

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESS

Biological

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A novel industry which is rapidly developing in Alaska, according to reports from that Territory received at the Department of the Interior, is that of mink farming. This little animal produces one of the most popular furs and, while it was once very generously distributed throughout North America, it has been growing steadily scarcer. There is consequently a good market for its fur.

The mink is a cousin to the skunk on one side and to the otter on the other. It lives on land and in water and while carnivorous will eat either flesh or fish. Here in Alaska the chief element of its diet is peculiar. It is fed upon the flesh of porcupines which are very plentiful. The mink is easy to control in captivity and, since each mother gives birth to five or six young ones in a year, they multiply very rapidly.

Mink farms are coming to be plentiful through much of that part of Alaska adjacent to the Government railroad. A typical such farm is that of Garrett Snyder at the village of Wasilla near Anchorage. Snyder was a section foreman on the Alaska Railroad but gave up that position to develop his mink farm. During the past summer he made shipments of mink the return on which was something near \$10,000. This he regards as but a demonstration of the possibilities in this new line of business.

Fox farms are an older development in Alaska and are scattered up and down the coast and far into the interior. A most advantageous location for a fox farm is on any one of the numerous small islands that fringe the coast of Alaska. On these islands fencing becomes unnecessary to prevent the animals from escaping and fish which is likely to be the chief food for foxes is easy to procure.

There are, however, many fox farms in the interior, some of which can be seen in passing on the Alaska Railroad.

Many varieties of foxes are native to Alaska including the black, blue, white, red and silver fox, all of which yield very attractive pelts. Foxes grown here in the far North have a heavy fur superior to that of those grown in warmer climates.

This farming for fur in Alaska is supplementary to the fur industry based upon the activities of hunters which has long been highly developed and which yields constantly increasing returns.

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