and 1837 Ceded Territories of Minnesota and the FDL Reservation

The 2015 bear season in the 1854 Ceded Territory and the FDL Reservation was August 29 – December 31. Baiting was legal from August 8 - December 31. The 1837 Ceded Territory season was September 1 - November 15. Bait stations were permissible August 14 - November 15. All harvested bears were required to be registered within 3 business days of harvest with reference to the DNR antlerless deer permit area (PA) of harvest (Fig. 3).

In addition to FDL members, 10 members of other recognized tribes who reside on the FDL Reservation were issued 10 licenses and bear tags to hunt on the FDL Reservation. Five FDL hunters registered 5 bears. One male bear was taken from the FDL Reservation (PA 199) one female from PA 127, 2 males from PA 181 and one male from 183. Bear harvest by state-licensed hunters on the Reservation was 2 females.

1837 and 1842 Ceded Territories of Wisconsin and Michigan

The 2015 bear season was September 8 - October 31. Three FDL members registered 4 female bears; 2 from Burnett County and 1 each from Bayfield and Washburn Counties, Wisconsin.

DEER

Four tags at a time were available to FDL members to hunt deer in the ceded territories with additional tags possible after a deer was registered. Tags could be utilized in any of the ceded territories. There was no individual limit and no restrictions on the harvest of antlered or antlerless deer. A total of 435 FDL members requested 1738 ceded territory deer tags. In an effort to recover the Reservation deer population, band members were limited to only 2 Reservation deer tags with no restrictions on age or sex of deer harvested. A total of 346 FDL members requested Reservation deer tags. In addition to FDL members, 19 members of other recognized tribes residing on the FDL Reservation were issued tags to deer hunt on the Reservation.

1854 and 1837 Ceded Territories of Minnesota and the FDL Reservation

The 2015 deer season was September 8 – December 31 for both ceded territories and the Reservation. Deer were required to be registered within 3 business days of harvest with reference to the DNR antlerless

