

rates of reproduction led to starvation due to over-grazing and a serious decline in the health and numbers of bighorn. Several years ago, a society for conserving bighorn was formed, uniting both naturalists and hunters. The hunters worked with game managers, selectively killing "surplus" animals to improve the quality of the bighorn population. Many institutions, including the University of Alberta, have been given grants by the bighorn society to carry out research on how to preserve the species.

If the criterion for the validity of hunting is merely whether or not the animal is wasted, then this is where conservationists and hunters part. Neuman says that most good hunters would leave the carcasses as food for other animals and birds. This may seem like waste to many people, he says, but it does benefit the wildlife community.

Much of the anti-hunting sentiment is focused on the fur trade. Many think that killing animals just so they could be worn by certain elements of humanity as a ticket to Riverbend is an extraordinary waste of wildlife.

Neil Jotham, Executive Director of the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, says that in 1981-82, 16,632 fox and 1,390,689 mink were raised on ranches compared to over 3 million wild animals killed for their fur. Of the wild animals, 4,500 seals, 2,000 brown bears, 363 polar bears, and 23 grizzly were victims of "inhumane" hunting practices. Jotham said that 105,000 wild mink were bagged.

In 79-80, 5 million wild animals were trapped and in 80-81, 4 million. Jotham attributed a number of factors to the downward trend: the shape of the economy, the market trends, the animal populations, the weather.

Kreiser said that the entire fur industry in Canada accounts for \$600 million of the GNP, up to \$100 million of



Furs in the wild.

which is in raw fur. 90 or 95 per cent of all Canadian pelts are exported to Europe, Japan, and the U.S. Russia is the world's largest fur producer, but its citizens consume 90 per cent of the furs.

Furriers cater almost solely to people's vanity, pride, and greed.

Betty of the Bay Fur Salon says that up to about ten years ago, fur was considered to be "an old lady's coat", symbolizing status and establishment. Now, establishment is unheard of; people buy fur coats because "I'm worth it."

She says all types of people buy fur — if they can afford it. "A lot of working girls come in, and girls who are about sixteen will if they can afford one, buy one."

According to Betty, the mark-up on furs is usually

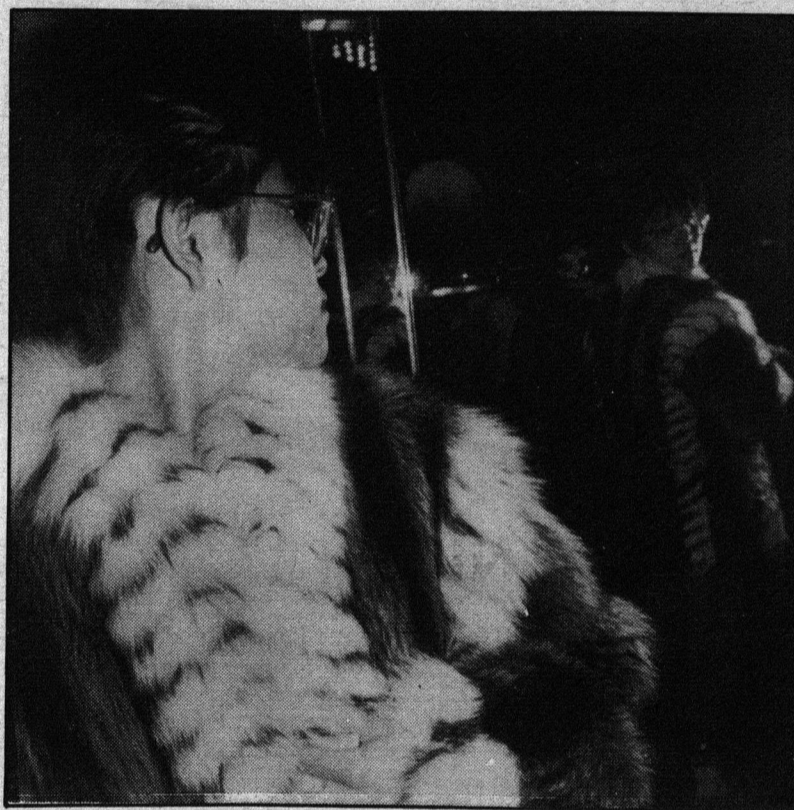
*Furriers cater almost solely to people's vanity, pride, and greed.*

about 50 per cent. Daniel of Trute-Perfect Furs says that is the price on the tag, but it can be haggled down. Furs are usually sold at a 20 per cent mark-up.

Both furriers agree that Edmontonians are rather conservative buyers, opting for warmth over fashion. We will buy \$3,000 coats, but rarely are willing to fork out for anything over \$10,000. We love mink, but will settle for racoon or coyote.

This, of course, is no consolation to the lynx, sable, or fisher.

Fashion furs seem to be regaining popularity as we crawl out from under the recession. If so, then the numbers of animals killed for their hides may have increased in the last hunting season, and probably will this season.



Suzette trying on an expensive fur

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Story by  
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