

Three Millions of Dollars From Skunk Skins

Suggestions For Raising the Animals as a Source of Income.

THREE MILLIONS FOR SKUNKS

THE skunk brings annually to the trappers of the United States about \$3,000,000. It stands second in importance only to the muskrat among our fur-bearing animals. The value of a skunk skin in the raw fur market averaged from about 25 cents to \$3.50 in December, 1913, and usually runs higher. Although this fur is not very popular in America, Europeans favor it because it wears well and has a luster which makes it rival the Russian sable in appearance. These facts are emphasized in the new farmers' bulletin (No. 587) now being sent out by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, which may be had free on application by those who are interested in the "Economic Value of North American Skunks."

Thirteen states now protect the skunk by game laws, and a fuller understanding of the economic value of these creatures to agriculture, as well as to commerce, will no doubt result in protective measures in other localities. The earliest legislation for the protection of these little animals grew out of appeals from hop growers in New York because of their value in killing the hop borer. This was in 1893 and since then laws have been passed for their protection in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, Kansas, and North Carolina. The closed season for the skunk varies in the different states, but in the opinion of the author of this bulletin it should be extended to at least nine months in every case, for at present there is a scarcity of fur animals and the increased demand for furs has put a higher premium on its pelt. Unless given more adequate protection, it cannot long survive a high premium. In advising this close season it should be understood that the right of farmers to destroy individual predatory skunks should always be reserved.

Returned to Us as Alaska Sable.

London is a great market for American skunk skins. In 1858 over 18,000 skins of this animal were exported to London; in 1911, over 2,900,000. Although only a small percentage of our skins are now dressed and made up here, we have received in years past a good number of them back after they have been made up abroad, and many American ladies who would scorn to wear a skunk skin have been proud of their imported "black marten" or "Alaska sable" which was merely the American skunk fur more attractively labeled.

The process of dressing the skunk skin and removing any lingering odor has been improving year by year and meanwhile the fur has been gaining popularity. The present extreme scarcity of Russian sable because of a law that forbids the taking of that fur favors the foreign market for the skunk and even in this country the use of its skin is increasing.

Profitably Raised for Their Fur.

The recent high prices for skunk skins have led to a discussion of the subject of skunk raising on a commercial basis. Although some breeders have encountered difficulties, on the whole there are good reasons for believing that a profitable industry may be developed. Skunks are less wild than other members of the family to which the more important small fur bearers belong and

their diet permits a good deal of latitude in feeding, whereas, the marten and the mink require a diet almost exclusively of meat. The problem of providing pens for rearing them is also less complicated in the case of the skunk.

An inclosure for skunks should occupy a well-drained, sandy hillside, partly shaded by trees, and partly open land covered with grasses. An acre will afford room for about 50 adult skunks. A three-foot fence made of poultry netting and having an overhanging barrier at the top is sufficient to confine the animals. The wire should be of No. 16 gauge, and the netting of one-inch mesh. This low fence, however, is not sufficient to keep out dogs, unless the overhang is very large and extends on both sides. Many breeders prefer a tight fence of boards or sheet iron or even a stone wall. The fence should penetrate the ground to a depth of two or three feet to prevent the skunks from digging under it.

Beside the general inclosure, a separate breeding pen for each female should be provided. Cheap boxes with wooden floors will serve every purpose, but they must be dry inside. Contact with the soil improves the fur but dampness must be guarded against.

Will Eat Most Anything.

Meat, fish, insects, bread, cooked and even raw vegetables, and ripe fruits are included in the great variety of foods which skunks will eat. Table scraps will keep the animals in good condition, and the food for a large skunk ranch may often be procured from hotels when usually it will cost nothing but the labor of removing it. Especially to be recommended are cakes and mush made of corn meal and bits of meat, fresh milk, cooked green corn and hominy. Little more than the amount of food required for a cat will supply the wants of a skunk.

While skunks usually breed but once a year in captivity, occasionally a second litter is produced. One male should be kept for from five to eight females. The mating season is in February or early March. The young are usually born in May and are mature with prime fur in December. Careful selection year by year will result in a better grade of fur and in three or four generations it is possible to secure a strain of skunks the furs of which will all grade "No. 1." A No. 1 fur will bring from \$2 to \$3.50 or more in the New York market.

