Environmental and Economic Issues in Fur Trapping

A Profile of Canada’s Fur Trapping Industry and Variables Influencing its Sustainability: An Annotated Bibliography
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Prepared for the
National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy

Canadian Circumpolar Institute (CCI)
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Introduction

The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) recognizes the importance of the fur industry to Canada, and to its Aboriginal Peoples in particular. Indeed, NRTEE views the sustainability of many aboriginal communities and the preservation of aboriginal cultural traditions as synonymous with the sustainability of the fur industry.

The fur industry in Canada today is composed of three major elements or sectors, employing approximately 100,000 people, including 5,000 fur ranchers, 10,000 manufacturers and retailers, and 85,000 trappers. The majority of trappers are Aboriginal Peoples who continue to rely on fur trapping to supplement personal and family income, support community stability and enterprise, and maintain ecological knowledge, traditional values and cultural identity.

The NRTEE commissioned the Canadian Circumpolar Institute to produce a comprehensive literature review relevant to documenting: a) the economic, social and demographic profiles of the fur trapping industry; and, b) the environmental and economic variables that influence the sustainability of trapping. Initially, three other issues were to be included in the comprehensive literature review: c) the public policy and regulatory system(s) in place that govern fur trapping; d) other issues that influence the industry’s sustainability; and, e) the representative stakeholders and their positions on fur trapping. However, resources were not available at the time of this study to undertake a comprehensive literature review of all five issues. Thus, a decision was taken by the NTREE to concentrate only on the first two elements, as described. Yet, it soon became apparent that these themes are intimately linked to other variables influencing the sustainability of the industry including social, political, and moral issues. Consequently, the latter theme (“other variables”), was added to the bibliography.

The NTREE views the following annotated bibliography as a first step in identifying the factors that influence the sustainability of fur trapping so that it may ascertain if there are unresolved environmental, economic and other issues that might be addressed in a round table project. The specific purpose of the literature reviews on these issues is to provide the NTREE with background information on the subject areas identified in order for it to:

a) determine the state of the debate on the environment and economic issues that influence the sustainability of trapping,
b) identify issues for further analysis, and

c) design follow-up studies.

The following annotated bibliography represents the results of extensive searches for relevant literature and other materials on six major issues or themes:

1) Economic Profile of the Fur Trapping Industry
2) Social Profile of the Fur Trapping Industry
3) Demographic Profile of the Fur Trapping Industry
4) Environmental Variables that Influence the Sustainability of Fur Trapping
5) Economic Variables that Influence the Sustainability of Fur Trapping
6) Other (Political, Social, Moral, etc.) Issues that Influence the Sustainability of Fur Trapping
Methodology
In order to access relevant sources in the opinion of the project team, extensive searches were first made of the University of Alberta library holdings, including those in the Canadian Circumpolar Library. In addition, keyword searches were made of several CD-ROM data bases including the GATE, Microlog, Environmental CR ROM, Arctic and Antarctic CD-ROM, Statistics Canada CD-ROM, Sociofile and the Canadian Periodical Index. The bibliographies of accessed titles were also consulted for additional direction. Relevant titles were subsequently identified and an attempt was made to access selected sources using call numbers. However, not all relevant titles were found or accessed owing to the facts that:

a) they were not included among the University of Alberta’s holdings, or

b) they were included among the University’s holdings, but were unavailable because they were out on loan, being re-catalogued, or were otherwise not in their specified locations.

Even though less than 50% of the titles selected were initially accessed, an attempt was made to overcome these deficiencies. Specifically, interlibrary loan requests to other universities and institutions were submitted for titles not held by the University of Alberta, while recalls were made for relevant titles out on loan. At the time of writing, many interlibrary loan requests had not been received (see Appendix A for titles requested and not received by August 31, 1996).

In addition to the above efforts, various trapping and Aboriginal organizations as well as federal, provincial and territorial government departments were contacted in order to gain access to relevant titles held by these institutions (see Appendix B). At the time of writing, many relevant titles and periodicals produced by these institutions had not been received, although a list of titles held by the Department of Renewable Resources, Government of the Northwest Territories is included as an appendix (Appendix C).

Individual sources are annotated separately. Annotations range from 30 to 300 words in length, averaging about 100 words each. These annotations describe the general subject, scope, purpose, and content of the source as well as its relevance to the major section or theme in which it appears. Keywords are also provided at the end of each annotation. Where individual sources address more than one major issue or theme, which was often the case, annotations are cross-referenced as to section. Sections are unequal as to coverage owing to a variety of factors, including availability. At the beginning of each section a brief analysis of the literature pertinent to the issue under consideration and the goals of the NRTEE is provided. Deficiencies, gaps, strengths, etc. in the ability of the annotated literature to shed light on the nature and state of current debate on the issue are noted. In addition, suggestions as to how these deficiencies might be overcome are presented.

Because of time constraints and other considerations, research focused on fur trapping industry literature, with an emphasis on aboriginal issues. Although fur ranching, the sealing industry and other issues are left out, two excellent sources (ICC 1996, Wenzel 1991) address a number of issues relating to the sealing industry from an Aboriginal perspective. While literature searches focused primarily on regional and national fur trapping issues, international issues were also considered, especially in the area of political, international, and trade relations.

A large proportion of the literature on the fur trade, indeed as much as half, is historical in nature. While many of these sources facilitate understanding of the historical development of the fur trade and Aboriginal involvement in it, an effort
was made to restrict the economic, social and demographic profiles of the fur trapping industry to the contemporary period. Although a historical analysis of the fur trapping industry might prove useful, and even illuminating, it was decided to focus on the current state of the industry, concentrating on issues that affect or may influence its sustainability in the future.

Profiles of the Fur Trapping Industry from Economic, Social and Demographic Perspectives
Sources profiling Canada’s fur trapping industry from an economic, social and demographic perspective are annotated, respectively, in the first three sections of this document. Although only a small percentage of sources yielded specific demographic information, what was accessed was informative and tended to distinguish Aboriginal (Métis, Indian, Inuit) participation in primary production and non-aboriginal participation in other sectors (manufacturing and retailing) of the fur industry.

Literature addressing the fur trapping industry from an economic perspective was more abundant. Various sources provide the economic value of fur trapping at the provincial/territorial and national levels. At the community level, statistics on the number and value of pelts sold are less abundant. Even though the dollar value of fur trapping may appear insignificant compared to other, more modern sources of income (e.g., wage labour) in some communities, money made from trapping forms an integral part of the mixed economies in many Aboriginal and northern settlements. By providing income that, in turn, supports other productive, sustainable income-generating activities (e.g., hunting, fishing, guiding, outfitting, etc.), fur trapping attains a value that it might not otherwise have in more southerly centres where economic opportunities are more diversified and plentiful.

The social dimension is perhaps the most overlooked perspective and under valued contribution of the fur trapping industry. Fur trapping, together with hunting and fishing, forms an integral and often distinct component of northern and Aboriginal economies. Money from fur trapping is often used to purchase equipment and supplies for hunting, fishing and other productive land-based activities. It also is a form of productive activity that keeps people on the land, in touch with nature and their cultural identity, and reduces dependency on social assistance programs. It is a source of self-esteem and social recognition in communities where traditional lifestyles are still valued. This complex, often labelled the "bush" or traditional economy is the cornerstone of Aboriginal culture in a modern world. It is what sustains Aboriginal cultural values, identity, knowledge, social relationships as well as physical and emotional well-being. However, there are many factors beyond those experienced locally that influence the sustainability of fur trapping and its viability as an integral way of life for Canada’s northern and Aboriginal communities. Many sources included in this section also appear in Section 1, as it is difficult to separate society from economy in such contexts.

