

In 1976, 2,130 fox pelts were produced on 81 farms across the country; this is 9% above the 1975 output of 1,962 pelts from 55 farms. The increase in production was attributed to the improved market for all the long-haired furs; values for ranched fox pelts have risen sharply in the past decade, and the 1976 average price of \$233.47 a pelt was the highest recorded since 1919 when the average was \$201.74. Encouraged by the upturn, producers are expanding their operations and the demand for breeding animals is stronger than for many years.

Fur marketing. The bulk of Canada's fur production is sold at public auction through five fur auction firms in Montreal, North Bay, Winnipeg, Regina and Vancouver. At the auctions, furs are purchased through competitive bidding by buyers who may be purchasing for their own account or for firms in Canada or abroad. Canadian furs are usually sold in the raw or undressed state, facilitating entry into the many countries which maintain tariffs on imports of dressed furs.

In 1976-77 exports of raw furs amounted to \$59.6 million, 13% above the 1975-76 exports valued at \$52.8 million. Imports for 1976-77 totalled \$82.4 million, 10% above the \$74.9 million of furs imported in the previous year. The increase in imports was due not only to a healthy fur retail business in Canada, but also to requirements occasioned through growing exports of fur garments. In 1976 exports of fur garments amounted to \$40.8 million, the highest value on record for this class of export.

The export of fur fashion garments on an important scale is a fairly new development on the Canadian fur scene. Historically, Canadian exports of furs have consisted mainly of undressed pelts from fur farms and the trapline. There are fairly definite limits to which this type of export can be developed. The production of wildlife pelts is relatively limited and not likely to be increased to any meaningful extent. In addition, in view of the highly competitive world fur farming situation, it is not practicable to visualize continuous increase in the production and export of ranch-raised furs.

In the fur manufacturing industry no such limits apply. Other factors, however, are present, principally import tariffs and competition from fur manufacturers in the importing countries. A high degree of efficiency in design and manufacture is required by Canada to compete, and there is a growing export group among Canadian fur manufacturers which is extending the horizons of this formerly largely domestic industry.

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 developed, 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.

Canada is known for its varied and abundant wildlife. It maintains most of the world's stock of woodland caribou, mountain sheep, wolves, grizzly bears and wolverines. For a long time, certain species were protected from man and predator. Now, because of better understanding of how nature works, it has been recognized that many factors cause fluctuations in wildlife numbers, and hunting seasons and bag limits are based to a greater extent on environment.