

Annual Mammal Survey 2015

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Abstract

Annual mammal surveys are used as an index to species distribution and abundance. For the 2015 Annual Mammal Survey, numbers of black bear, and bobcat per respondent were above long-term averages. Numbers of American marten, badger, coyote, fisher, gray fox, gray wolf, jack rabbit, red fox, and river otter per respondent were below long-term averages. Long-term averages represent observations over the twenty-eight year period of 1987-2014. Additionally, responses by field personnel in the 2015 Annual Mammal Survey decreased 8% from the 2014 level.

Methods

Wildlife Survey materials were sent to regional land leaders with the instruction to distribute the survey forms to all field personnel in their region. The annual Mammal Survey was sent out with the Ten-Week Brood Survey. Field personnel were asked to record the number of eleven mammal species, namely, American martens, badgers, black bears, bobcats, coyotes, fishers, gray foxes, gray wolves, jack rabbits, red foxes, and river otters observed by them while doing normal field operations during the past year. Field personnel were asked to report live sightings as well as road kills. All species have appeared on the annual mammal survey since 1987 except for gray wolves, which were added in 1997. Numbers per respondent were used because the number of observers changes from year to year. The number of respondents, however, underestimates the number of observers because field personnel did not fill out the survey if they sighted none of the mammals listed. Long-term averages are based on observations from the twenty-eight year period of 1987-2014.

Results

One hundred and twenty-three (123) surveys contained observations of mammals in 2015. Since 1987, respondents have averaged 171 surveys per year. The number of surveys returned in 2015 represents a 8% decrease from the 2014 response of 134 surveys.

American Marten

No American marten were observed in 2015, the long-term average is 0.012 (Figure 1).

Badger

Twenty-five field personnel observed 32 badgers in 2015. Fifteen (15) observations were live sightings and 17 observations were road kills. Badgers per respondent numbered 0.26 in 2015, which is lower than the long-term average of 0.60 (Figure 2).

Black Bear

Sixty-four field personnel observed 365 black bears in 2015. Three hundred and twenty-three (323) observations were live sightings and 42 were road kills. Black bears per respondent numbered 2.97 in 2015, which is above the long-term average of 2.86 black bears per respondent (Figure 3).

Bobcat

Twenty-one field personnel observed 48 bobcats in 2015. Thirty-nine (39) observations were live sightings and 9 were road kills. Bobcats per respondent numbered 0.39 in 2015, which is above the long-term average of 0.17 bobcats per respondent (Figure 4).

Coyote

Seventy-four personnel observed 266 coyotes in 2015. One hundred and ninety-six (196) were live sightings and 70 were road kills. Coyotes per respondent numbered 2.16, which is below the long-term average of 2.55 coyotes per respondent (Figure 5).

Fisher

Sixteen field personnel observed 22 fishers in 2015. Seventeen (17) were live sightings and 5 were road kills. Fishers per respondent numbered 0.18 in 2015, which is below the long-term average of 0.77 fishers per respondent (Figure 6).

Gray Fox

Twenty-five field personnel observed 43 gray foxes in 2015. Twenty-seven (27) were live sightings and 16 were road kills. Gray fox per respondent numbered 0.35 in 2015, which is below the long-term average of 0.46 gray fox per respondent (Figure 7).

Gray Wolf

Twenty-five field personnel observed 42 gray wolves in 2015. Thirty-four (34) were live sightings and 8 were road kill. Gray wolves observed per respondent numbered 0.34 in 2015, which is below the long-term average of 0.53 (Figure 8).

Jack Rabbit

No jack rabbits were observed in 2015, the long-term average is 0.02 (Figure 9).

Red Fox

Eighty-one field personnel observed 287 red foxes in 2015. Two hundred (200) were live sightings and 87 were road kills. Red fox observed per respondent was 2.33 in 2015, which is below the long-term average of 4.21 red fox per respondent (Figure 10).

River Otter

Thirty-seven field personnel observed 141 river otters in 2015. One hundred and twenty-six (126) were live sightings and 15 were road kills. River otters observed per respondent in 2015 was 1.15, which is below the long-term average of 1.93 otters per respondent (Figure 11).