Economic, Environmental, and Other (Social, Political and Moral) Issues Influencing the Sustainability of Trapping
Many factors have, can, and will affect the sustainability of the fur trapping industry in the future. The encroachment of the techno-industrial complex into the wilderness threatens fur trapping as a viable and sustainable industry. Mines, hydro development, oil and gas development, forestry, etc., pose a threat to habitats critical to fur-bearers and the people who depend on them for their
livelihoods. Contaminants and pollutants generated in the industrial centres of the south and west pose an equally formidable threat to animal populations.

These and other environmental threats often provide the catalyst for Aboriginal groups to seek recognition of their rights and title to their lands through comprehensive land claims negotiations. Aboriginal involvement in decision-making through participation on boards and committees aimed at managing natural resources is often a vital component of these land claims. However, time-tested systems of local management, and the traditional and ecological knowledge that often inform such systems, often take a back seat to imposed state management systems and the application of scientific knowledge to decision-making. Without local control of natural habitat and living resources by the people most dependent on them, the sustainability of fur trapping will be in jeopardy.

Economic factors that affect the sustainability of fur trapping include the cost of production, market price, and supply and demand. These, in turn, are directly effected by public opinion and resultant political actions. Perhaps, the single greatest factor influencing the sustainability of fur trapping today from an economic standpoint is the impact of the animal rights movement, or anti-fur lobby. Animal rights are directly responsible for political decisions in Europe in 1983 which resulted in the collapse of the seal skin market. Constant pressure on European governments by animal rights activists and the anti-fur industry also continues to threaten to destroy the market for Canadian wild furs in Europe, which has historically accounted for 80% of Canada's fur exports. Public reaction to the fur trapping industry, and specifically the use of the leg hold trap, has also resulted in the creation of a "humane trapping" techno-industry, which in turn has affected the cost of production for people on the trapline. Efforts aimed at educating the general public about the sustainability and "ecosystem friendly" nature of fur trapping vis-a-vis ending trapping as a viable way of life, is insurance that all stakeholders in the fur trapping industry should invest in.
Section 1.

Economic Profile of the Fur Trapping Industry

The fur trapping industry in Canada today is only marginally viable from a purely monetary perspective. Owing to fluctuations in the price of furs, not the availability of furbearers or lack of infrastructure to supply markets, fur trapping as a viable way of life for many Aboriginal people is in jeopardy. Market conditions are influenced directly by consumer demand and fashion trends. These, in turn, are affected by many variables including public opinion, which is subject to media manipulation and other influences, including the animal rights movement and the anti-fur industry, specifically.

While some sources annotated within this section specify the number and value of pelts of trapped species taken in various jurisdictions, regional/provincial representation over a broad time scale is incomplete.

Many sources in this section recognize that the income-generating value of fur trapping is only part of the overall value that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal trappers and their families derive from fur trapping. Trapping has social, cultural, and other values and dimensions that must be considered when evaluating the economics of the fur trapping industry. It may not be cost-efficient for many Aboriginal people to hunt and trap, yet they do because such activities provide high quality food and provisions, as well as a sense of cultural identity and connection to the land.

Many of the economic values of fur trapping are indirect or hidden. For example, the economic value of the fur industry must take into account how much damage would occur to crops, commercial forests, recreational property and other heavily used areas if furbearers were not trapped (Deems and Pursely 1983). For many Aboriginal people, trapping is a labour intensive activity which articulates with other productive activities (e.g., hunting) to put good, nutritious "food on the table" (at a cost much less than what can be purchased locally), while maintaining their relationship to the land and a vital interest in the health and well being of the resource.

The economics of fur trapping must consider the in-kind replacement value that income and food generated by hunting and trapping provides. The loss of trapping as a viable enterprise in many northern and Aboriginal communities would result in increased health care, social assistance, and other hidden costs. It may also have an environmental cost; taking people off the land will only pave the way for the expansion of the techno-industrial complex (mines, hydroelectric development, etc.) into the “wilderness”, causing severe economic and social hardship to those most dependent on the land and its furbearing animals for their survival (Herscovici 1985). Who will care for the land and its furbearing resources when Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal trappers are no longer an integral part of ecosystems? An accurate economic profile of the fur trapping industry must consider these and other hidden costs.
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Section 1:

Bibliographic References and Annotations


This table provides information on the number of pelts sold in Alberta and the average price per pelt. Breakdown is by species. Also provided is information on the number of registered trappers, resident trappers, Métis and Indian licences and the number of Wood Buffalo Park licences issued. Information from previous years is also available.
(Keywords: Aboriginal trappers, economics, demographics).


The course manual for the Trapping and Conservation Course and the Western Canadian Trapper Instructor Training Course. The course objectives are to provide information on 1) humane and efficient trapping techniques, 2) improved fur handling methods, 3) the basic biology and management of furbearers, and 4) fur marketing procedures. Also included within the manual is information on the history and development of the fur industry, equipment, business management, first aid and a very detailed section on humane trapping.
(Keywords: economics, environmental sustainability, economic sustainability, furbearer biology, trapping technology, humane trapping, Alberta resource management).


This book was originally published in 1977 as the report of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry. It examines how a pipeline built through the Mackenzie Valley would affect the land and people of the region. Environmental, cultural, economic and social impacts are discussed. The history of native land claims is also examined since no major decisions about northern development should be made until land claims are settled. In conclusion, the final recommendation is that the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline should not be built. Instead, native land claims need to be settled, new institutions set up, and a truly diversified economy established.
(Keywords: Aboriginal people, Dene society, economics, resource management, Yukon, Mackenzie Valley Pipeline, traditional economy, land claims, economic sustainability).

Originally produced in 1977, and revised in 1989, the Manitoba Fur Fact Book was prepared as an aid to wildlife managers and public service personnel within the provincial government. It is intended as a collation of the fur sales statistics, fur industry facts and fur management guidelines in the province of Manitoba from 1919 to 1987. For the past 68 years Manitoba's contribution to Canada's wild fur industry has averaged over $2 million dollars annually, but for the last 10 years, the annual average has been almost $7 million. Fur sales records by species and pelt values, variables affecting the fur harvest, and a number of incidental facts are provided. (Keywords: economics, wild fur sales - Manitoba, fur management).


This government document addresses the European Community Regulation governing the importation of wild fur and how this regulation has affected aboriginal trapping in Canada economically, socially, and culturally. Twenty-three recommendations are provided as to how the Canadian government should effectively deal with the EC Regulation and how the government can protect the future of the aboriginal trapping industry. The present day Canadian fur industry is discussed and one chapter is devoted to discussing how more humane trapping methods can be implemented. (Keywords: Aboriginal trappers and society, animal rights, traditional economy, humane trapping, economic sustainability).


This document provides an in-depth examination of the Canadian fur trapping industry. The social, cultural, and economic importance of trapping to various stakeholders, especially Aboriginal people, is emphasized. The trapping profession, the effects of the animal rights movement and the role that government can play in supporting the industry are also discussed. Various recommendations are given concerning ways by which government organizations can assume proactive positions to protect the fur industry. (Keywords: Aboriginal people, economic importance, social and cultural importance, animal rights, humane trapping, traps, traditional economy, economic sustainability).

