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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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LADIES' TASTES IN COATS STILL AFFECT RAW FUR HARVEST

The continued disinclination of women to accept long-haired fur for coats was again reflected on the traplines of America which last year netted slightly more than eight million fur-bearing animals, according to information from State conservation agencies compiled by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

The take of staple furs--muskrat, skunk, raccoon, opossum, fox and weasel--has been steadily decreasing and the 1954-1955 season was no exception. This trend is due to the low price for raw furs and not because of the scarcity of animals.

The muskrat led the list with more than five million pelts taken and with almost every State reporting a muskrat harvest. Raccoons were next with nearly a million while the ever-popular mink supplied more than 400,000 skins.

The outstanding exception to the downward trend was beaver, which has a steadily growing population and which has continued to command prices sufficiently high to interest trappers. Slightly more than 183,000 beaver were taken during the year. An increase is also noted in the take of nutria which has a rapidly expanding population, particularly in the marshlands of Texas and Louisiana. Steadily declining prices for nutria pelts greatly reduced the potential harvest.

Louisiana led the Nation in muskrat harvest with 1,383,000 pelts, in nutria harvest with 374,000 and in mink with 65,170. Missouri, Ohio, and Michigan each produced more than 100,000 raccoon pelts; Montana and Minnesota each produced 25,000 beaver; Michigan led with 54,000 opossum with Georgia second with 45,000.

A summary of the fur harvest for the 1954-55 season, subject to some correction when some late State data are received, shows: badger, 5,481; bassarisk, 15,329; beaver, 183,102; bobcat, 9,168; fisher, 332; foxes, 152,177; fur seal, 65,638; lynx, 3,251; marten, 7,992; mink, 406,486; muskrat, 5,027,871; nutria, 384,161; opossum, 257,731; otter, 14,902; raccoon, 980,930; skunk, 129,296; squirrel, 473,993; weasel, 113,951; wolf, 14,516; wolverine, 304.

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