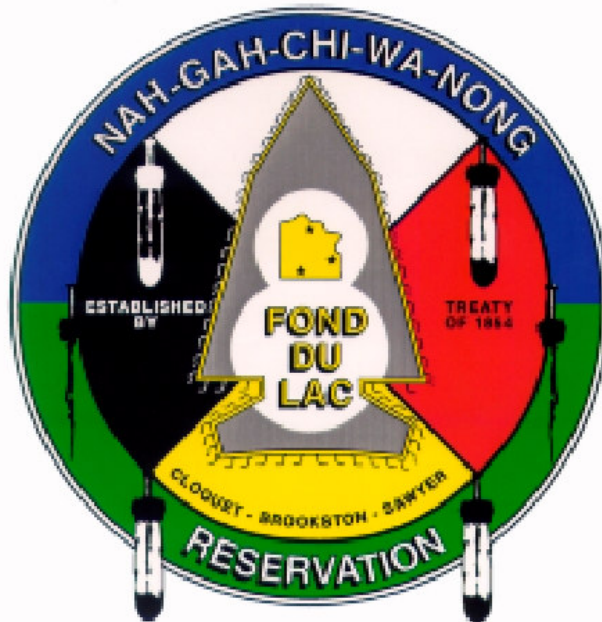


2008 BIG GAME AND FURBEARER HARVEST  
RECORD FOR THE FOND DU LAC RESERVATION  
AND CEDED TERRITORIES

Mike Schrage  
Wildlife Biologist

Fond du Lac Resource Management Division  
1720 Big Lake Rd.  
Cloquet, MN 55720



September 2, 2009

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I would like to thank Terri Redding, Ellen Bassett, John Smith, Mike Smith, Mark Zacher, Pete Durfee, Josh Whitebird, Darren Seppala, Duane Barney, Bake Evanson, Tim and Phil Whelan, and the personnel at Chalstrom's Bait and Tackle, Country Corner Tavern, Fond du Lac Gas and Grocery, Sawyer Store and the Cotton ICO Store for assisting with harvest registration.

**INTRODUCTION**

Under the Treaties of 1854 and 1837 the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa (FDL) retains hunting, fishing and gathering rights within the lands covered by these treaties - approximately 8,000,000 acres of northeastern and east-central Minnesota (Fig. 1). In addition, FDL band members hunt, fish and gather on their reservation of 100,000 acres near Cloquet, Minnesota. This report summarizes the FDL harvest of bear, turkey, deer, moose and furbearers in the 1854 and 1837 Ceded Territories and on the Fond du Lac Reservation.

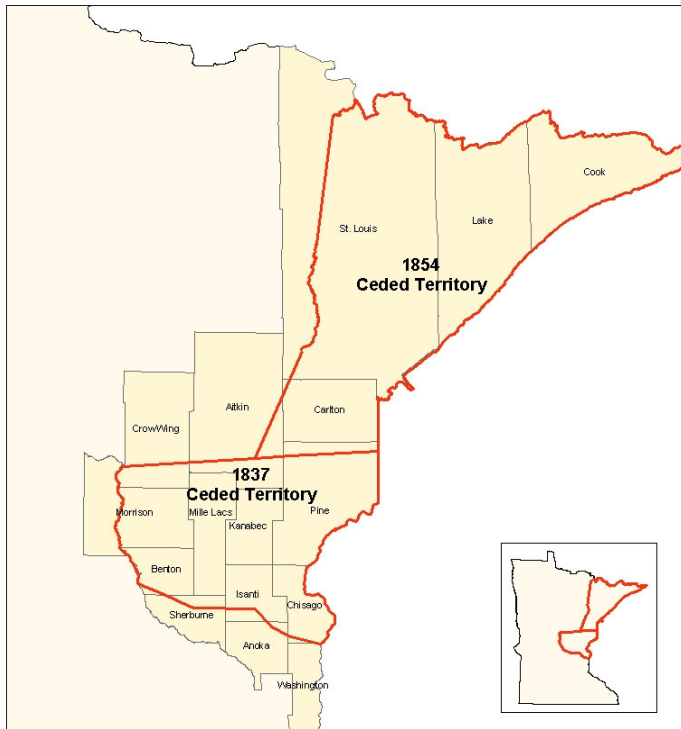


Figure 1. The 1837 and 1854 Ceded Territories in Minnesota.