The fur industry is important to many Canadians, but primarily to Aboriginal people and residents of rural and remote regions. Animal rights campaigns affect sales of furs, causing severe economic hardship for trappers. The federal government and pro-fur organizations have resolved to defend trapping as an important economic and cultural activity. This information sheet provides an excellent overview of the Canadian fur industry and the issues it faces.

(Keywords: Aboriginal people, social and cultural importance, economic hardships, animal rights, humane trapping, economic sustainability, environmental sustainability).


This paper re-examines the debate over the future of native traditional economies. It states that hunting and trapping provide not only cash from furs which is used to renew hunting equipment and gain other supplies, but also provides quantities of country food and provisions. So, even though the cash needed for hunting supplies may be greater than the income brought in by furs, hunting and trapping are essential to the traditional economy because of the high quality provisions it supplies. Anything that reduces this harvest of country provisions, reduces the native Northerners' standard of living. In order to allow for hunting and trapping, while increasing capital in the communities, an Income Security Programme is recommended.

(Keywords: Native people, nutrition, economic importance, income security, traditional economy, economic sustainability).


This book provides a brief overview of the management of furbearer populations, trapping technology, the impact of the animal rights movement, the use of ranched fur, and the economic value of the fur industry. The book also discusses each furbearer species and how the species is managed throughout North America. Trapping is seen as the method by which humans, as predators, take part in the ecosystem. The use of steel traps is discussed as being no more cruel than death by disease, starvation, or predation, and the animal rights controversy is seen as being rife with propaganda fuelled by poorly conducted studies. Also, the value of the fur industry must take into account how much damage to crops and commercial forests would occur if furbearers were not trapped, the actual value of the fur pelts, revenues from licences, and the income generated by the industry.

(Keywords: economics, ecosystem management, traps, animal rights, humane trapping, economic sustainability, environmental sustainability).

The role that trapping plays in the native culture and economy can only be truly realized when the link between the subsistence economy and culture, politics, and the spirituality of the people is understood. The subsistence economy involves every member of the community in a labour-intensive and all-encompassing lifestyle. Bush life allows people to escape the stress and tension of community life and provides freedom and self-sufficiency. Also, the value of bush products is indispensable for food and supplies. With new technologies available, bush life has not disappeared, but has been modernized. Snowmobiles, rifles and gasoline aid in trapping, but also require the trapper to take part in a cash economy in order to buy these supplies. It has been argued that trapping only came into existence with the fur trade and therefore is not a traditional subsistence activity, but a commercial one. However, the skills and knowledge used in trapping have always been part of the resource management systems used by the people. It was a simple progression for trapping to become an integral component of the economic base of Aboriginal peoples. By working in the fur trade Aboriginal people have access to imported goods and can still maintain their autonomy and traditional lifestyle. This is a comprehensive, in-depth argument supporting Aboriginal knowledge and the fur industry's right to equal status with any other resource-based industry. History has effectively disproved the assumption that the so-called subsistence economy would give way to the industrial economy. The freedom and self-sufficiency that comes from being your own boss and running your own life are difficult to recreate in the wage economy. In the development of renewable resources, however, there is potential for a long-term economic base built on the traditional environmental knowledge native people already have.

*Keywords: Aboriginal knowledge, traditional environmental knowledge, subsistence economy, industrial economy, economic importance, social and cultural importance, demographics, resource management, economic sustainability.*

Fast, H., and F. Berkes. (1994). *Native Land Use, Traditional Knowledge and the Subsistence Economy in the Hudson Bay Bioregion*. Ottawa: Canadian Arctic Resources Committee and the Municipality of Nanikiluaq.

This report summarizes the land use studies of the Hudson Bay bioregion. Aboriginal hunting, trapping, and fishing constitute most of the land use activities based on local traditional ecological knowledge and environmental management systems. Meat is the main product, although wood, fur, plant products for food and medicine and raw materials for crafts are obtained from the land. The subsistence economy is significant economically, as seen by replacement values of bush products, and is the basis of Aboriginal culture and social health. Strengthening this economy would improve the quality of life for Aboriginal peoples.

*Keywords: Aboriginal people, economics, subsistence economy, social and cultural importance, sustainability, land-use, resource management, replacement values, country food.*
Environmental and Economic Issues in Fur Trapping


The popularity of wildlife-related recreational activities, including trapping, commitments of time and money to these activities, and strong support of wildlife conservation were confirmed by this survey. Most Canadians were involved in some sort of wildlife-related activity and spent more money on a per-activity basis when they participated in multiple activities. A number of distinct groups, determined by their demographic profiles and their commitment of time and money to wildlife activities were identified. Provincial and regional differences were observed.

(Keywords: wildlife activities/breakdown - Canada, economics, demographic, resource management, economic sustainability).


Two questions regarding the economic significance of wildlife-dependent activities are asked within the context of sustainable development: 1) What are the economic impacts that result from participation in wildlife-related activities? and 2) How much value do people place on wildlife-related activities? In answer, wildlife resources contribute substantially to Canada's gross domestic product and to income generated by employment sustained by this economic activity. People also attribute a high economic value to wildlife-related activities. The benefits of fish and wildlife to Canadians, including fur trapping, can certainly be measured economically to provide a significant incentive to ensure sustainable development of wildlife resources.

(Keywords: wildlife-related activities/economic significance, resource management, sustainability).


See Fillion et al. (1989).


See Fillion et al. (1990).

The pattern of Kaktovik (Alaska) subsistence harvest is described from a geographical perspective. The study compiled site-specific information on hunting sites and contextualized this information with that on site use, changes in use over time, and the role of subsistence in village life. Consideration was given as to how oil development has affected subsistence over time in the area. 
(Keywords: economics/subsistence harvest, oil development, Aboriginal land use).


This book is a collection of 13 graphs for beaver, fisher, lynx, marten, mink, muskrat, otter, polar bear, squirrel, weasel, white fox, wolf and wolverine for the period 1943 to 1961. These graphs indicate the number of pelts taken and the average value per pelt. 
(Keywords: pelt values and pelts traded - N.W.T.).


This is the final report of the Special Committee on the Northern Economy, created in 1987 to "mark out a secure economic path for the future." Two types of communities were found: developed and underdeveloped. Each type requires a different economic development strategy. In order to develop a single long-term strategy, underdeveloped communities require development to be fostered and this must occur in a manner which will respond to the needs of both developed and underdeveloped communities. Recommendations are provided as to how this development can take place. 
(Keywords: economic strategy, developed/underdeveloped northern communities, demographic).


This survey covers the demographic characteristics of native harvester households and their level of involvement in trapping, hunting, fishing, wage employment, and traditional crafts production. Also included are household income, consumption of country food, types of harvesting equipment owned, and associated operating costs. 
(Keywords: native harvesters, demographic, characteristics/ income, production costs, level of involvement).


This table provides the value and number of pelts by species produced in the N.W.T. for a 12 year period between 1982 and 1994. No analysis of the table is undertaken, although both the value and number of pelts decreased during this period. 
(Keywords: pelt numbers and values, N.W.T.)
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The techniques involved in preparing a pelt for the highest sale price possible are discussed. Trapping techniques and general pelt handling techniques are mentioned. Specific comments for particular species are also given.

(Keywords: economics/pelt preparation and handling, trapping technology).


