

trapping coverage, pelt production figures in recent years compare favourably with the output in the 1920s and 1930s.

Fur farming. In 1973 Canadian mink ranchers produced 1 million pelts on 531 farms located in all provinces except Newfoundland for a value of \$19.2 million (Table 10.22). The principal producers of pelts, in order of importance, were Ontario (40.3%), British Columbia (17.8%), Alberta (11.4%), Quebec (10.3%), and Nova Scotia (10.1%). The average value of the 1973 pelts was \$18.00, up 12% from the 1972 average of \$16.01. The 1973 production was approximately 2% above the 1972 output, reversing a decline that commenced in 1968. World production of mink has declined and, with mink still the dominant fur of the industry, it is hoped that the more manageable quantities now being produced will result in a continuing firm market situation. Despite steadily increasing production costs, 1973 returns to mink ranchers were only slightly above values prevailing throughout most of the 1950s, and mink ranching remains viable mainly because it has become a vastly more efficient operation in recent years. The trend toward larger enterprises has encouraged the use of labour-saving machinery, and better management practices have put the industry on a sounder economic basis. This, together with a steady improvement in the size and quality of the pelts produced has made it possible to offset at least part of the higher production costs. This improvement in the ranching operation is continuing and, hopefully, future gains in productivity will help to offset costs which can be expected to continue to rise.

The production of ranched fox pelts declined slightly from 1,488 pelts in 1972 to 1,395 pelts in 1973. Average values increased from \$66.60 in 1972 to \$98.39 in 1973, reflecting the strong interest in all long-haired furs.

Chinchilla are also raised on farms in Canada, but because of the small numbers involved the collection of statistics on this species has been discontinued.

Fur marketing. Canada's trade in furs is, understandably, being affected by the increased value of the annual production and the general buoyancy of the world market for furs. In 1973-74 exports of raw furs were valued at \$41.9 million, up from \$41.2 million in 1972-73 (Table 10.23). The principal species exported were mink (\$12.9 million), beaver (\$7.8 million), lynx (\$2.7 million), muskrat (\$3.1 million) and fox (\$4.8 million).

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 of exploration and settlement. When the country was being opened up, a number of mammals and birds became seriously depleted or extinct. As settlement 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 has brought an increase in the number of forest fires, although the great forests farther south retain much of their original character despite exploitation. Arable 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 surplus of game and fur species available for harvest 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 a nucleus herd of plains bison was