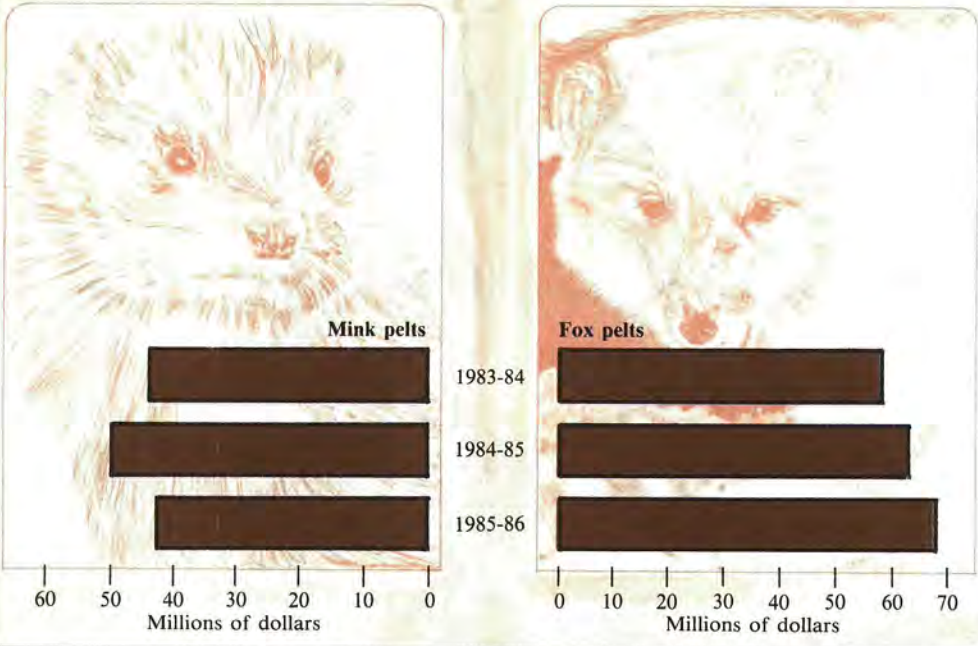


Chart 8.4

Pelts produced on fur farms



with increases in value of wildlife and farm fur harvests of 17.7% and 13.0%, respectively. Production was down from 1983-84 but average values were mostly higher, especially for lynx and wildcat. Average values for all bear varieties (including white bear) were below the previous year.

The Atlantic seal hunt. Harvesting seals is an important source of income in many areas along the Atlantic Coast. It involves residents of small communities scattered along the shores of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Îles de la Madeleine, the Quebec north shore and the Arctic. Its significance is greater than the relatively small dollar returns might suggest, since there are few available income-earning activities during the seal hunt period.

The harp seal is the main species involved. About 2 million of these seals now inhabit the northwest Atlantic. Pups of both harp and hooded seals are caught primarily by sealers in large vessels; some are harvested by landmen in small boats or on foot from coastal areas. Between 1978 and 1982, an annual average of about 10,000 pups and 2,600 adults were taken by Canadian and Norwegian sealers, and about 3,800 seals were harvested at Greenland.

In the early years of the hunt, the main product was oil from the blubber but in recent years the greatest part of the gross return in the commercial hunt has come from the skins. Most seal meat is either used by the sealers themselves or is sold fresh, frozen or canned.

Following a quota imposed on seal hunting in the early 1970s, the population appeared to have increased slightly. At present, hunting has been substantially reduced and the population is expected to increase more rapidly.

Fur farming. Mink are raised in all provinces. In 1985-86 the principal producers were Ontario, Nova Scotia, Quebec and British Columbia (Table 8.22).

In value of production, mink is by far the most important species raised on fur farms. Mink pelt production grew from about 911,000 in 1976 to 1.4 million in 1985. The peak year was 1967 when the output was nearly 2 million pelts. Because of lower returns and higher production costs, the number of mink farms decreased from 1,359 in 1967 to 596 in 1985. Average value of mink pelts in 1985 was \$29.91, down from \$35.70 in 1984, and the 1979 record high of \$44.08.

Entry into the mink business on a scale that would hold the promise of some return on invest-