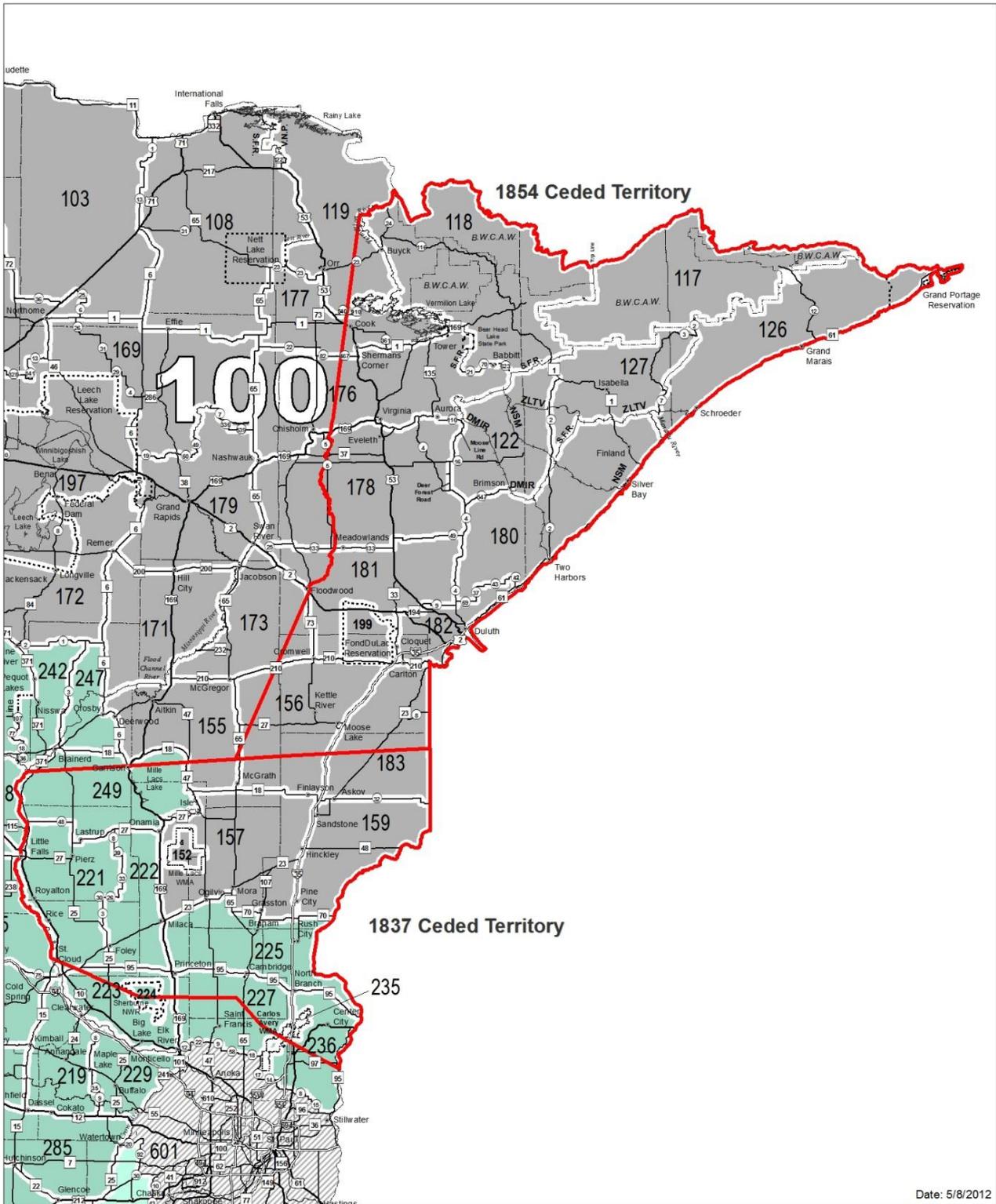


Figure 3. Minnesota antlerless deer permit areas and the 1837 and 1854 Ceded Territories of Minnesota. Permit area 199 is the FDL Reservation.

deer permit areas of harvest (Fig. 3). A total of 90 FDL and 1 member of other bands registered 157 deer from the Reservation and the 1854 and 1837 Ceded Territories of Minnesota (av. = 1.7, range = 1-8). Most successful hunters (62%) registered only 1 deer with another 22% of hunters registering 2 deer. The remaining 16% of hunters took 3-8 deer apiece. Of the 154 deer where method of take was recorded, 7 deer were taken with a bow, 2 with a muzzleloader and 145 with a regular firearm. In addition to tribal hunter harvest, RMD conservation officers harvested 20 deer for subsistence/ceremonial purposes. The 2015 FDL deer harvest was up only slightly from 2014 (Fig. 4). Likely, the harsh winter of 2012-13 with its associated deer mortality and past DNR efforts to decrease deer populations, were significant factors. A breakdown of total FDL Reservation and Minnesota 1854 and 1837 Ceded Territory deer harvest by permit area, age and sex is provided in Table 2. The majority of animals were taken from the Fond du Lac Reservation and neighboring permit areas. As in past years, the majority of deer were harvested in November (Table 3).

Table 2. 2015 FDL deer harvest by DNR antlerless deer permit area, age and sex.

DNR Antlerless Deer Permit Area	Adult Buck	Adult Doe	Buck Fawn	Doe Fawn	Total Harvest by Permit Area
118	0	0	0	1	1
156	6	7	1	3	17
157	1	0	0	0	1
159	0	3	0	0	3
176	0	2	0	1	3
177	1	1	0	0	2
178	2	5	1	0	8
180	1	4	1	0	6
181	21	29	7	3	60
182	9	5	2	1	17
183	6	5	2	1	14
199 (FDL Reservation)	18	18	4	3	43
221	0	1	0	0	1
225	1	0	0	0	1
Total Harvest	66	80	18	13	177

Table 3. FDL deer harvest by month.