In 1977 the Fond du Lac 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 1837 Conservation Code was first implemented in 1997. Seasons and bag limits are determined on an annual basis. Band members exercising their right to hunt 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 Reservation is divided into 6 wildlife harvest units for the purposes of reporting wildlife harvest (Fig. 2). To facilitate sharing of data with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission and to assist the management and enforcement efforts of the FDL Resource Management Division (Division), the location of harvested animals in the ceded territories are referenced using DNR management units. However in the case of moose, FDL has developed their own zone system for the purpose of distributing harvest pressure.

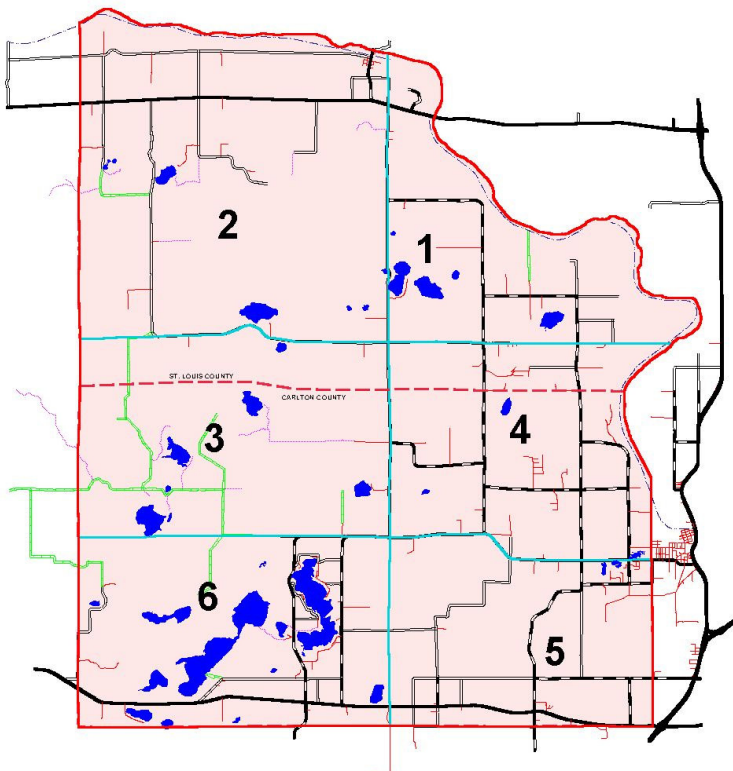


Figure 2 - Fond du Lac Reservation wildlife harvest zones

## TURKEY

The 1837 Ceded Territory spring turkey season in 2008 was April 12 - May 29 and the fall season September 2 - December 31. The Reservation and part of the 1854 Ceded Territory were open to turkey harvest during the spring season (Fig. 3). The 1837 Wildlife Management Plan for 2007-2011 provides for tribal harvest thresholds for each state antlerless deer permit area below which the bands need not declare a turkey harvest quota. A single tag was available initially to each FDL member, with additional tags possible following the registration of a bird. The turkey tag could be used either in the ceded territories or on the Reservation. Thirteen members requested a total of 16 tags in the spring. Fifteen members requested 15 fall tags. All birds had to be registered at the Division office. Three birds were taken in the spring from Unit 235 and 1 from 181 in the fall. The threshold level for Unit 235 was 8 birds. There were no thresholds established in the 1854 Ceded Territory where unit 181 is located.