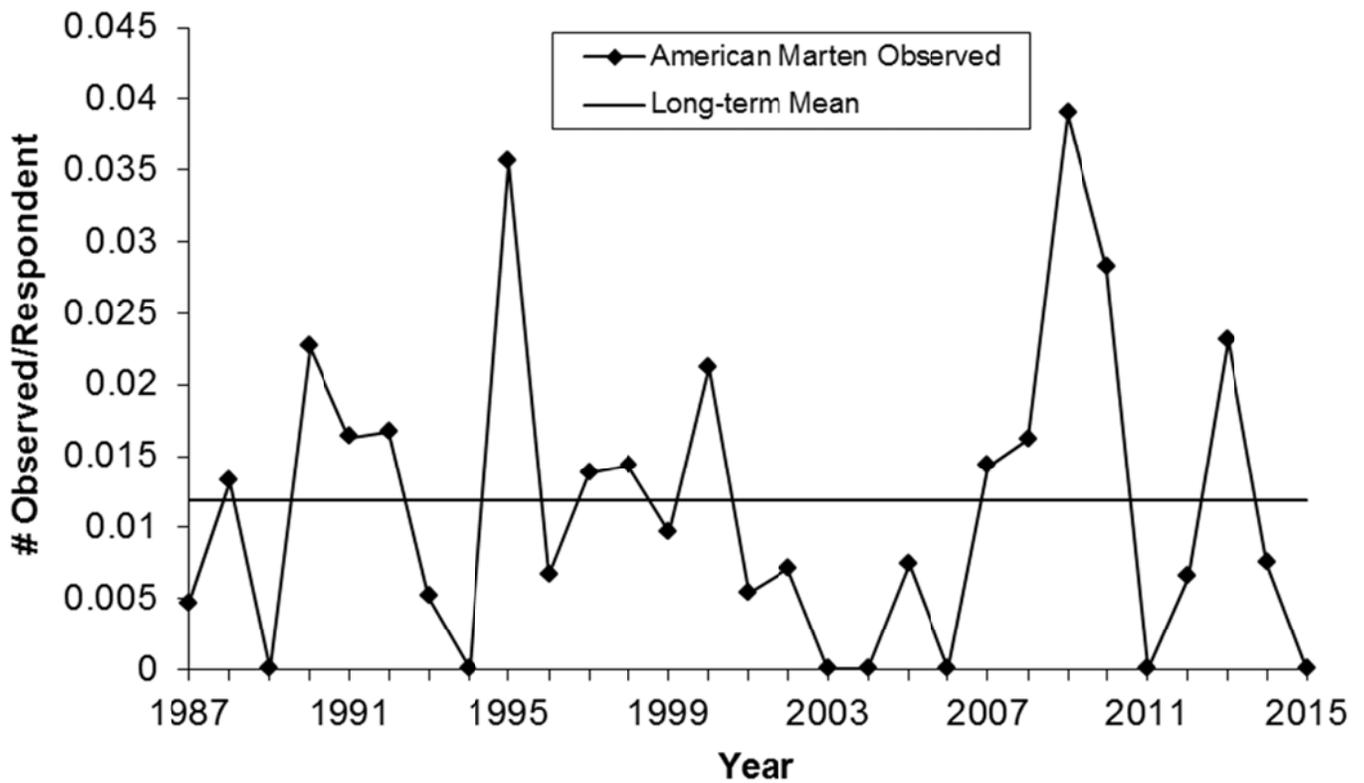


Figure 1. Number of American martens seen per respondent 1987-2015.

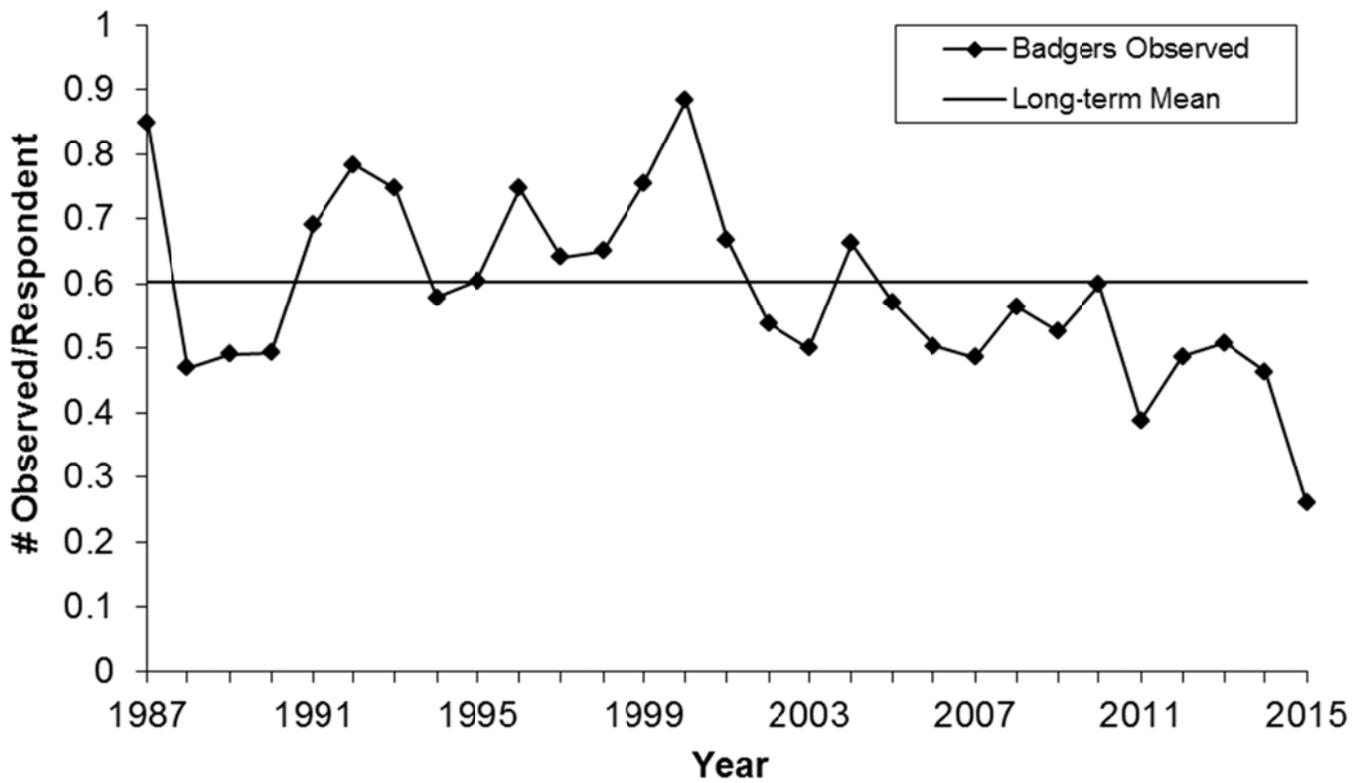


Figure 2. Number of badgers seen per respondent 1987-2015.