Registration Period	Deer Harvest
September	7
October	21
November	101
December	28
subsistence/ceremonial*	20
total	177

*Subsistence/ceremonial deer are taken as needed throughout the year

In 2015 FDL hunters participated in state park deer hunts in the 1837 and 1854 Ceded Territories. These hunts are held to reduce deer numbers and impacts to vegetation inside park boundaries. Details of 2015 season formats for state park hunts are in Table 4. Although permits were claimed for 4 state park hunts, no deer were registered from these special hunts by FDL members.

Table 4. 2015 Minnesota state park hunt participation by the FDL Band

State Park	Hunt Type	County	Hunt Dates	Available FDL Permits	Permits Claimed
St. Croix	Archery	Pine	Oct. 10-30 & Nov. 2-8	12	2
Banning	Firearms-Youth Only	Pine	Oct. 31 - Nov. 1	1	0
St. Croix	Firearms-Youth Only	Pine	Oct. 31 - Nov. 1	2	0
Tettegouche	Firearms-Youth Only	Lake	Oct. 17-18	2	0
Cascade	Firearms	Cook	Nov. 7-22	none required	
Judge C. R. Magney	Firearms	Cook	Nov. 7-22	none required	
Gooseberry Falls/Split Rock/Tettegouche	Firearms	Lake	Nov. 7-22	10	3
St. Croix	Firearms	Pine	Nov. 19-22	20	17
Soudan/Lake Vermillion	Muzzleloader	St. Louis	Nov. 28 - Dec. 13	3	0
Jay Cooke	Muzzleloader	Carlton	Dec. 5-9	5	1
Crow Wing	Muzzleloader	Crow Wing	Dec. 5-6	2	0