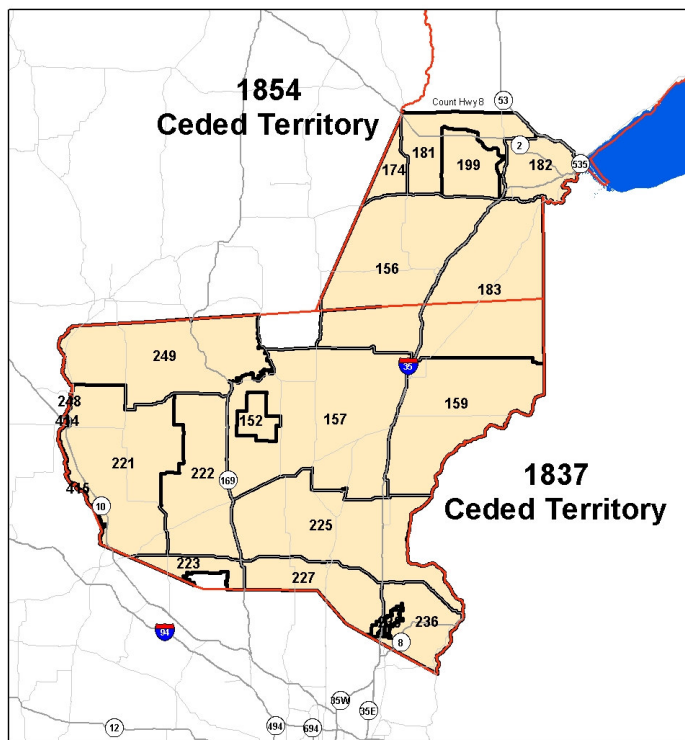


Figure 3. Areas open to Fond du Lac turkey hunting.

## **BEAR**

### **Ceded Territories**

A single bear tag was available to band members to hunt in the ceded territories. Following registration of an animal, a second tag could be obtained. Cubs and sows with cubs were protected from harvest. All harvested bears were required to be registered at 1 of 7 big game registration stations or with a Division wildlife or conservation officer staff member. The 2008 bear season in the 1854 Ceded Territory was September 1 - November 30. Baiting was legal from August 15 - November 30. The 1837 Ceded Territory season was September 1 - November 15. Bait stations were permissible August 15 - November 15. A total of 35 bears from 2 state management units and an unlimited number of bears from the state's no-quota area were available for harvest under the 1837 Conservation Code. There were no such quotas under the 1854 Conservation Code.

Band members requested 154 initial bear tags for hunting in their ceded territories. No second tags were requested. In the 1854 Ceded Territory one male was registered from antlerless deer permit area 127 and 1 male and 1 female from unit 181 (Fig. 3). No bears were registered from the 1837 Ceded Territory.

### **Reservation**

The Reservation bear season was September 1 - November 30. Baiting was allowed August 15 - November 30. Band members received one tag initially with a second tag possible upon registration of an animal. Band members requested 135 initial tags. No second tags were requested. A band member registered 1 male bear from Wildlife Harvest Unit 2. State hunters registered 1 bear from the Reservation.

It's generally accepted that many bear tags are requested by members because they are free and easily obtained from the Division office. Very few members are believed to actively pursue bears. In addition, many band members are members of the Bear Clan and may feel a spiritual affinity to the bear and therefore an unwillingness to hunt this species.

## **DEER**

### **Ceded Territories**

In the Ceded Territories, the 2008 firearms and archery deer season was September 2 - December 31. There were no restrictions on sex of legal deer in either Ceded Territory. Deer were required to be registered with reference to the DNR antlerless deer permit area of harvest (Fig. 4).

A total of 462 band members requested 1,586 ceded territory deer tags. Members received the first 1-3 tags at the Division office and subsequent 1-3 tags at the office upon registering 1-3 deer. The total individual limit was 15 deer. The majority of members requested