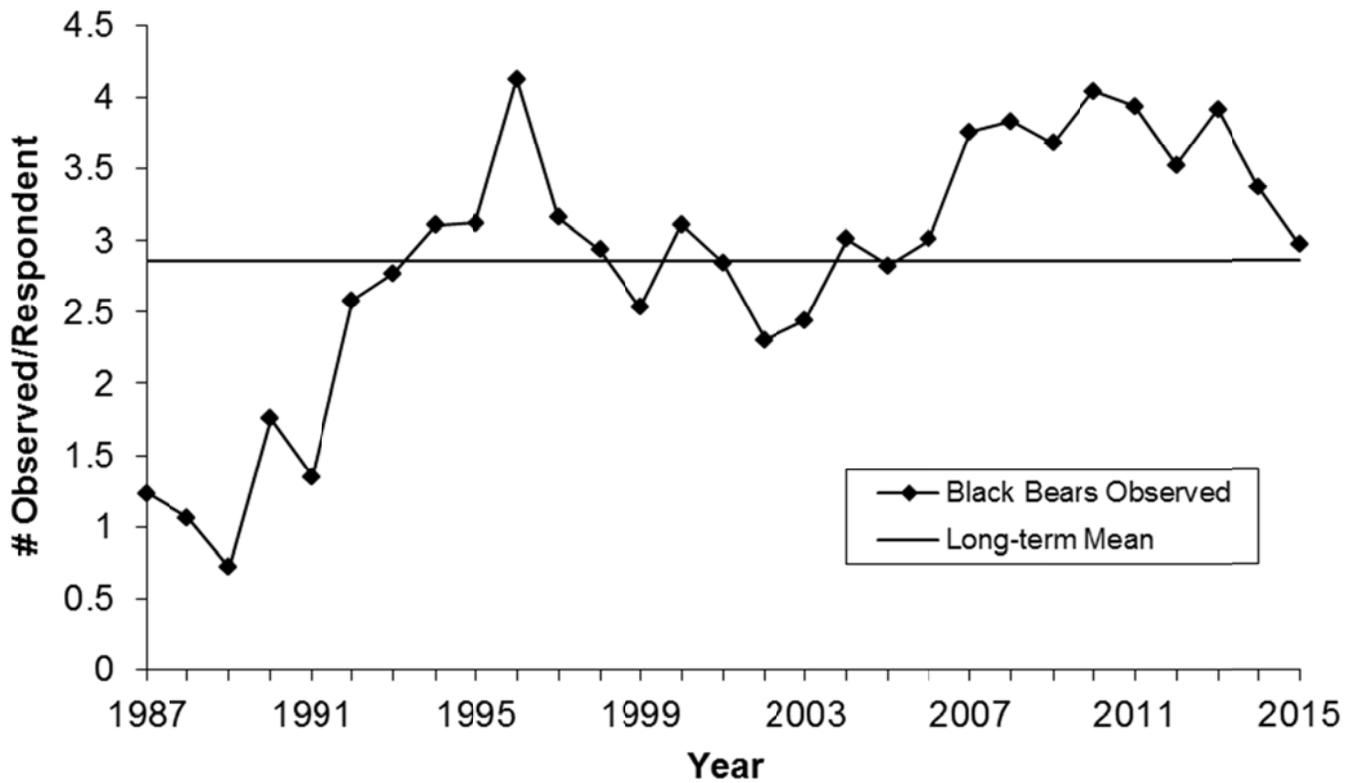


Figure 3. Number of black bears seen per respondent 1987-2015.