This report discusses the procedures taken to obtain annual fur harvest statistics in the Yukon. The data presented was collected from three sources: general hunting licence returns, fur traders counter cheque book slips, and fur export permits. Some personal communications with trappers and conservation officers was also included.

(Keywords: fur harvest statistics, trapper conversations).


This report is an assessment of the Income Security Program (ISP) provided by the federal government for the James Bay Cree. Those Cree trappers who chose a subsistence life were provided with exclusive hunting territories, access to certain animals, and provisions for environmental protection. The ISP is a significant experiment to support the subsistence activities of northern hunters/trappers whose contributions to local economies has long been underestimated. The value of cultural continuity, nutritional bush foods, and the costs of hunting and trapping excursions are evaluated to determine the best approach for income subsidies. By comparing fur income, wage income and welfare payments, the research indicates that wage income often subsidized bush activities, but 55% to 60% of cash flow was derived from manpower courses and welfare. It was evident welfare also subsidized the bush economy. Experiments in subsidy programs to test for labor withdrawal and equity payments are discussed to evaluate the ISP. The subsidy, therefore, took the form of wages for subsistence activities. In comparison with the NIT program, the ISP provided equal annual benefits while ensuring man hours in subsistence activities. An organizational chart, a description of the implementation and administration of the income security program is supplied, complemented by illustrations, graphs and charts supporting conclusions.

(Keywords: James Bay Cree, trapping costs and benefits, Income Security Program, cultural continuity, nutritional bush foods).

Environmental and Economic Issues in Fur Trapping

This material provides, in booklet form, an overview of the early Manitoba fur trade, the depletion of furbearers, and early conservation methods. The Manitoba trapping profile, which covers 10 years from 1975 to 1984, is complemented with illustrations, graphs and charts describing registered traplines, the value of wild fur and ranch fur exports, the flow of fur from the producer to the consumer and annual fur prices per furbearer. (Keywords: economics, fur exports, and prices, early conservation).


This is an in-depth examination of the entire fur industry in the Northwest Territories. In order to develop a strong N.W.T. fur industry, several challenges must be addressed. Knowledge must be increased on the business and value-added processes of the fur industry to lessen dependence on outsiders. Fur technology should be transferred from fur grading to product design, production, processing, promotion and marketing. Finally, coordinated mechanisms to support and promote the value of N.W.T. furs in local, domestic, and international markets should be established. Strategic initiatives to carry out these goals are proposed. The fur trade in the N.W.T. is discussed from a cultural perspective through historical to contemporary times in order to provide a context for the discussion of how to develop the industry further. (Keywords: economics - N.W.T., valued added products, markets, sustainability, marketing, cultural perspective).


A profile of trappers in the N.W.T. between 1987 and 1992 is given. Comparisons are made between trappers north and south of treeline and between communities. Productivity based on income is examined in relation to age and community both north and south of the treeline. A brief discussion of how trappers can and do contribute to biodiversity conservation is included. (Keywords: economic productivity, demographic breakdown, biodiversity conservation).


This paper discusses community resistance to the imposition of an external industrial socioeconomic system and the destruction of a distinctive land-based way of life. It shows how historically Inuvialuit independence has been eroded by contact with the external economic system and the assimilationist policies of the government. In spite of these pressures, however, the Inuvialuit have struggled to retain their culture and their land-
based economy. This thesis shows that hunting and trapping continue to be viable and contribute significant income, both cash and income-in-kind, to the community. This "hidden" economic reality underlies the preference of community residents for hunting and trapping over wage labour. The thesis also discusses how hunting and trapping are more compatible with community values and independence and how Paulatuk people have fought to maintain their land-based identity; "land is the critical element of the past and the cornerstone of the future." It shows how Paulatuk people have struggled to adjust the outside system's rules, in order to enjoy some of its benefits, while retaining important economic and cultural elements of the community way of life. (from author's abstract)

(Keywords: Inuvialuit - Paulatuk, industrialization/assimilation, hunting and trapping, economic importance, cultural importance, sustainability).


This publication appears three times per year and covers a variety of issues pertaining to the Canadian fur industry, including humane trapping, the rights of the trapper, the anti-fur lobby, political action in Europe to ban Canadian-trapped furs, and the sustainability of trapping from social, cultural, economic and environmental perspectives. Of primary attention is the anti-fur movement and various means of combating the anti-trapping sentiment. The periodical provides a current analysis of the debate, as seen from the trappers' viewpoint.

(Keywords: Aboriginal trappers, animal rights, humane trapping, traps, politics, marketing, sustainability).


The economic and cultural importance of subsistence activities is beginning to be acknowledged, as more and more conflicts over natural resources occur by various stakeholders. Subsistence use of wildlife persists and continues to adapt to modernization and industrialization. Mixed economies, which include subsistence-based systems, occur within the context of an interrelated economic and socio-cultural system. The recent history of Alaska, with rapid modernization and demographic changes, illustrates how the role of wildlife harvest in the previously solely subsistence-based communities has changed. The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, passed in 1980, was specifically intended to protect the culture and lifestyles of resource users who depend on wild fish and game for subsistence consumption, sharing, and barter. However, recent judicial review has questioned the constitutionality of certain provisions of the state law and has rendered policies on subsistence use of resources in a state of flux. Alaska's situation is used to demonstrate how wildlife management and policy formation must consider the economic, social, and cultural functions served by subsistence as a component of a mixed economy in Aboriginal communities.
(Keywords: economics - Alaska, traditional economy, social and cultural importance, modernization/industrialization, economic sustainability, resource management).


The N.W.T. Fur Symposium brought together representatives from all sectors of the fur industry, native organizations, and government agencies to exchange information on the current status and problems of the fur industry. The representatives met on different panels to discuss a variety of issues. Summaries of each panel's discussion are presented here. The panel topics were: an industry overview; the fur markets, demands and trends; problems and challenges facing the market; industry requirements to meet demand; options for primary producers; post-harvesting handling requirements; and prospects for secondary and tertiary activities. (Keywords: economics - N.W.T., market demands and trends, business development, economic sustainability, animal rights, humane trapping).


The N.W.T. Fur Symposium brought together representatives of all sectors of the fur industry, native organizations and government agencies. The representatives were to exchange information on the current status and problems of the fur industry, to apprise fur producers of changes and trends in trapping and fur farming, to determine requirements of the fur sector and available government assistance programs, and to recommend initiatives that should be taken for expansion and for determination of the relative roles government and industry can play in expansion and development. The proceedings of the symposium provide an important analysis of the status and challenges facing the fur industry in the N.W.T. (Keywords: economics - N.W.T., economic sustainability, animal rights, humane trapping, marketing).


This paper provides a brief historical overview of the Canadian fur trade before discussing the modern Canadian fur industry. Canada produces a high proportion of the wild fur on the international market, as well as some ranch furs. Most fur in Canada is sold at public auction at local, regional, national, and international levels, although some furs are sold directly to private dealers. The dressing and dyeing industry of Canada is closely tied to the manufacturing sector and has lately faced stiff competition from the Far East. However, the fur-manufacturing industry in Canada is significant owing to an influx of skilled fur-craftspeople from Europe. Fur products were primarily sold to Europe, but anti-fur campaigns have contributed to a lower market. Now the U.S. is the largest market. Overall, the fur industry is of great importance to native peoples although the latter are mainly involved in primary production or trapping. Recently, there have
been more attempts by native people to break into higher levels of the fur industry (e.g., tanning and dressing).