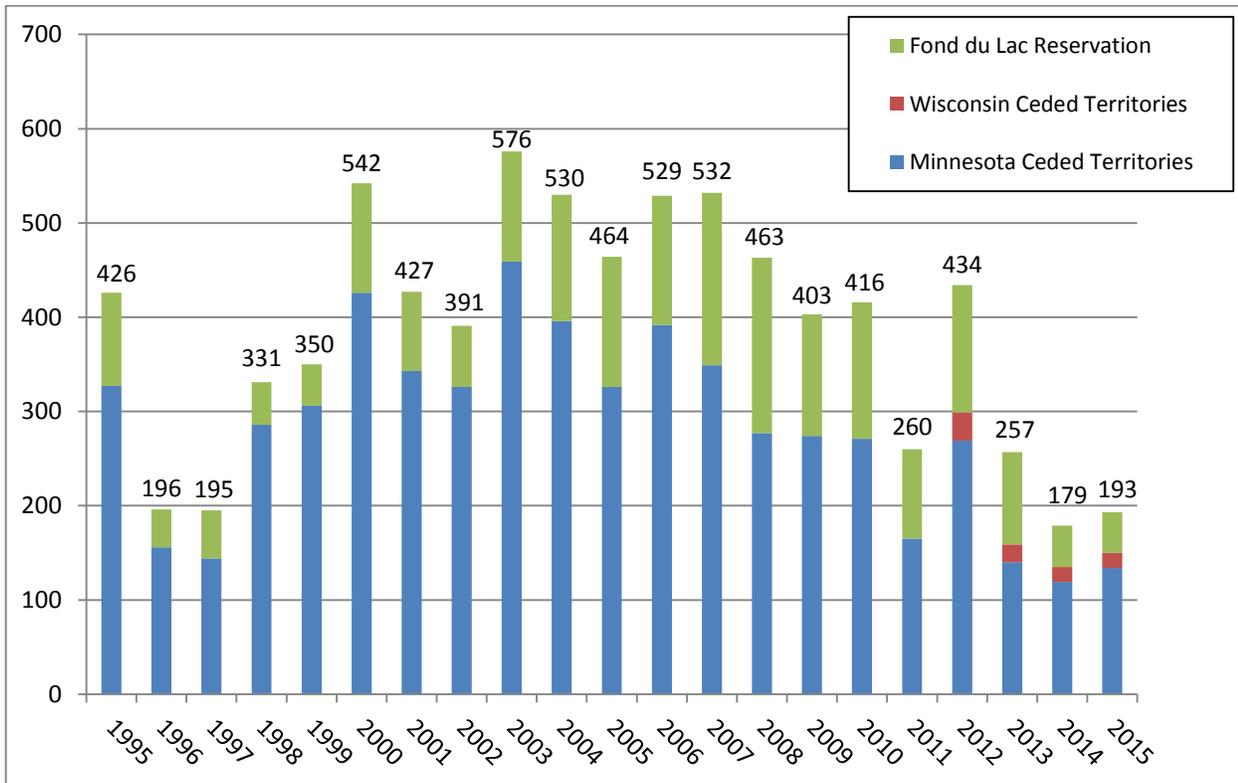


Figure 4. Fond du Lac Reservation and Ceded Territory deer harvests 1995-2015.

The RMD and the Cloquet DNR office continued their cooperation on deer harvest strategies for the Reservation. Predictive models and anecdotal information indicated local deer numbers remained below desired levels so the RMD requested and the DNR agreed to continue their “bucks only” harvest strategy for state-licensed hunters on the Reservation. This strategy allows a state-licensed hunter to take 1 antlered deer. Total 2015 deer harvest by state-licensed hunters on the FDL Reservation was 97 deer; 94 antlered and 3 antlerless deer. It was not clear if the 3 antlerless deer were the result of registration errors or illegal hunting.

1837 and 1842 Ceded Territories of Wisconsin and Michigan

The 2015 deer season was September 8 – January 3. Five FDL members registered 16 deer from Wisconsin; 13 from Douglas County and 3 from Washburn County (Fig. 1 and Fig. 4).

MOOSE

1854 and 1837 Ceded Territories of Minnesota

Due to continued low moose numbers the Fond du Lac Band elected not to hold a moose hunt in 2015. The State of Minnesota and the 1854 Treaty Authority also elected not to hold moose hunts.

REGISTERED FURBEARERS

1854 and 1837 Ceded Territories of Minnesota and the FDL Reservation

The 2015-16 hunting and trapping season for registered furbearers – marten, fisher, bobcat and otter - was September 8 - March 31 on the FDL Reservation and the 1854 Ceded Territory and October 1 - March 1 in

the 1837 Ceded Territory. All 4 species were required to be registered at the RMD office. Four FDL members registered 27 bobcat, marten and fisher (Table 5 and Fig. 5). No otter were registered. One bobcat was shot and the remaining animals taken by trapping. Fluctuations in FDL’s fur harvest are as likely due to fur prices and the small number of trappers involved as to changes in furbearer populations. One individual accounted for 48% of FDL’s total registered furbearer harvest. The RMD registers furbearers with reference to the DNR’s antlerless deer PAs (Fig. 3).

Harvest by state-licensed trappers on the FDL Reservation can only be estimated. State-licensed trappers are required to report harvest with reference to township and then a harvest location is randomly assigned within the township. The Reservation touches 11 different townships; however, only 1 township is entirely enclosed by Reservation boundaries. On this basis, the estimated 2015 state-licensed harvest on the FDL Reservation is 4 bobcats, 11 otter and no fisher or marten, but the actual harvest may be different.

Table 5. FDL 2015-16 registered furbearer harvest for the 1854 and 1837 Ceded Territories of Minnesota and the FDL Reservation.

