Fur Trappers Set State Record

Fourth In A Series

Louisiana's fur industry reached a record $13.8 million during the 1976 season; fish and shellfish brought in $89 million in 1975; and the state's first official alligator harvest grossed nearly $340,000.

The state's diversified and growing fish and game industry is examined in the publication, "The State of the State in 1977, an economic and social report to the governor."

2.5 Million Pelts

Published by the State Planning Office, the book reports trappers took 2.5 million pelts in 1976, earning $13,820,062. The previous record season was 1974 when 2.3 million pelts brought $13,319,953.

The fish and shellfish catch in coastal and inland districts totaled 1.1 billion pounds — highest of any state — and had a value of $88,985,703 — fourth highest of any state.

This represents a drop of 105 million pounds from 1974, but a jump of $875,000.

Reason For Decline

"Lower menhaden (pogy) landings were responsible for the decline in volume," explains the report, "while sharp increases in shrimp prices caused a significant gain in value."

The menhaden catch of 984.1 million pounds in 1975 was down 95.2 million from the previous year. Shrimp landings also dropped in 1975, 53.1 million pounds (heads-on) against 59.6 million pounds in 1974.

The state's first official alligator harvest grossed nearly $340,000.

Oyster Harvest

A high point of the season was the oyster harvest of 13.7 million pounds of meat, passing the previous record set in 1939 by more than 100,000 pounds. Oyster landings were up 37 per cent in volume and 13 per cent in value. The 1975-76 season figures were 13.7 million pounds, worth $7.2 million.

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission's alligator harvest program, started in July 1976, produced 389 alligators caught by 198 hunters Sept. 9 through Oct. in Cameron, Vermilion and Lafourche Parishes. Another 60 alligators were taken from farms.

The average price per hide was $11,671, bringing $35,672 for the wild and pen-reared alligators.

The commission pointed out that the harvest represented 92.1 per cent of alligator tags issued (4,767).

(Continued On Page 3, Col. 1)