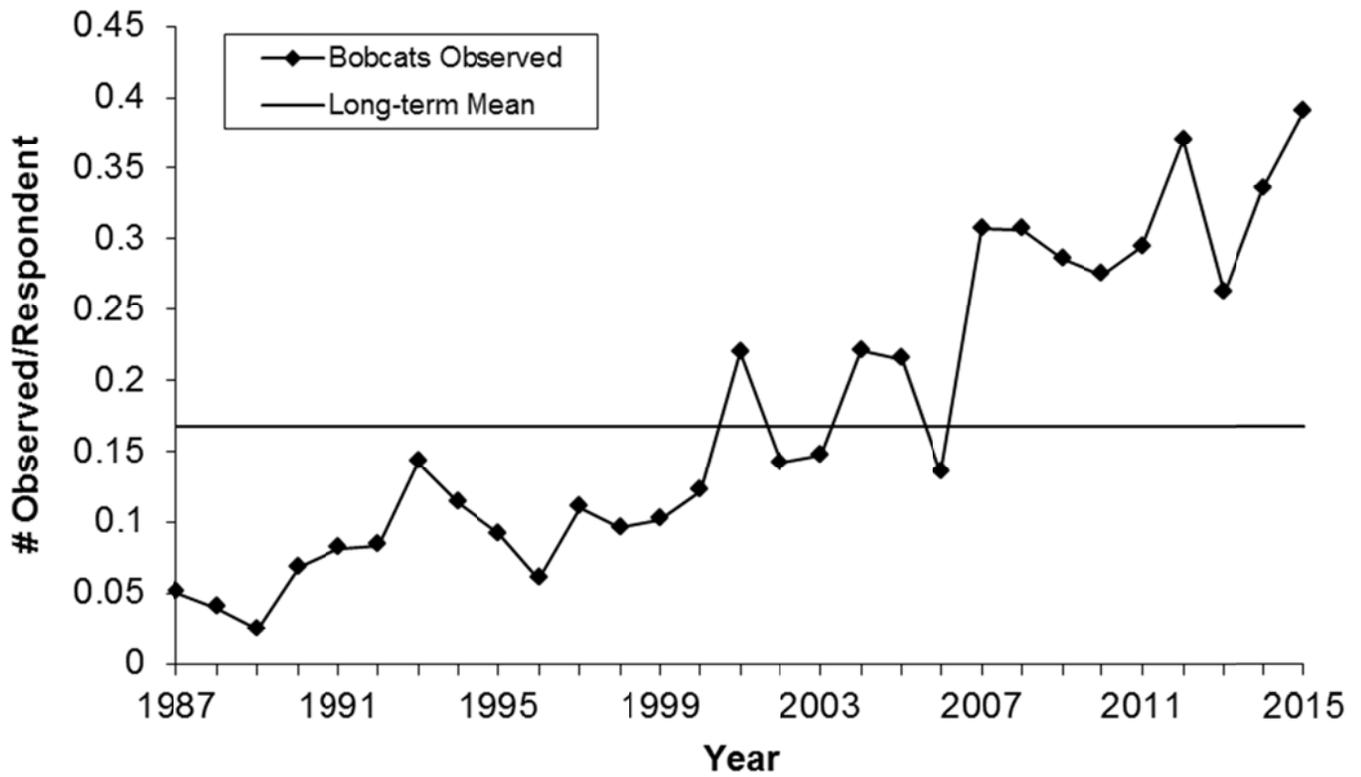


Figure 4. Number of bobcats seen per respondent 1987-2015.

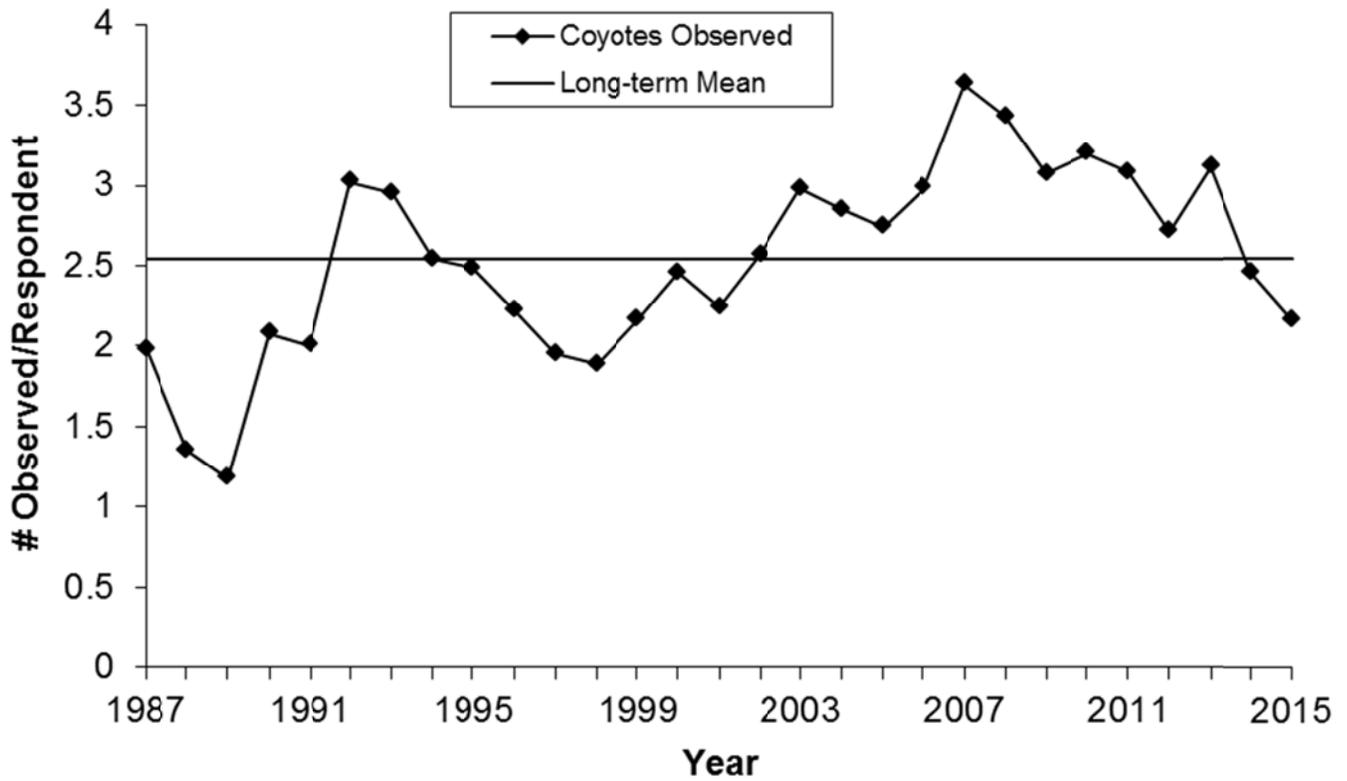


Figure 5. Number of coyotes seen per respondent 1987-2015.