As skunks inhabit most parts of the United States, they may usually be obtained in the neighborhood where it is desired to breed them. The best method is to dig the young out of their dens in the summer. Additional data of interest to the skunk raiser may be had in the new bulletin which gives diagrams to aid him in making an inclosure for the animals.

In capturing the wild skunk for its fur, trapping is a better method than shooting, for shooting impairs the value of the fur and generally results in its being deiled. Skunks are neither suspicious nor cunning and are easily trapped. They are often caught in unbaited traps placed in the paths they travel; yet the head of a fowl, a sparrow or a dead mouse makes an excellent bait. Skunks when trapped do not often discharge their scent so as to deile the fur, but care is needed in removing them from the trap.

Bayocean and Its Attractions

EVERY place where members of the human race congregate has some special attribute, else that particular locality would be left to primeval wilderness or barren waste. Man is quick to accept the good things which Nature has placed for his use. Whether it be soil rich in the elements for plant growth, pastures of succulent grasses for his stock, mineral-laden sands, forest-covered hills, granite or marble wealth in mountain fastnesses, a protected harbor, an accessible shipping point, or merely a play ground where he may rest and enjoy a health-restoring climate, man will find that spot and make of it a gathering place for his fellowmen.

Bayocean is primarily a pleasure re-

sort, a play ground, where all who come are welcome to share in the abundance of pure sunshine, the invigorating ocean breezes; in rambles over green hills, through virgin forests; in the boating, fishing and hunting; in surf bathing or a plunge in the warmer waters of Tillamook Bay. Bayocean is destined to be the "Play ground of the Pacific Northwest." Few beach resorts have so varied an assortment of attractions for the pleasure seeker. None have the unequalled combination of ocean beach and inland joy. No convenience has been overlooked for the comfort of the thousands who will find rest and recreation at Bayocean during the coming summer season. With Bayocean as your summer headquarters,

you have surf bathing in the ocean; still water swimming in the bay; mountain climbing; hunting; trout fishing, up any one of the five rivers flowing into the Bay; salmon trolling; deep-sea fishing; boating on the bay, and so many other things we would tire you in the telling. You can spend the entire summer at this wonder spot and never want for something to do, or a place to go.

Few resorts can boast of a beach equal to that of Bayocean. From Tillamook Bay to Cape Mears, a four-mile course, the beach extends, smooth, hard white sand, 800 feet in width at low tide in the summer. The surf is ideal for bathing and a rowboat can be safely launched in it.

Do not confuse Bayocean with any other resort in this part of the country. The whole idea is different. Think of a summer resort with hard-surfaced streets and sidewalks; electric lights, pure mountain water; telephone; a high-grade hotel (not a boarding house); a \$75,000.00 Natatorium with a tank 50x160 feet with warm salt water and containing the latest wonder, artificial surf, so real in its action as to fool old Neptune himself; amply stocked stores, clean amusements, interesting side trips, natural beach attractions, all are here awaiting those who seek an outing, whether for a few days or for the entire summer.

Place such a resort in the center of all natural attractions that appeal to you, and you have Bayocean situated on the high-wooded peninsula which forms Tillamook Bay. The ocean on one side with a clean, hard beach, the beautiful Bay on the other side, three miles wide and seven miles long. At the south Cape Mears mountain raising its wooded sides high above the surrounding hills and ending in a rocky promontory, extending half a mile into the ocean, pierced by many caves extending their winding passages hundreds of feet into the solid rock.

Now, don't say "all this might be true, but I doubt it." Don't listen to some "friend" with an axe to grind who tells you not to believe it. If we can bring the people of the Northwest to a full realization of what Bayocean really means to them, as individuals, and what an asset it is to their community, we will have accomplished our purpose.

In closing, we want to urge you to spend your summer vacation at Bayocean, and we can promise you the most delightful outing of your life. Don't postpone coming this year, because you think your friends are going elsewhere, for when summer comes you will find them all at Bayocean. Don't hesitate to apply at 732 Corbett building, Portland, for information, as you will not be importuned to buy property. We have none for sale. (Advt.)

The forest service has been requested to co-operate with the port authorities of Coos Bay, Wash., in planting to control shifting sand dunes.



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