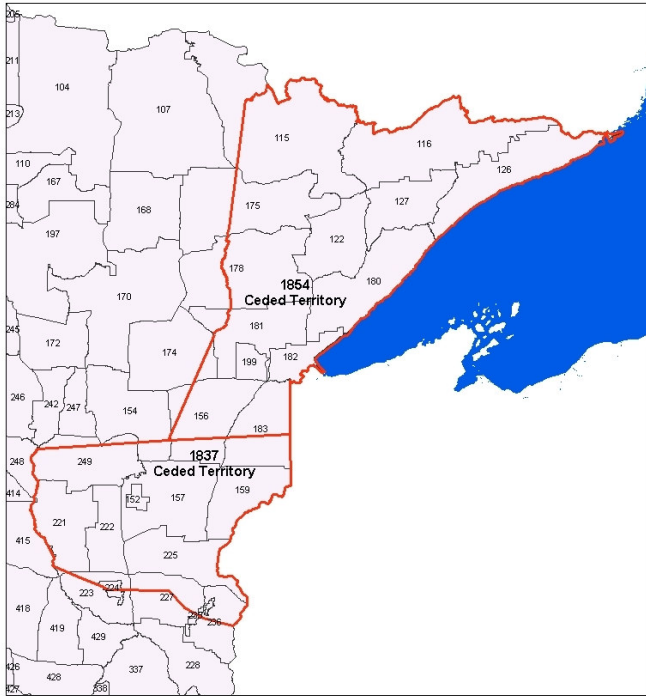


Figure 4. Minnesota antlerless deer permit areas.

only 3 tags. One individual requested all 15 available tags. All animals were required to be registered within 3 business days of harvest at 1 of 7 registration stations or with a Division wildlife or conservation officer staff member.

A regular cash prize drawing was continued during the firearms season to encourage hunters to register their animals. Prizes of \$50, \$25 and \$15 were awarded in each drawing. Deer from both ceded territories were eligible for drawings.

The majority of animals were taken from permit areas near the Fond du Lac Reservation. Band member harvest for 2008 was 252 animals. In addition to the member harvest, 25 deer were harvested for subsistence/ceremonial purposes by Division conservation officers for a total of 277 deer (Table 1 and Fig. 5). The harvest was a decrease from 2007, and about 38% below the previous 5 year average. Method of take is not differentiated on registration forms; however, the percentage of members who actively pursue deer with a bow is believed to be quite small. As in past years, the majority of deer were harvested in November (Table 2).

Table 1. 2008 ceded territory Fond du Lac deer harvest breakdown by sex, age class, and DNR antlerless permit area.

Permit Area	Adult Buck Harvest	Buck Fawn Harvest	Adult Doe Harvest	Doe Fawn Harvest	Total
115	2	0	7	0	9
116	0	0	0	0	0
122	1	1	1	0	3
126	1	1	2	0	4
127	1	1	2	0	4
152	0	0	0	0	0
154	0	0	0	0	0
156	4	1	1	0	6
157	0	0	0	0	0
159	0	0	1	0	1
174	0	0	0	0	0
175	0	0	0	0	0
178	4	5	8	8	25
180	14	1	11	2	28
181	64	19	55	12	150
182	1	0	0	0	1
183	9	3	11	2	25
221	1	0	0	0	1
222	0	0	0	0	0
223	0	0	0	0	0
224	0	0	0	0	0
225	0	0	0	0	0
225	0	0	0	0	0
227	0	0	0	0	0
235	0	0	0	0	0
236	0	0	0	0	0
249	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown Permit Area	4	0	2	0	6
St. Croix State Park	0	1	5	0	6
St. Croix SP Youth Hunt	0	0	0	0	0
Wild River State Park	1	2	3	2	8
Total =	107	35	109	26	277

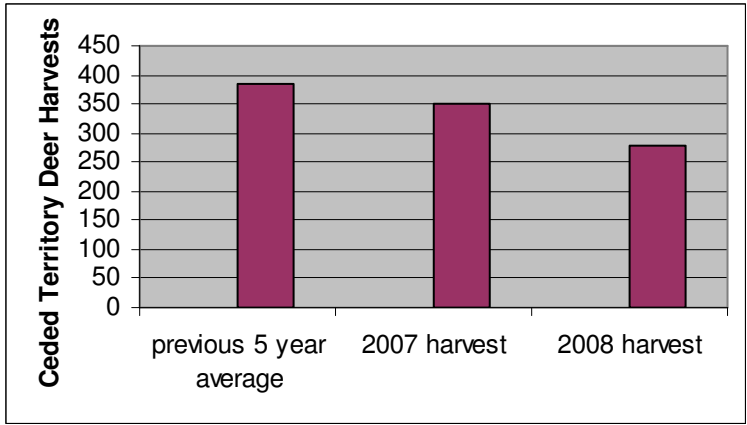


Figure 5. Recent historical Fond du Lac ceded territory deer harvests.

Table 2. 2008 Fond du Lac ceded territory deer harvest registration by month.