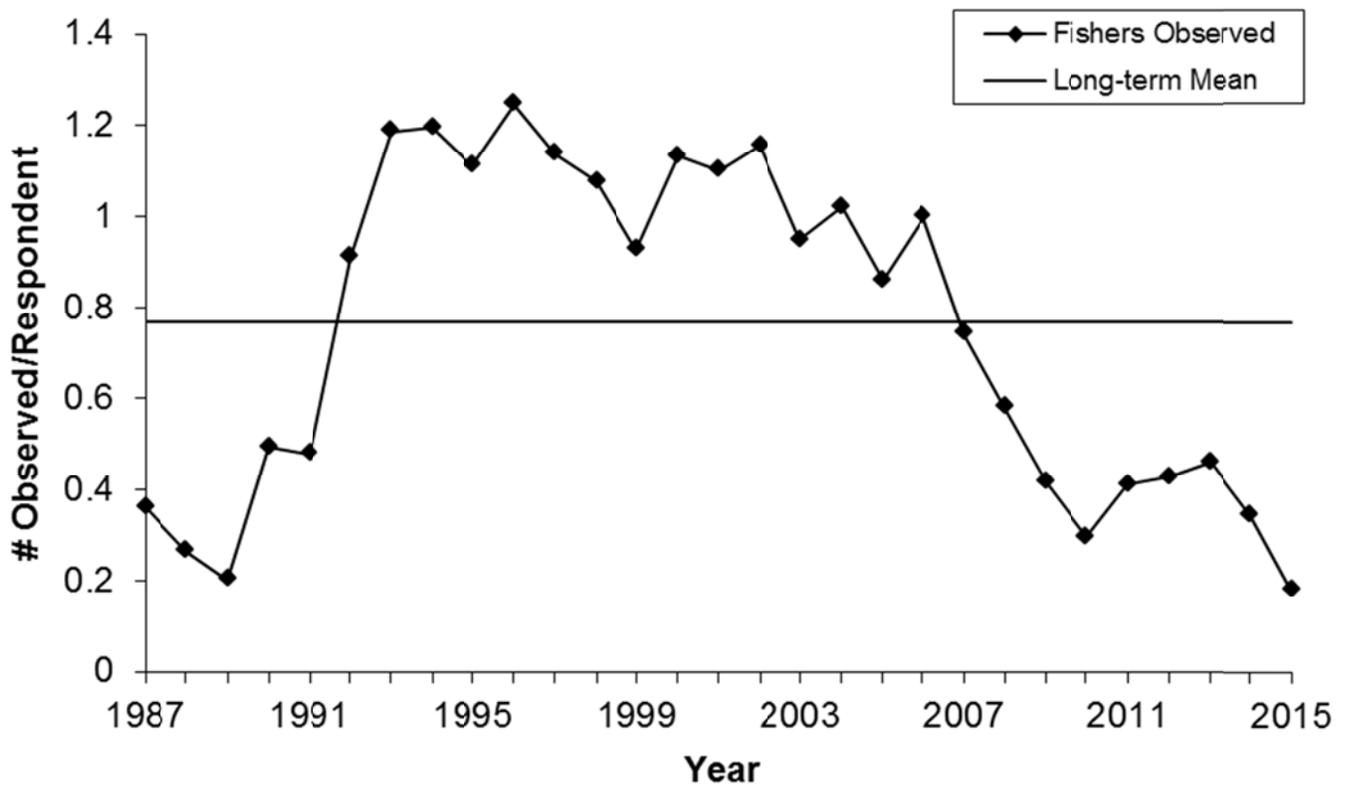


Figure 6. Number of fishers seen per respondent 1987-2015.