(Keywords: economics, Aboriginal people, markets, Aboriginal participation in manufacturing, sustainability).


This chapter discusses in detail how furs are graded and pelts are sorted. Raw furs are sorted at auction houses where they arrive in a variety of conditions. The season in which the animal was trapped, the skill of the trapper, and the geographic area in which the animal lived all affect the quality of the pelt and thus the lot into which it is sorted. The greater uniformity there is in a lot, the higher the price for the auction house, and consequently for the trapper. Factors affecting pelt quality are thoroughly covered for each furbearer species. Many illustrations are included.

(Keywords: economics fur handling and processing, marketing).


This chapter discusses the steps involved in processing a pelt from its raw state to the state of a complete garment. All aspects of fur processing are examined. Mink is the most popular fur in the garment industry, but other furs move in and out of fashion. Trappers must keep aware of changing fashion trends and manufacturing demands in order to concentrate on the strongest areas of the fur market.

(Keywords: economics, fashion trends, manufacturing demands, trapper flexibility).


This thesis analyzes the consequences for the domestic mode of production of the Cree-Montagnais of Quebec, and the latter's successive articulations with the Euro-North American capitalist economic and state formation. By examining the historical and ethnographic literature, and on the basis of the author's own case study at Paint Hills of the periods immediately prior to and following the implementation of a guaranteed income for hunters, he demonstrates the persistence of traditional relations of production through a series of changing productive forces and relations with the larger society. We are led to reject the idea that relations with the capitalist economy and the state lead a priori to the destruction or attrition of traditional relations of production. Rather, the author shows that at each step of articulation with, and dependence on, the capitalist economy and the state, relations of production in a domestic mode decisively structured the form and consequences of articulation. (from author's abstract)
(Keywords: James Bay Cree, capitalist economy, traditional economy, articulation).


The marketing of furs by trappers, the amount of raw fur production in the world, the economics of the fur industry and the export and import of fur products for Canada and the United States are examined. An overview of the modern fur trade from 1964 to 1984 is provided with the intention of making the marketing information available to trappers, fur managers and fur manufacturers or retailers.

(Keywords: economic fur production, marketing, economic sustainability).


This annotated bibliography describes 154 reports dealing with furbearers, the trapping industry, and small mammals, in the Canadian portion of the Yukon River watershed (exclusive of the Porcupine River). Sources include government and industrial reports, periodicals, university theses and books. Most of these are present in the library of the Wildlife Management Branch, Yukon Department of Renewable Resources, or the Yukon Archives, both in Whitehorse. A number of reports were obtained, from the Canadian Wildlife Service Library, Ottawa and Edmonton; various University libraries; or the authors. Subject report areas include: 1) legal reports pertaining to harvesting rights, wildlife ordinances, trapping regulations, and fur management; 2) statistical reports including statistics on pelt production, fur harvest, and raw fur production; 3) government reports (reports prepared by and for various government departments), including reports on fur trapping, the impact of land-use planning on fur management, and studies on specific furbearing animals; 4) industry studies on various aspects of the fur trade, such as the fur garment industry, the Alaska pipeline, and potential hydroelectric projects; 5) private reports and studies on a variety of topics including academic studies on specific wildlife species (e.g., marten, wolf, snowshoe hare), environmental impact studies and trapping industry reports; 6) anecdotal accounts of wildlife hunting and trapping in the Yukon. Summaries and keywords are provided for each report. The bibliographic information is listed alphabetically by author. A subject index is also provided.

(Keywords: economics of trapping (Yukon), demographics, furbearer habitat, abundance, distribution, pathologies and behaviour, fur harvest statistics, trapper education).

This report investigates and describes the size, structure and contributions of the Canadian fur industry from an economic perspective in 1987 and 1990. As such, it is the first known comprehensive investigation of the Canadian Fur Industry. All sectors of the fur trade are examined including wild fur trappers, fur farmers, "country" collectors/skin buyers, auction houses, intermediate buyers/brokers/dealers, manufacturers and retailers. Examined are the flow of pelts and garments through the industry and the resulting economic benefits. Benefits measured include: jobs supported, salaries and wages produced, tax revenues generated, and total economic activity resulting from the fur trade as well as the number of people employed directly by the fur trade and the number of businesses within the trade. Estimates are provided, where possible, for each level of the fur industry in Canada, from the pelt production level to the final retail sale level. A significant reduction in jobs, sales and wages and salaries (e.g., total sales for trapped pelts fell from $72 million in 1987 to $20 million in 1990) occurred in every sector of the fur industry between the two years under scrutiny.

(Keywords: economic analysis, pelt prices, pelts sold, economic benefit, demographic characteristics, primary producers, manufacturers, retailers).


Commercial fur trapping, once the primary economic activity of the Aboriginal inhabitants of the Northwest Territories, now accounts for only a small fraction of the income received by native people. Many adult native males do continue to engage in commercial trapping, nevertheless, though with varying degrees of commitment. A review of the recent literature reveals a wide variety of suggested motivations for this continuing involvement. Through the use of econometric techniques, the motivations of two distinct sub-groups of trappers are analyzed. One group, accounting for about 15% of those who trap, has a substantial commitment to the activity and is motivated primarily by income-earning potential of fur sales. The second group, which includes approximately 85% of the participants, consists of those whose participation is best explained by the lack of alternative employment opportunities. (from authors' abstract).

(Keywords: economic importance, fur sales, demographics, trapper sub-groups).


Patterns of wild resource harvest and utilization and the economics of trapping are described for the western Susitna Basin in Alaska. The cash economy is closely tied to wild resources either indirectly through lodges and guiding operations or directly through trapping. Resources taken for personal use are also part of the mixed economy. Trapping serves as a long-term relatively stable income source which also serves to maintain mental and physical health and to teach young people about responsibility.
Environmental and Economic Issues in Fur Trapping

(Keywords: economics - Alaska, mixed economy, cash economies, sociocultural importance).


This table gives the compiled information on all of the pelts sold in Canada and for how much they sold. Breakdown is by individual species and province/territory. Information for past years is also available.
(Keywords: economic breakdown - Canada, pelt prices, pelt numbers).


This table provides information on the number of trapping licences issued by province and territory for seasons between 1979/80 and 1994/95. The number of animals caught and the total dollar value of furs sold in each province/territory is also provided.
(Keywords: economics, pelt prices and numbers, Trapping licences).


Records of furs purchased from trappers by fur dealers are provided for the Northwest Territories. Information is given for each species on the number of pelts sold in a given year and the value of the pelts sold. Also discussed are resource harvesting programs which assist the trapper: trappers' assistance loans, trappers' incentive grants, fur marketing services, and the outpost camp program.
(Keywords: economics - N.W.T., pelt prices and numbers, resource harvesting programs/government assistance).


Four sections provide a summary of the major findings of contemporary research on trapping and trappers. These include: 1) a review of the numbers and the socioeconomic characteristics of trappers, 2) a description of trapping and trapper effort and success, 3) a discussion of the benefits of fur trapping in selected regional and community economies, particularly in Northern Canada, and 4) a review of the knowledge and attitudes of those segments of the public that are attentive to trapping issues. There is not enough data to make generalizations about all of or even most regions of North America. However, subsistence trapping does provide cash to fund subsistence activities as well as serves as an important food source, although the complete economic importance of trapping cannot be
quantified. More information about trapping is needed in order to make appropriate decisions in fur management.