Registration Period	Deer Harvest
September	23
October	53
November	148
December	28
Unknown	0
Subsistence/Ceremonial*	25
Total =	277

\*Subsistence/Ceremonial deer are taken as needed throughout the year

**Reservation**

The Reservation archery and firearms deer season was September 2 - December 31. FDL members and members of other federally recognized bands who reside on the FDL Reservation, were allowed up to 6 deer tags valid for either sex and any legal method of take. Two tags were granted initially with additional tags after an animal was registered.

A total of 435 band members requested 1,416 Reservation deer tags. Twenty-three members requested all 6 tags. As in the ceded territories, a drawing was held at periodic intervals during the season in order to encourage registration.

The 2008 band member harvest was 181 animals (Table 3 and Fig. 6). In addition, Division conservation officers harvested 5 animals for subsistence/ceremonial purposes for a total of 186 deer. The majority of the harvest occurred in November (Table 4).



Table 3. 2008 Fond du Lac Reservation deer harvest breakdown by age, sex and management unit.

Wildlife Harvest Unit	Adult Buck Harvest	Buck Fawn Harvest	Adult Doe Harvest	Doe Fawn Harvest	Total
1	14	7	7	1	29
2	17	13	21	3	54
3	12	4	14	2	32
4	19	7	15	1	42
5	5	2	5	1	13
6	6	0	6	3	15
Unknown unit	0	0	1	0	1
Total =	73	33	69	11	186

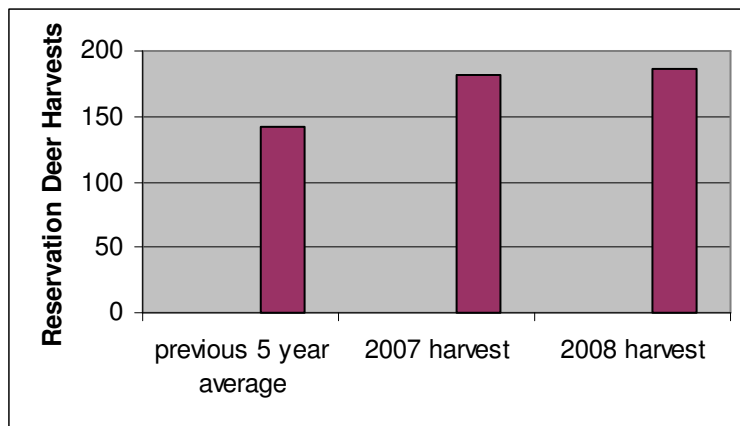


Figure 6. Recent historical Fond du Lac Reservation deer harvests.

Table 4. Fond du Lac Reservation deer harvest by time period.

Registration Period	Deer Harvest
September	20
October	24
November	127
December	10
Subsistence/Ceremonial*	5
Total =	186

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

In an effort to increase antlerless deer harvest and keep the number of deer on the Reservation in check, the Reservation's Conservation Committee requested that the DNR switch from a lottery to a managed strategy for antlerless deer. This allowed any state-licensed hunter on the Reservation to take up to 2 deer of which at least one had to be an antlerless deer. This request was honored. Total deer harvest by state-licensed hunters was 119 adult bucks and 99 antlerless deer.

## **MOOSE**

The 1854 Ceded Territory moose season was October 4 - December 31. In response to declining moose numbers, harvest was limited to antlered moose only. The Reservation Business Committee approved the issuance of 72 moose permits through a drawing process to parties of 3-4 hunters for the 1854 Ceded Territory. A total of 78 parties applied for the available permits and 71 permits were eventually claimed. A \$20 nonrefundable fee was required to enter the drawing and a \$50.00 deposit was required for each permit. The fee is intended to encourage only serious moose hunters to apply for a permit and to generate funding for moose related projects. The deposit was refunded upon the registration of a moose or the return of an unused carcass tag. Each permit was valid in 1 of 8 FDL Moose Hunt Zones established by the Division. Each FDL zone conforms to from 2 to 8 state moose zones (Fig. 7 and Table 5).