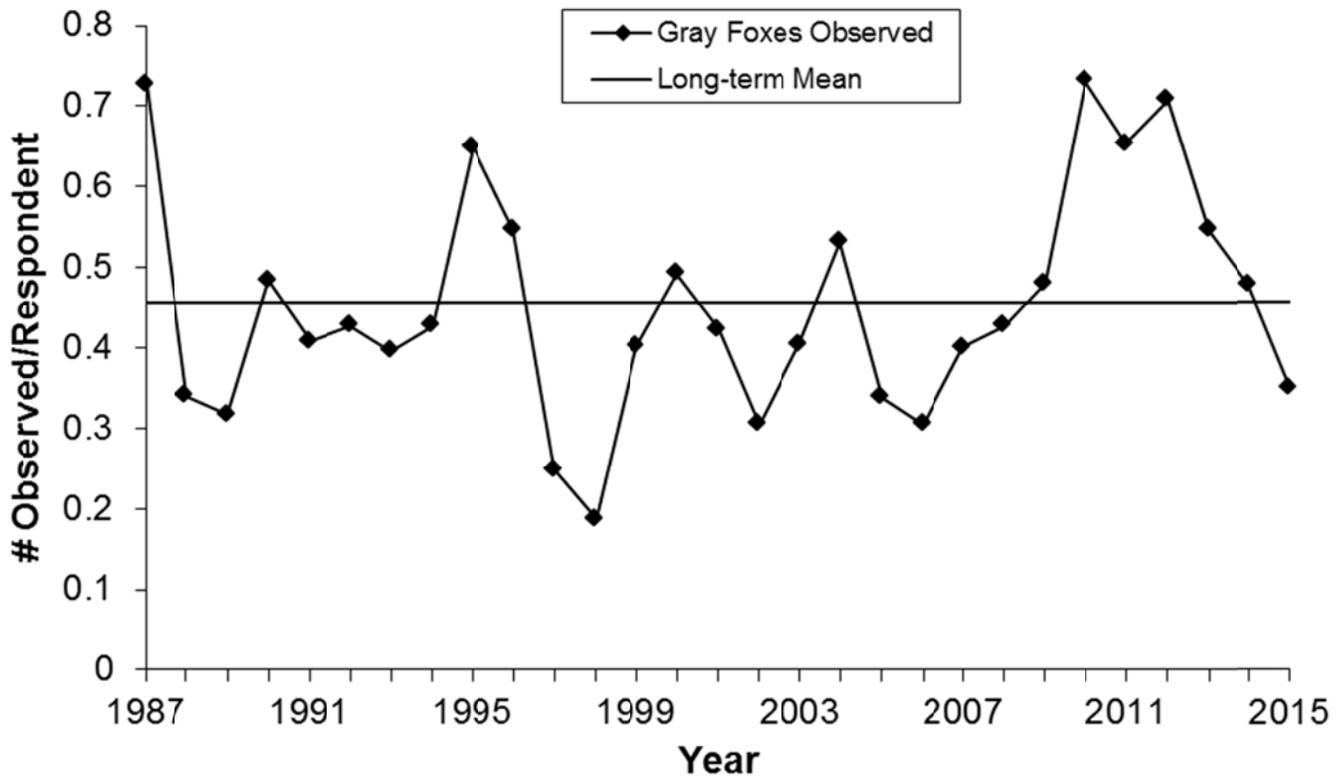


Figure 7. Number of gray foxes seen per respondent 1987-2015.

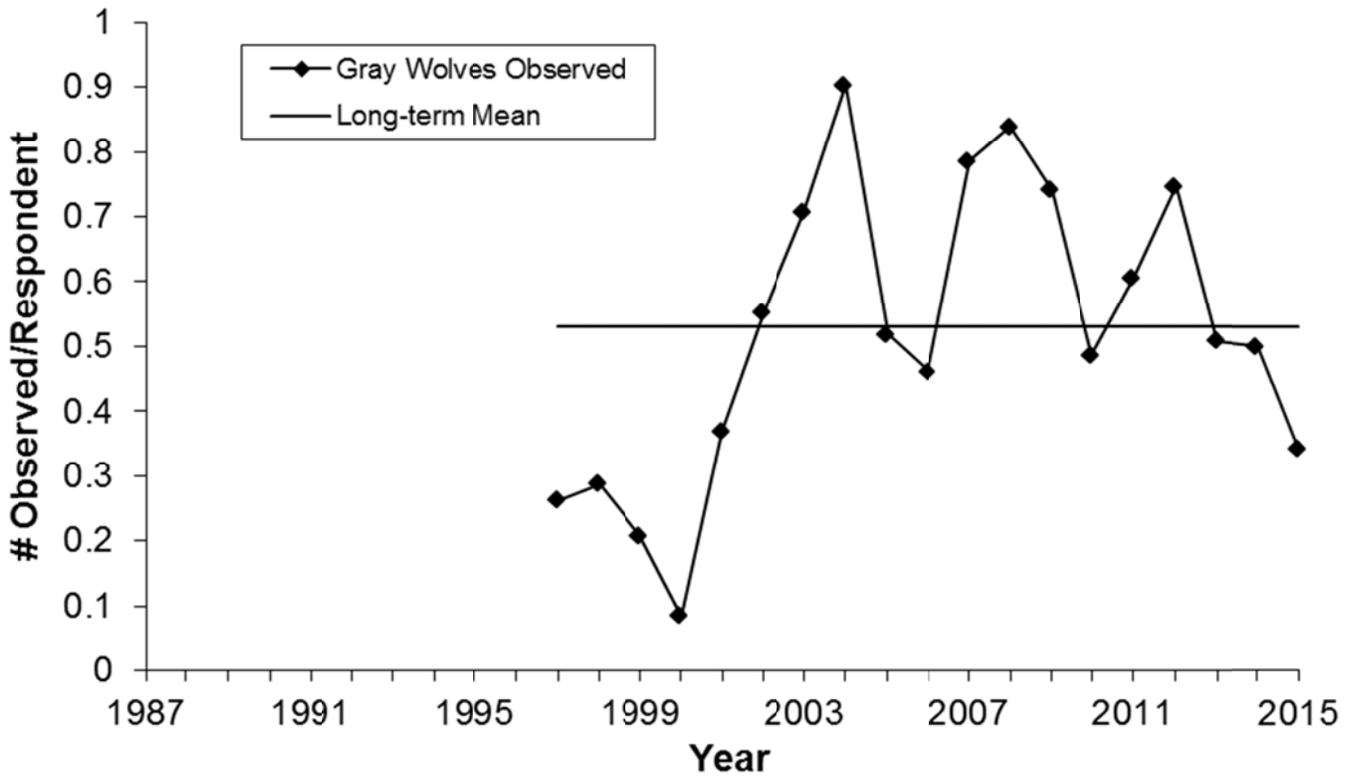


Figure 8. Number of gray wolves seen per respondent, 1997-2015.