(Keywords: economics, community benefits, socioeconomic importance, humane trapping, resource management, demographic, number and socioeconomic characteristics, subsistence economy, public attitudes).


This report compiles statistics on fur production and the fur industry in Alberta from 1920-21 to 1977-78. The estimated revenue from production of wild furs has, in the 1970's, reached the highest levels recorded in Alberta ($3-$7,000,000 annually), while total pelt production (total numbers of pelts of all species) conversely is near the all-time low ($500,000). The trend of increased total revenue earned from lower numbers of pelts stems partly from shifts in trapper effort to species which can be trapped most lucratively (a function of major changes in fur prices for various species over a period of 57 years), and partly from changes in species abundance. Trapper numbers have also increased in recent years, as generally increased fur prices have rejuvenated interest in fur-trapping. Harvest trends for the various furbearing species are also collated in this report, along with data on pelt prices and trapping regulations. These elucidate population trends and status, and assist in devising review management strategies. Results of these examinations suggest that trapping pressure may currently be high on some species as a result of high pelt prices (e.g., badger, coyote, fisher, lynx, marten, otter, and wolverine). Careful monitoring of fur harvests of such species is recommended. (from authors' abstract)

(Keywords: economics - Alberta, pelt prices and numbers, harvest trends, environmental sustainability, resource management).


Fur trapping for generations was the chief source of income for native people in northern Canada. However, it has seriously declined in recent years. An outstanding exception is the community of Sachs Harbour, Banks Island, N.W.T., where several thousand arctic fox pelts are harvested annually by 15 to 20 trapping families. This study analyzes the cultural ecology of the colonization of Banks Island as a trapping frontier, the economic geography of trapping and hunting there, and the current status and future prospects of the community of Sachs Harbour. Its purposes are to investigate the ecological, economic and social basis of trapping, to understand trapping as an adaptive strategy in particular historical circumstances, and to analyze it as a viable resource system.

(Keywords: Inuivialuit, economic contribution, social and cultural importance, sustainable systems).

A detailed look at Alberta's participation in the fur industry reveals the concentration and control of secondary fur business activities to be firmly established in Eastern Canada. This review investigates current activities and trends in the Canadian fur industry. It is a preliminary report to be used as a reference for further investigation. The conclusions and recommendations of this paper on the future expansion of Alberta's fur industry are reached through analysis of Alberta's current participation and the possibility of setting up competitive secondary fur businesses in the West (from author's introduction).

(Keywords: economic control, industry competition, Alberta and western Canada).


This is an in depth look at the importance of sealing to the Inuit way of life and how the European ban on sealskin products affected one Inuit community, Clyde River. Ringed seal harvesting has allowed the Inuit to participate in both the traditional food economy and the cash economy. Modern day supplies such as rifles and snowmobiles can only be obtained in the cash economy, yet they are required in the traditional economy. By limiting cash flow into Inuit communities through the collapse of markets for sealskins, Inuit cannot participate effectively in either the cash or traditional economy.

(Keywords: sealing, Inuit, economic contribution, traditional and cash economies, socio-cultural importance, economic sustainability, animal rights).


This study examines how the Great Whale River Cree perceive economics differently than the dominant white culture does. When a subordinate culture, such as the Great Whale River Cree, is in extended contact with an economically-dominant culture, they adopt many aspects of the dominant culture. They may wear the same clothing and participate in the same religious, political, and legal systems. The dominant culture perceives this as reflecting inward similarities. However, the members of a subordinate culture may hold entirely different perceptions while participating in economic activities with the other culture. These differences, as seen in the example of the Great Whale River Cree, affect the economic contact between western and non-western cultures. This study looks at the structure of perceptions of western economics and how they are distributed in the community of Great Whale. The accuracy of these perceptions, outside influences on the perceptions, and behavioral responses in relation to the perceptions are examined.

(Keywords: Great Whale River Cree, economic contact, dominant culture, cultural perceptions).

The importance of trapping in the mixed, subsistence-cash economies of rural Alaska is described. Trapping provides households with some cash, as well as food, raw materials, and fuel. Social values are also taught through trapping such as the socialization of young males in traditional knowledge, skills, and beliefs. Trapping is a profitable activity if capital equipment costs are prorated across all traditional fishing, hunting, and gathering activities. Trapping is considered as one management category with no distinctions being made between subsistence, commercial or recreational trapping.

(Keywords: subsistence-cash economies - Alaska, economic importance, socio-cultural importance, traditional knowledge).


This report was a product of the special rural development agreement (ARDA) June 15, 1976. It identifies a four-year fur development program intended to maximize the economic and social benefits of trapping for Yukon residents based on the current level of fur resource exploitation. Topics identified included a historical perspective of the fur industry, the current trapping areas, trapping statistics, relevant legislation, and economics of the fur industry.

(Keywords: economics - Yukon, trapping statistics, economic benefits, social benefits).


This survey provides a profile of trapping in the Yukon. It also assisted in the evaluation of the Department of Renewable Resources support programs to the trapping industry. Topics identified included length of time spent trapping, purpose of trapping, income from trapping, type of traps used, pelt sales, and costs incurred.

(Keywords: economics - Yukon, income, pelt sales, cost of production, technology, sociocultural characteristics).
Section 2.

Social Profile of the Fur Trapping Industry

Numerous sources in this section describe the importance of Canada's fur industry from a social perspective, particularly from an Aboriginal trapping perspective. Although materials specifically addressing the social importance of Canada's fur industry to other socioeconomic groups (e.g., non-Aboriginal trappers, manufacturers, and retailers) are lacking, the social and cultural importance of trapping in many northern Aboriginal communities can only be understood in terms of its role in the larger, mixed economy and lifestyles of these settlements.

Trapping usually articulates with hunting, fishing and other land-based activities to form a vital component -- often termed the traditional, subsistence, or "bush" economy -- of the local economy. This component provides high quality foods and provisions for local consumption that would not otherwise be attainable or affordable by other means. The health and economic benefits of the subsistence economy are obvious to many Native Northerners, as is the sense of self-sufficiency, spirituality, cultural identity, and connection to the land they derive from trapping, hunting, and fishing. As importantly, the traditional economy, which continues to form the basis of Aboriginal culture and society, is paramount in establishing, maintaining, and reaffirming social relationships which are crucial to the reproducing society. Finally, trapping as part of the traditional economy gives meaning, value, and efficacy to traditional ecological knowledge, which is vital not only for the perpetuation of Aboriginal culture and society, but for the animals and ecosystems upon which Native people depend.

The cultural incentives, importance, exchange relations, etc. associated with the bush economy are frequently different, and more valued, than those that dominate the capitalistic orientation of the wage or industrial economy. However, the wage economy is viewed in many northern settlements as vital to maintaining the subsistence economy, through the provision of much needed cash income to purchase supplies and equipment. This is especially so since the demise of, or volatility in, various fur markets owing to fashion trends, the anti-fur lobby, etc. Today, in many northern communities the wage economy and bush economy articulate to form a mixed economy, which sustains Aboriginal culture and society.