Species	FDL Reservation				Total
	PA 122	PA 156	PA 181	(PA 199)	
Marten	3	1	8	0	12
Fisher	4	0	4	0	8
Bobcat	1	0	4	2	7
Otter	0	0	0	0	0
Total	8	1	16	2	27

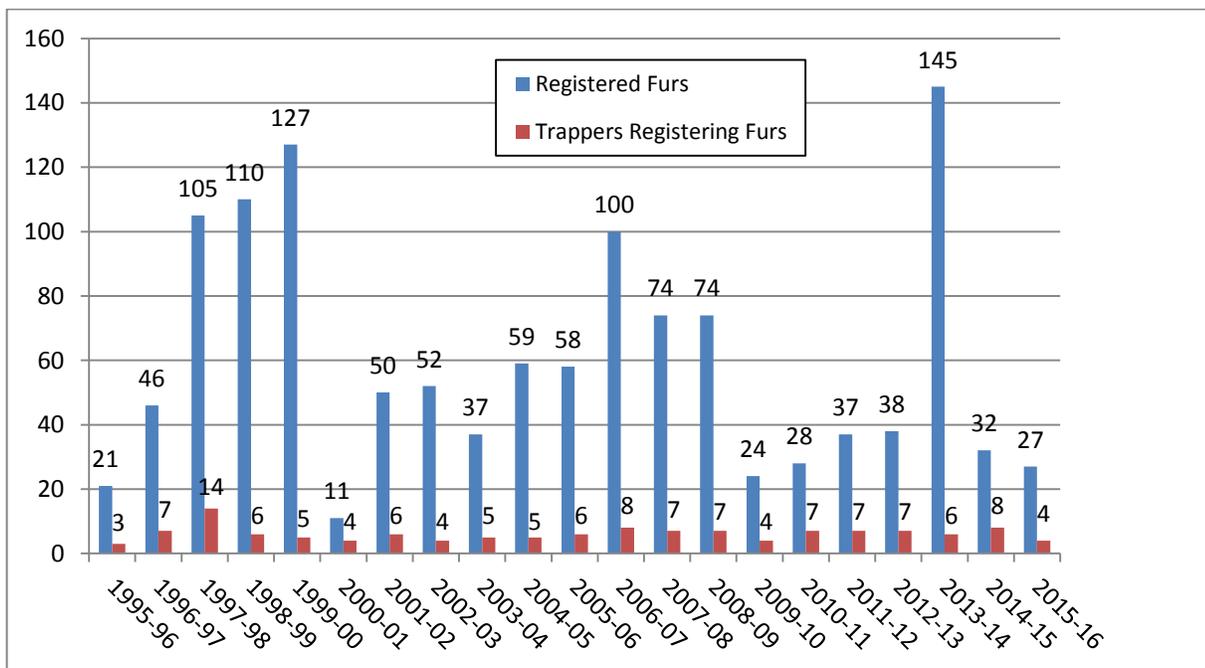


Figure 5. Total numbers of FDL trappers registering furs and their registered furbearer harvest from the FDL Reservation and the 1854 and 1837 Ceded Territories of Minnesota.

1837 and 1842 Ceded Territories of Wisconsin and Michigan

In 2015-16 there were various open and closing dates for the harvest of registered furbearers. There was no marten season in the 1837 or 1842 Ceded Territories of Wisconsin. One FDL member got carcass tags for bobcat, fisher and otter but no animals were registered.

SANDHILL CRANES

1854 and 1837 Ceded Territories of Minnesota

The FDL Band's 2015 sandhill crane season was September 1 - November 30 in the 1854 and 1837 Ceded Territories of Minnesota. There was no season on the FDL Reservation. The daily limit was 1 crane with no season or possession limit. A carcass tag was required before hunting and additional tags were possible following registration of a bird. Eighty-four FDL members requested crane tags. One crane was registered from permit area 183 (Fig. 3).

1837 and 1842 Ceded Territories of Wisconsin and Michigan

The 2015 sandhill crane season was September 1 - December 31 with a daily limit of 2. No carcass tags were required for cranes, but any birds harvested had to be registered. No FDL members registered cranes from either ceded territory.

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