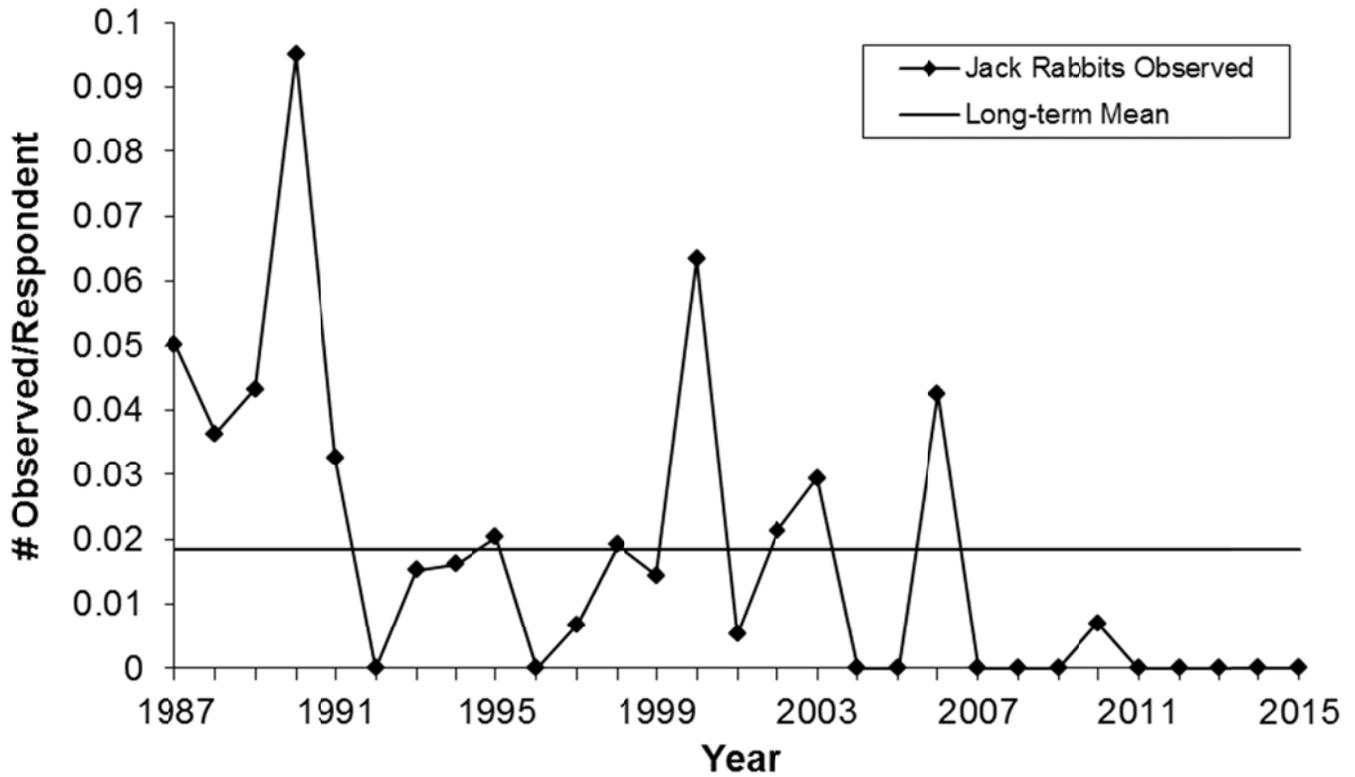


Figure 9. Number of jack rabbits seen per respondent 1987-2015.