Many industry officials and others who have a vested interest in fur trapping generally are cognizant of the social, cultural and other non-economic values of fur trapping to Aboriginal communities. Yet, case studies linking these benefits directly and succinctly to trapping are rare. More studies addressing the social, cultural, and other values that flow directly from fur trapping (e.g., social pathology research in Aboriginal communities devasted by the collapse of various fur markets) would strengthen arguments for the sustainable development of fur trapping.
Section 2:

Bibliographic References and Annotations


In 1991, the European Economic Community passed legislation to impose a ban of fur from countries which continue to use the leghold trap or have not adopted internationally-approved humane trapping standards. Increasingly, those opposed to trapping have aligned with well-funded and politically influential animal-rights groups concerned with a broad range of animal welfare issues. The effect of this ban on Alaska's rural economy is examined in this report. The ban will not likely devastate the Alaskan fur industry, but it is a symptom of a number of related factors. There is currently a downturn in the fur trapping industry brought on by larger supplies of ranched furs, anti-harvest sentiments, and changes in lifestyle and fashion characterized by more casual dress. The EEC ban is a symbol of these problems. The future of trapping in rural Alaska will depend on how these challenges can be met.

(Keywords: Aboriginal people, EEC ban, Alaska, leghold trap, social/rural impact, economic sustainability, animal rights, humane trapping).


See Section 1.


This is an account of a trapper's life in Ontario from the early 1900s to present day. Particular emphasis is placed on the setting of the beaver quota, and the initiation of trapping zones. The founding of the Ontario Trappers Association and the future of trapping with regard to animal rights is discussed.

(Keywords: social history, humane trapping, animal rights, traps).


Northern hunting peoples have had to survive in spite of southerners' perceptions of their lifestyles. Southern stereotypes explain their lives as primitive and poverty-stricken, yet these are modern people with the wealth of the land surrounding them. How can southerners learn to appreciate the
northern way of life unless they have some knowledge about it? This book tries to describe how northern hunting and trapping peoples have survived in defiance of the stereotypes and insensitive government institutions which precluded them. The peoples' own statements are used throughout the book so that their point of view can be given in their own words. By allowing others to learn of their ways, it is hoped that support will be offered to help northern hunters and trappers continue to live in the way they choose.

(Keywords: northern Native people, southern stereotypes, sustainability).


The daily lives of the Beaver Indians of northeastern British Columbia are described, along with their dreams. The story is told as the author tries to map land-use of the area and is taken on several journeys by the people. Alternating with such descriptions are accounts of the history, politics, and social conditions of the area. The book demonstrates the conflicts of interest and the different points of view of the Beaver Indians and the encroaching white man by retelling anecdotes and also acting as a research report.

(Keywords: Beaver Indians, social conditions, politics, sustainability, land-use).


Many Natives rely on the land for a source of income, food security, and identity. Trapping is an essential part of the culture. In order to continue trapping a trapper must have enough capital to maintain equipment. The fur trade is unpredictable with its dependence on world markets, biological cycles, and whims of fashion. Trappers, therefore, do rely on government assistance such as trappers assistance loans, trappers incentive subsidies, wildlife committees, and outpost camps.

(Keyword: Northern Native people, social importance, nutritional importance, cultural importance, government assistance).


See Section 1.


See Section 1.

See Section 1.


See Section 1.

Fast, H., and Fikret B. (1994). *Native Land Use, Traditional Knowledge and the Subsistence Economy in the Hudson Bay Bioregion.* Ottawa: Canadian Arctic Resources Committee and the Municipality of Sanikiluaq.

See Section 1.


This paper reviews recent research on the use and management of furbearer populations by contemporary James Bay Cree hunters, and on the continuities and changes in their traditional systems of knowledge, territoriality, and wildlife management. How James Bay Cree hunters collect their information and evaluate their traditional hunting knowledge is summarized, based on Cree statements. It is shown that traditional knowledge is based on many of the same indicators of the condition of game populations as are used by wildlife biologists. Data on actual Cree hunting practices are evaluated using data from the results of biological surveys, work diaries, and harvesting questionnaires. The importance of the Cree system of hunting territories, and of Cree conceptions of the moral bonds between men and animals, are emphasized. It is argued that the Cree pass on their hunting management knowledge through a continuation of the traditional cultural and territorial organization of hunting, an organization which has gone through historical change and threats to its continuity. The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) was intended to aid the Cree to reproduce this organization, and to manage the game populations more effectively. However, recent threats to the continuity of these practices are noted in the post-JBNQA period.

*Keywords: James Bay Cree, socioeconomic organization, traditional knowledge, resource management, environmental sustainability, forestry, land use.*


See Section 1.

Trappers have an important role in the fur industry and in wildlife management. Because furbearers are a renewable resource that is valued for more than just commercial reasons, trappers must ensure the long-term welfare of furbearer populations. Trappers must understand furbearer husbandry, and have a sound professional knowledge of wildlife management programs. They must be aware of the regulations regarding trapping and be willing to change their methods to improve their trapping skills or their public image. Trappers must work together to educate the public about the benefits of trapping.

(Keywords: social and cultural values, wildlife management, humane trapping, public education).

Government of the Northwest Territories. (1986). revised ed. This Land is Our Life. Yellowknife: Department of Renewable Resources.

The impact of the European boycott on sealskin products and large scale campaigns against the trapping of fur bearing animals is destroying traditional Aboriginal lifestyles and cultures that have existed in harmony with nature for thousands of years. The impact is particularly being felt throughout Canada’s Arctic Northwest Territories where Inuit, Inuvialuit, Dene, and Métis people attempt to maintain a fine balance between traditional lifestyles and the modern wage economy in order to preserve their cultural identities and to care for their families. It is on the land and on the water that Aboriginal people gain a sense of achievement and identity from traditional pursuits of hunting, trapping, and fishing. For many aboriginal people, animals, fish, and sea mammals are used as the primary source of nutrition, and money from the sale of products manufactured from the skins and furs is used to supplement the precarious and fragile economy that exists in most northern settlements. (from text).

(Keywords: Northern Aboriginal people, social and cultural importance, traditional lifestyles, wage economy, ecological balance, cultural identity, mixed economy, anti-fur lobby).


See Section 1.


The geographic mobility and commercial fur trapping activities of male trappers of the English River Chipewyan of Patuanak, Saskatchewan, were observed during a 1971-72 field study to analyze the spatial organization of economic production in a contemporary subarctic Indian society. The relationship of size and structure of trapping teams and degree of team interaction to economic efficiency is not sufficiently defined. Although trapping is less economically rewarding than fishing, successful trapping remains a source of prestige, and integral part of community life, and a way to relieve tension within the social group.  

(Keywords: Chipewyan trappers, social organizational production, economics, productivity, male mobility).

In 1978 Calvin Martin, in his Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade, proposed that Indians suffering under disease epidemics blamed the animals for their sickness. This perceived inability to control the supernatural through hunting taboos opened the way to corruption of the Indian-land relationship and the eventual over-hunting of the land by Native Americans. This volume critiques Martin's view of the causes behind over-hunting during the fur trade. His original essay is included as a chapter.
(Keywords: Native American, Indian-land relationships, sustainability, religion).


This bi-monthly journal serves Canada's wild fur industry, although only trappers' organizations from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Yukon, and New Brunswick appear to be regular contributors. Occasionally, profiles of trapper's lives are presented. However, most articles seem to focus on trapper education re: better management practices, handling techniques, knowledge of furbearers, etc. Articles on market and fashion trends in the fur industry as well as the politics of the fur trade appear occasionally.
(Keywords: trappers' lifestyles, trapper education, management practices, fashion and market trends, politics).


