

CANADIAN FURS - RACCOON AND LYNX

The 'coon-skin hat and coat are symbols of eras in North American history; raccoon skin has for a long time been regarded as a man's fur since raccoon pelts enjoyed their greatest popularity as caps for North America's early settlers and as coats for male students attending football games in the Roaring Twenties.

Today, however, raccoon fur is popular in female fashion, and is used in both natural and dyed shades - full-haired for collars and either full-haired or sheared for coats. It is also bleached white, then tip-dyed black or brown - a change so radical that the fur no longer looks anything like raccoon.

HABITAT

Raccoons inhabit the southern part of Canada, preferring the lighter bushland areas, along lakes and rivers and around swampy meadows.

They eat everything from fish, frogs, birds' eggs, insects and seeds. They can turn a corn field into a tangled mess and a quiet night's sleep into a clanging alarm when the garbage can tilts over on the rocks.

The bulk of the pelts are taken in Eastern Canada. The 1967-68 crop was 27,636 pelts, worth \$110,000.

The animal is quite heavily built and grows to a length of from 30 inches to a yard, including a round, club-like tail about ten inches long. The coat is shaggy brown and sprinkled with black-tipped yellow hairs. The raccoon's outstanding feature is a large bandit's mask of black over his eyes.

Raccoons have heavily-furred tails with alternate black and yellow rings. They use their forepaws very cleverly for feeding, catching and holding prey as well as for washing food, when water is handy. They are agile climbers and usually make their dens in the hollow of a tree, although they hunt and feed on the ground. During cold spells they stay in their dens, but do not hibernate.



The raccoon

Males help the females raise their families, from three to six young, born in May. Raccoons are social animals, usually found in pairs or in families.

THE LYNX

Deep, silky lynx fur is probably the most beautiful trim of all. It not only graces fashion wear, but is also used on sportswear, including ski jackets.

The adult lynx is a 40-pound feline with a large head, rather flat face and prominent ears tipped with tufts of black hair. It has a stub of a tail, grey on top and white below, with a black tip. When the lynx is standing on its heavily-furred feet, its hind-quarters are usually a little higher than its shoulders. During the winter months, its large snowshoe-like paws help it walk easily in soft snow - an asset in hunting.

This large cat's rather shaggy fur is silvery, mottled with brown on the back and sides, shading to white underneath.

HABITAT

Primarily a wilderness creature, the lynx stays close to the more remote forested areas. Its numbers vary, depending to some degree on the rise and fall of the rabbit population. While rabbits are its chief food, the lynx also eats mice, birds and other small game.

The lynx mates during February or March; the female has a gestation period of about 60 days. Litters number between two and five and the young are born in dens under windfalls or among rock crevices. They are weaned in about three months, after which they follow their mother for the greater part of the first year. The male, though seldom seen with the family after they leave the nursery, is usually nearby.



The lynx