

In 1971, 1,405 fox pelts with an average value of \$39.11 were produced on 39 Canadian farms. The principal producers were Ontario, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. Costs of fox farming operations have been increasing and, although fox furs are currently popular in all markets, there are no indications that this business is likely to increase in importance in the foreseeable future.

**Fur marketing.** The bulk of the Canadian fur crop is sold at auction through competitive bidding and, prior to 1970, fur farmers and trappers were served by eight fur auction firms located across the country. Since 1970, through amalgamation and closure, the number of auction firms has been reduced to five, with three firms handling both ranched and wild furs, and the remaining two dealing in wild furs only.

The decline in the number of marketing outlets has not been a disadvantage to Canadian fur producers. World fur buyers have a wide choice of markets and will routinely travel from Europe to Canada to attend major auctions though they are unwilling to do this for small offerings. The decline in the number of auctions has reduced the fragmentation of the Canadian fur crop and made it possible to schedule fewer but larger offerings that have been attracting buyers from many countries.

In the calendar year 1972 the value of exports of raw Canadian furs amounted to \$30.3 million (Table 10.23). The principal species exported were: mink (\$11.4 million), beaver (\$7.5 million), muskrat (\$2.5 million) and lynx (\$2.0 million). The United States, Britain, Switzerland and the Federal Republic of Germany were the principal buyers.

#### 10.4 Wildlife

Wildlife is an important renewable natural resource. The original inhabitants of what is now Canada depended on it for food and clothing and still do in some remote areas. The coming of the Europeans brought development of the fur trade which guided the course taken in exploring and settling the land as we know it today. When the country was being opened up, a number of mammals and birds became seriously depleted or extinct. As settling progressed, wildlife habitat was reduced by cutting and burning of forests, pollution of streams, industrial and urban development, drainage of wetlands, building of dams, and other changes in the land.

Today, the arctic and alpine tundra, a major vegetational region, has begun to show serious man-made changes. The adjacent sub-arctic and sub-alpine non-commercial forests have been affected principally by increased human travel which causes more forest fires, although the great forests farther south retain much of their original character, despite exploitation. Cultivable lands, originally forest or grassland, have completely changed but they have, in some cases, become more suitable than the original wilderness for some forms of wildlife. The harvestable surplus of game and fur species across Canada is seldom fully utilized and wildlife will remain generally abundant where habitat is preserved and management enlightened.

Today, Canada is known for its varied and abundant wildlife. It maintains most, or all, of the world's stock of woodland caribou, mountain sheep, wolves, grizzly bears and wolverines. These animals exist because of the vast habitat and because of the efforts that have been made to preserve them.

In 1885, the Rocky Mountain Park (now Banff National Park) was established in Alberta, preserving an area of over 2,500 sq miles in its natural state; in 1887, the continent's first bird sanctuary was established at Last Mountain Lake in Saskatchewan; in 1893 when wood bison faced extinction, laws were passed to protect them; and in 1907, a nucleus herd of plains bison was established at Wainwright in Alberta. These were among the early attempts at wildlife conservation in Canada.

For a long time, certain species were protected from man and predator. Now, having a better understanding of how nature works, it is recognized that many factors combined cause fluctuations in wildlife numbers, and hunting seasons and bag limits are based to a greater extent on environment. Given a fully stocked environment, the annual increase need only replace the losses. Surplus production can therefore be safely taken by predatory animals or, in the case of game species, by man.

As a natural resource, wildlife within each province comes under the jurisdiction of the provincial government. However, the federal government does have responsibility for wildlife on federal land and for research and management of migratory birds.