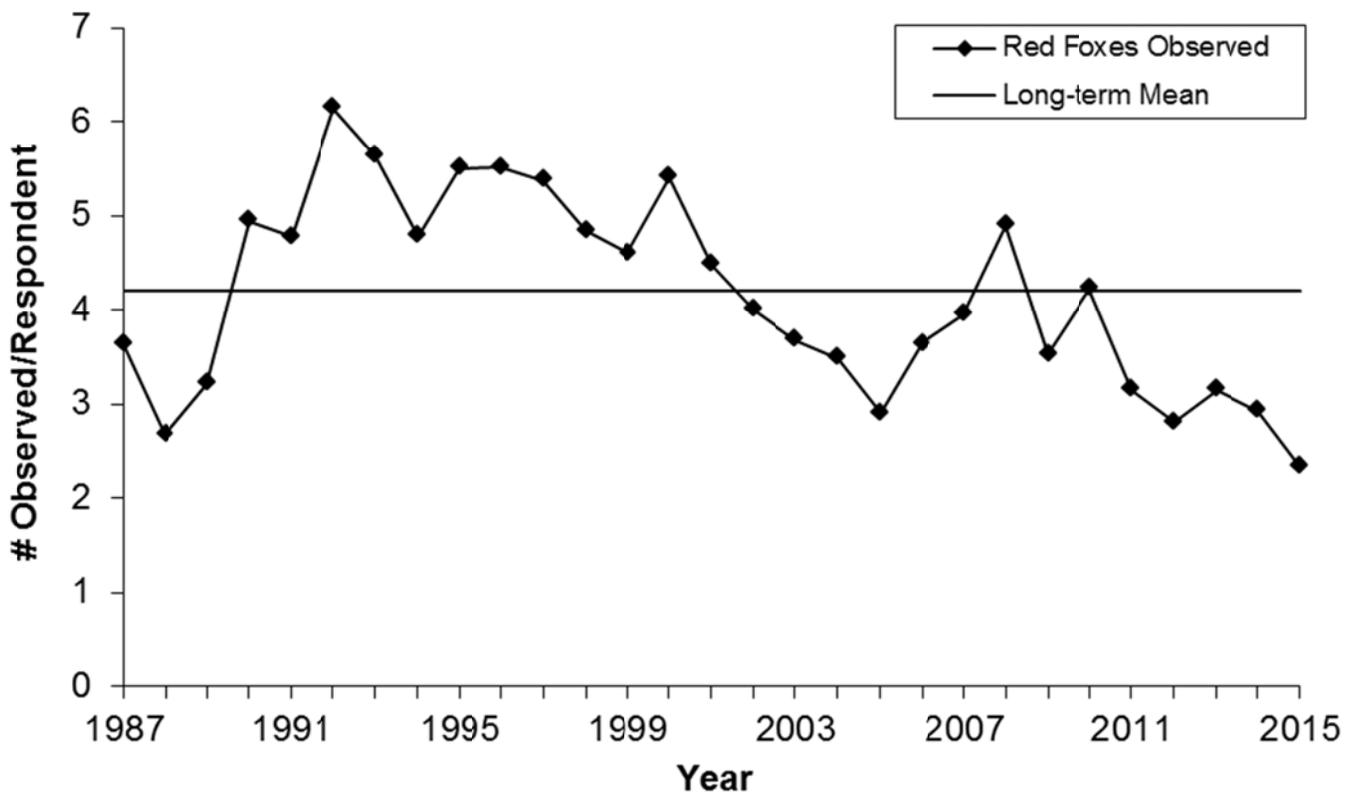


Figure 10. Number of red foxes seen per respondent 1987-2015.

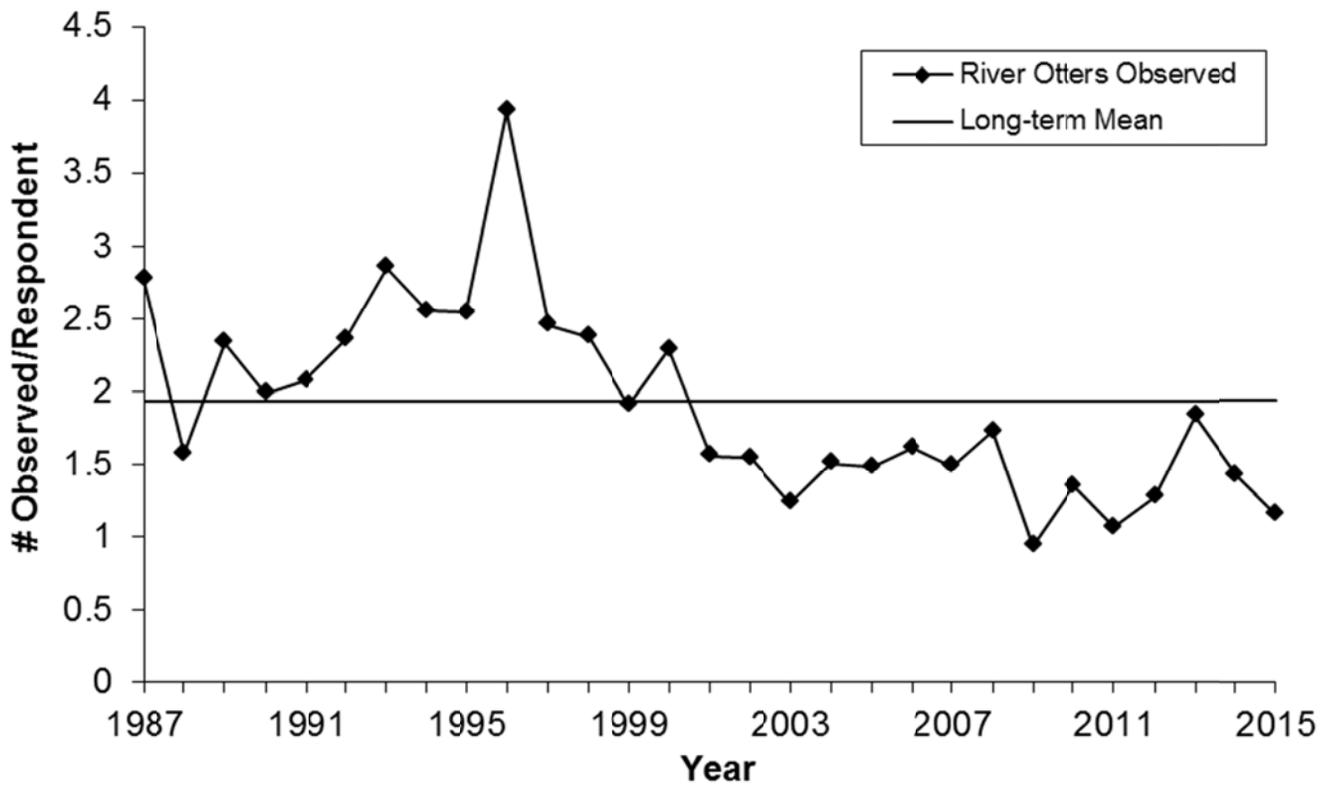


Figure 11. Number of river otters seen per respondent 1987-2015.