The 1837 moose season opened on September 2 and ran through December 31. A tribal quota of 5 moose were available for harvest under the 1837 Conservation Code. Fond du Lac made 5 permits available to band members; however, no permits were requested. The lack of interest in 1837 moose permits probably reflects the very low numbers of moose present in that area.

All moose were required to be registered within 3 business days of harvest at 1 of 7 registration stations or with a Division wildlife or conservation officer staff member. Antler spread, and the FDL and DNR moose zones were recorded. In addition, the hunter was required to present an incisor tooth for ageing. Hunters were asked to collect tissue samples from their moose for a moose health assessment project conducted by the DNR in cooperation with the bands. Many band members returned complete or partial health kits.

A total of 13 bull moose were registered by Fond du Lac hunters for a harvest success rate of 18%. This continues the trend of declining harvests and success rates for moose hunters in recent years (Fig. 8). In addition, 1 cow moose was harvested for subsistence and ceremonial purposes by Division conservation officers.

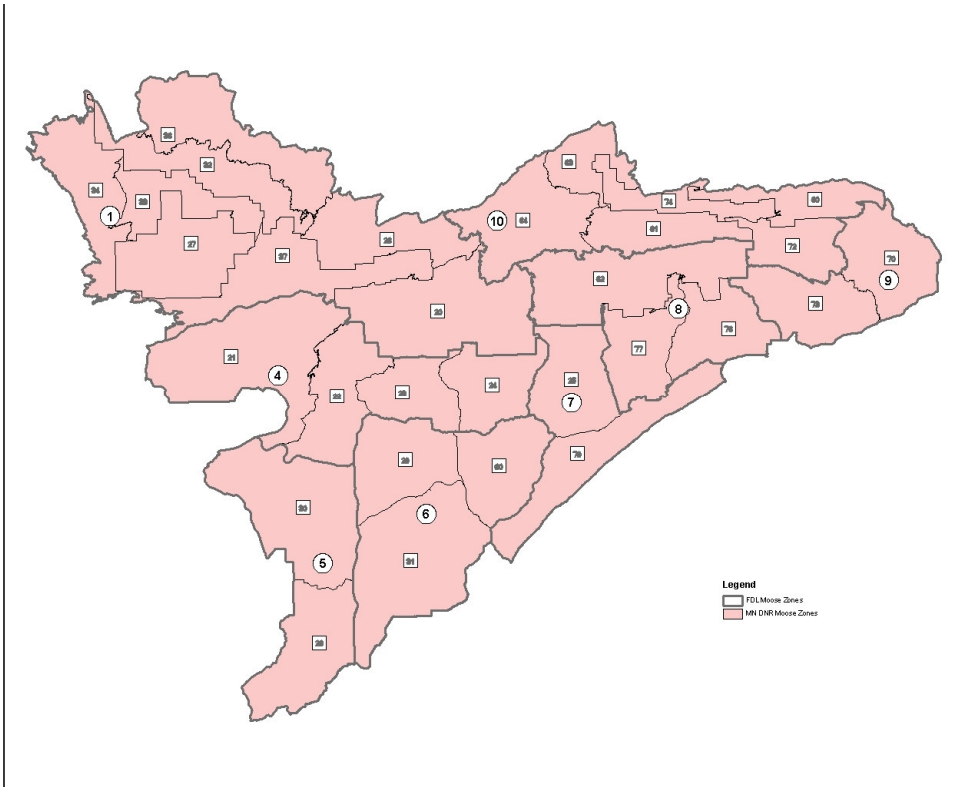


Figure 7. Fond du Lac and corresponding State Moose Harvest Zones.

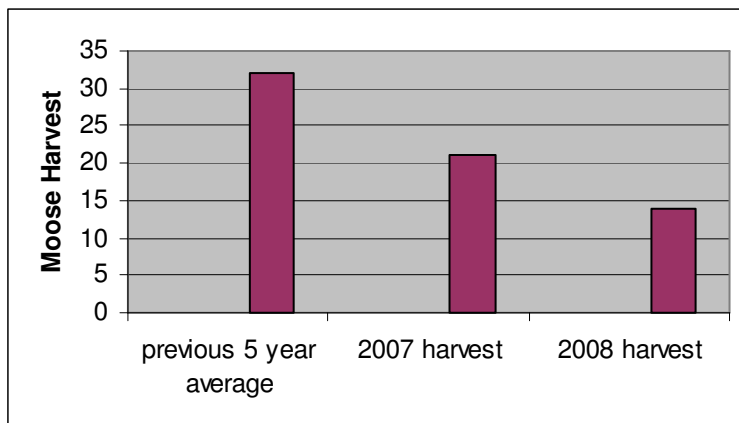


Figure 8. Recent historical Fond du Lac moose harvests.

