

Pacific Coast landings dropped from 389 million lb. (176 million kg) in 1973 to 298 million lb. (135 million kg) in 1974. This decline of 24% represents a reduction in Pacific Coast fishermen's incomes by about \$29 million. Most of this decline occurred in the salmon fishery.

Halibut, the mainstay of the Pacific groundfish fishery was again a disappointment in 1974 declining almost 50% to 7.5 million lb. (3.4 million kg). Depletion of resources in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska is thought to be the main reason.

The landings of salmon, the most important species to the Pacific fishery, dropped sharply to 134 million lb. (61 million kg) in 1974, a decline of 27% from 1973. This decline represented a \$26 million loss to Pacific Coast salmon fishermen. A shift in the 1974 salmon catch breakdown saw sockeye become the principal species at 35% of the catch in volume terms followed by chum and pink at 21% and 18% respectively.

10.2.3.2 Products and marketing

Declining export prices and weak US demand for fish products combined to weaken the demand for and prices of frozen groundfish products.

The marketed value of processed product on the Atlantic Coast was \$425 million and on the Pacific Coast \$220 million. These figures represent decreases of 8% and 23% respectively compared with 1973. Atlantic Coast production of frozen fillets and blocks fell 26% to \$121 million in 1974 (see Table 10.19) and in absolute terms, the \$42 million decline would appear to be the largest single element in the overall drop in this region. Only pelagic and estuarial fish products were able to show an increase in product value on the Atlantic Coast, rising 21% to almost \$94 million. (Table 10.17)

On the Pacific Coast, salmon, as a group, were the most valuable species in Canada in 1974 with all types of products having a marketed value of \$166 million. Canned salmon pack was valued at \$114 million in 1974. (Table 10.18)

10.3 The fur industry

The value of the 1974-75 Canadian production of raw furs amounted to \$41.5 million made up of \$24.9 million (60%) from wildlife pelts and \$16.6 million (40%) from farm pelts. The world market for furs was active in 1974-75 but prices were mainly below the previous season's high levels; in addition, production of many of the important species was lower than in 1973-74. These factors combined to produce a decline of 20.2% in value compared with the record 1973-74 production of raw furs with \$52.1 million. (Tables 10.20 and 10.21)

Fur trapping. In recent seasons prices for almost all kinds of Canadian wild furs have been on the increase, and although in 1974-75 there was a price decline, pelt values were still substantially above historic levels. Over the past three seasons the higher returns encouraged trappers to work their traplines to full advantage, resulting in increased production of many species, especially the long-haired types such as fox, raccoon and coyote. Lynx is also high on the list of popular furs; however, in 1974-75 this cyclic species was approaching the lower end of its period of abundance and the numbers taken reflected this decline.

With the encouragement provided by recent strong price levels the production of many of the fur-bearer species is approaching optimum levels. This has not been the case for many years. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s raw fur prices failed to keep pace with the general price rise and there was little incentive for trappers to work their traplines to maximum potential. As a result a good percentage of fur bearers went unharvested. Since nature does not stockpile its creatures the incomplete trapline coverage resulted in wastage.

With the incentive provided by higher returns many resource-based undertakings have contributed materially to the northern economy. A thriving fur industry can distribute revenue to even the most remote hamlets of the North.