



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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30 MILLION FUR SKINS PRODUCED YEARLY IN U.S. F.W.S. ESTIMATES

American fur trappers and fur farmers produce about 30 million pelts each year, the Fish and Wildlife Service estimated today.

Frank G. Ashbrook, in charge of the Service's wild fur animal investigations, explained that the figure represents a five-year average of the annual fur catch in the United States. Lack of statistics from some of the states and differences in state methods of obtaining production reports from fur trappers make it impossible to release specific, nation-wide figures, he said.

Muskrat rates highest in wild fur production. The average yearly take ranges from 18 million to 20 million pelts. Opossum is next highest, with an average yearly take ranging from $2\frac{1}{2}$ million to 3 million. Other important fur-bearing species: skunk, 2 million to $2\frac{1}{2}$ million pelts; raccoon, 1 million to $1\frac{1}{2}$ million; foxes 900,000 to 1 million; mink, 700,000 to 800,000.

About one-sixth of total U.S. fur production is obtained from animals raised in captivity. Almost 425,000 pelts are harvested yearly by fur farmers from minks and their mutations, and almost 250,000 from silver foxes and their mutations.

The average annual raw fur crop is worth almost \$125 million to the country's trappers and farmers, the Service said. It yields an average annual income of about \$500 million to the retail fur trade.

Most recent statistics on total fur-animal catches indicate that Louisiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and Minnesota are the country's leading fur producing states.

Although the United States is one of the chief fur-producing countries in the world, it does not produce enough furs to meet more than half its own demand.

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