Table 5. 2008 Fond du Lac moose harvest breakdown by FDL and state zone.

<b>FDL Zone</b>	<b>State Zone</b>	<b>Bull Harvest</b>	<b>Cow Harvest</b>	<b>Calf Harvest</b>	<b>FDL Zone Totals</b>
1	20	0	0	0	0
	26	0	0	0	
	27	0	0	0	
	32	0	0	0	
	33	0	0	0	
	34	0	0	0	
	36	0	0	0	
	37	0	0	0	
4	21	0	0	0	1
	22	0	0	0	
	23	0	0	0	
	24	1	0	0	
5	28	0	0	0	1
	30	1	0	0	
6	29	0	0	0	2
	31	1	0	0	
	80	1	0	0	
7	25	2	0	0	2
	79	0	0	0	
8	62				2
	76	1	0	0	
	77	1	0	0	
9	70	1	0	0	3
	73	2	0	0	
10	60	0	0	0	3
	61	0	0	0	
	63	0	0	0	
	64	0	0	0	
	72	2	1	0	
	74	0	0	0	
<b>Total =</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>

The average age of adult bulls harvested was 4.1 years (N = 13, Range = 2-10. Rounded to the nearest inch, the average antler spread was 41" (N = 13, Range = 26-53").

## FURBEARERS

For the 2008–2009 trapping season 7 FDL band members registered 74 fisher, marten, bobcat and otter pelts (Table 6). This harvest is equal to last season’s harvest and higher than the previous 5 year average of 66 (Fig. 9). Most animals were harvested in November and December, with a few in February and March. No furbearers were harvested by firearms this past season.

The Division registers furbearers using the DNR’s antlerless deer permit areas and FDL Reservation harvest units (Fig. 2 and Fig. 4). Proportional distribution would suggest 1 male marten was harvested in the 1837 Ceded Territory in unit 156 with the remainder coming from either the Reservation (permit area 199) or the 1854 Ceded Territory.

Table 6. Fond du Lac registered furbearer harvest for the 2008–2009 season.

Harvest Unit	Female Fisher	Male Fisher	Female Marten	Male Marten	Male Otter	Female Otter	Female Bobcat	Male Bobcat	Total
Res. 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Res. 2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Res. 3	0	2	1	0	0	0	2	0	5
Res. 4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Res. 5	2	2	0	0	1	0	4	0	9
Res. 6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
122	5	2	6	23	0	0	0	0	36
127	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
156	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	5
159	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
174	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
180	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
181	1	5	2	6	1	0	1	0	16
Total=	9	11	12	33	2	0	7	0	74

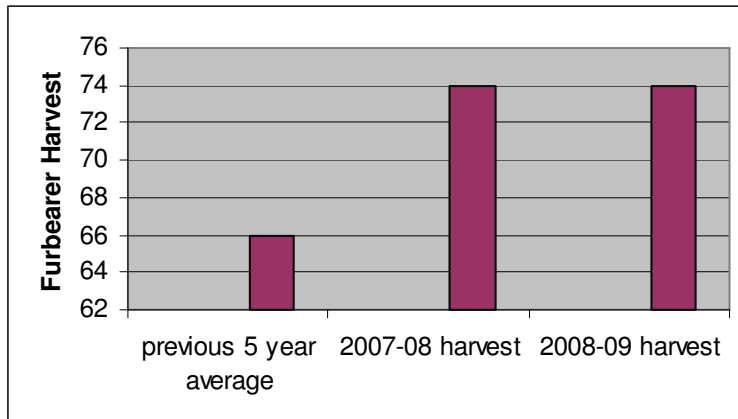


Figure 9. Recent historical Fond du Lac registered furbearer harvests.