

if it is damaged, if it has been improperly stretched or dried, or if it is an unprime skin obviously taken before the season opened.

Muskrat pelts are graded for size as: 1. Extra large, 2. large, 3. medium, 4. small, 5. kits and damaged skins. Sometimes sizes 4 and 5 are lumped together. Since the emphasis now is upon dyed, tinted and blended furs, color of muskrat furs no longer is necessarily a characteristic of quality. If styles change, certain fur colors may again command premium prices.

In grading furs, not only primeness and size of pelts are considered, but the value is also influenced by the kind of care the pelt had. Although the pelt should be stretched firmly to its full size, yet it must not be forcibly stretched because such forcing makes the hide thin and causes some loss in value. Pelts which have been dried too fast as happens when placed near a fire become grease-burned and as a result have less value. Excess grease and flesh should be carefully removed from all pelts.

Measurements of four commonly used sizes of muskrat are shown in Fig. 8. By comparing the length and width of your muskrat hides you will be able to grade your own pelts for size. Beaver pelts are graded into various sizes, depending on the size as represented by the total of the length plus the width of the pelt. A total of 50 inches or less represents a small pelt, medium pelts are 50 to 60 inches, large pelts are 60 inches and up, and blanket size pelts 66 inches and up.

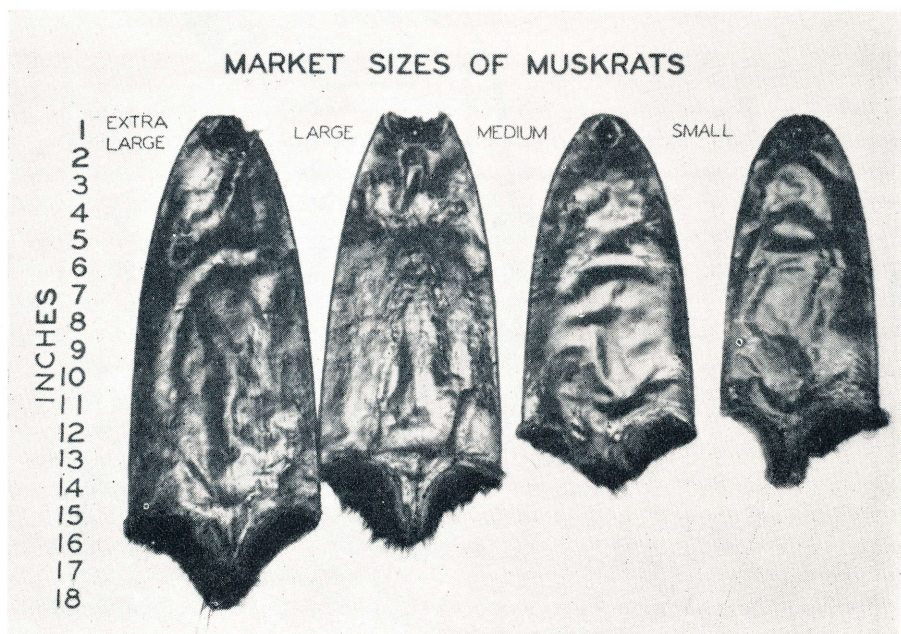


Fig. 8. BY USING THIS ILLUSTRATION YOU WILL BE ABLE TO GRADE YOUR OWN PELTS FOR SIZE.