This quarterly publication serves British Columbia's trappers. Occasionally, profiles of trapper's lives and lifestyles are presented. Articles are varied and include land claims updates, news about humane trapping methods, consumer reports, fashion trends, market conditions, international politics surrounding the fur trade, management practices, handling techniques and knowledge of furbearers.
(Keywords: trappers' lifestyles, trapper education, management practices, fashion and market trends, politics).


This quarterly publication serves Ontario's trappers, presenting much the same type of information as contained in the BC Trapper and The Trapper (see above).


This is an account of the skills, physical endurance, and the adaptability of a seasoned, professional trapper named Alfred Francis. Alfred and his wife Bertha, are Loucheux (Gwich'in) Indians witnessing the impact of development on the people of Fort McPherson. The loss of traditional values and knowledge associated with land-use disturbs Alfred who has also worked as a councilor in a local alcohol treatment centre. As Alfred
contemplates imposed trapping guidelines and the possible loss of fur markets, he feels his only recourse will be to collect welfare. He feels anti-fur lobbyists don't know what they are talking about.

(Keywords: Loucheau Indian, social and cultural importance, modern development, anti-fur lobby, traditional knowledge and values).


See Section 1.

Unpublished Masters Thesis

See Section 1.


The lifestyle of the Nichicun group differs greatly between seasons: winter is bush life and summer is life in the settlement of Mistassini. The move between the different social and economic situations is guided by traditional religious beliefs and hunting controls. Three phases of hunting and trapping activity are isolated: information gathering, killing, and distribution. Each of these corresponds with parallel religious rites. This religious ideology has allowed the Cree to maintain their high degree of cultural autonomy and integration despite their long association with the fur trade.

(Keywords: Mistassini Cree, socioeconomic situations, sustainability, religion).


This paper discusses the value of developing a holistic method for valuing traditional activities in the northern native community of Old Crow. The history of the Kutchin Indians is recounted. The thesis proposes that contemporary valuation methods must be extended to include native values and perceptions. The paper balances static quantitative analysis with the social aspects of native activities. The research indicates that the people of the Old Crow Community continue to value their traditional land and lifestyle.

(Keywords: Kutchin Indians, traditional activities, social aspects, holistic method, natural values).


See Section 1.


Native women play an important role in the fur industry. While the men are on the trapper the women are at home skinning, fleshing, and stretching the skins to dry. The Women are the ones who ensure that family ties are strengthened and that the children learn the traditional roles in production. It is the mother who teaches the children how respect is paid to the animals through rituals and ceremonies. Women, living on the trapper, are able to provide traditional foods to their family and obtain traditional materials to produce arts and crafts. Also, while the men are in the bush, women have become outspoken community leaders fighting for the continuation of the fur industry - their way of life.

(Keywords: Native women, roles in fur industry, cultural traditions, sustainability).


This book is an updated edition of the 1975 account of the Cree Indians of northern Quebec and James Bay. Hydro-Quebec put 4400 square miles of land under water and destroyed the natural ecosystem of the James Bay area. This is the story of the people and their communities, how they fought the dams and lost, and how the struggle to maintain their traditional way of life continues. With the hydroelectric project came village life, clear-cutting, roads, hunters, power lines, and more development which further threaten their communities.

(Keywords: James Bay and Northern Quebec Cree, cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, economic sustainability, hydroelectric development, clear-cutting, land-use, resource management, traditional economy).


See Section 1.


See Section 1.

See Section 1.


This is a collection of short stories written by John Tetso depicting experiences with his family while traveling and trapping in the rugged terrain of the north. The book offers the reader a personal view of the trapper's life and insight into the issues surrounding this lifestyle. John Tetso was an independent, industrious man who shared his love for life on the trapline. His stories include questions about the outside perceptions of the subsistence life.

*(Keywords: Dene, Aboriginal perspective, trapping lifestyle).*


See Section 1.


See Section 1.


This report was prepared for the Economic Development Council for Yukon First Nations. The report provides a framework for understanding the operation of a subsistence economy. It compiles and interprets statistical data and identifies its limitations. It also discusses the main problems that confront the maintenance and viability of a subsistence economy.

*(Keywords: Yukon First Nations, subsistence economy, statistical analysis).*


Beginning with the Dene Declaration, this book sets out Dene property and political rights. In regards to the resource rights, it contains statements made during the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, and describes the importance of fur trapping, country food and the mixed economy to the continuation of Dene values and culture. With respect to Aboriginal rights, it describes the colonial experience of the Dene and proposes a new relationship with the government of Canada -- one in which Dene will gain significant control over the management of their land and resources, including the fur trapping, which is integral to the Dene way of life.

*(Keywords: Dene, traditional and mixed economy, Mackenzie Valley Pipeline, political rights and property).*

See Section 1.


See Section 1.


See Section 1.


The people of the Yukon fear the threat of anti-fur activists to Aboriginal people in the Yukon. In spite of southern cultures and technologist, native people have continued a subsistence lifestyle in balance with the land. Native people feel that their removal from the land would upset a long-established balance. Their continuance is a matter of survival for all wildlife, and ending trapping would be a devastating blow to the Aboriginal people of this country.

(Keywords: Aboriginal people, Yukon, anti-fur campaign, sustainability, ecological balance).


See Section 1.


See Section 1.
Section 3.

Demographic Profile of the Fur Trapping Industry

Few sources describing the demographic characteristics of those involved in Canada's fur trapping industry were encountered during the literature review. Demographic information was usually embedded within documents that had a different focus and objective. Nevertheless, what was accessed tended to reveal a distinction between Aboriginal (Métis, Indian, Inuit) participation in primary production and non-Aboriginal participation in other sectors (manufacturing and retailing) of the fur industry. However, there were some exceptions.

The GNWT, Bureau of Statistics (1991) native resource harvester survey covered a number of demographic characteristics including: level of native household involvement in trapping, hunting, and fishing; level of wage employment; traditional craft production; household income; consumption of country food; harvesting costs; and harvesting equipment owned. Other sources compared trapping communities on the basis of geographic location (e.g., north or south of the treeline) (Maracle and Associates 1991) or divided trapping communities on the basis of commitment into full-time or part-time trappers (Stabler et al. 1989). Another source (Olsen 1989) addressed the role and importance of Native women in the fur trade.

These exceptions notwithstanding, studies addressing participation in the fur industry on the basis of a variety demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, age, income, % of community involvement in trapping and the bush economy, and other vital statistics.) generally were lacking. Studies aimed at determining these and other demographic characteristics at the local, regional and national levels would facilitate conclusions and recommendations aimed at promoting the sustainability of fur trapping in Canada.
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Bibliographic References and Annotations


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See Fillion et al. (1989), Section 1.


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Section 4:

Environmental Variables Influencing the Sustainability of Fur Trapping

There are numerous environmental variables that have and will continue to influence the sustainability of fur trapping. Many of these are dealt with by the sources contained within this section. The two most prevalent environmental variables that affect the sustainability of fur trapping are the health of furbearing animal populations and the condition of the habitat in which they occur. Exposure to parasites and diseases as well as industrial contaminants and pollutants threaten furbearers directly. Disease and parasites can wipe out entire furbearing populations if not kept in check through natural means (i.e., maintenance of ecosystemic relationships). Industrial pollutants, such as oil and chemical spills, can have more immediate impacts on the well-being of furbearing animals. Industrial-borne contaminants may not pose as immediate a threat, but over time organochlorines, heavy metals, and other toxins can accumulate in furbearing animals, reducing their capacity to reproduce.

The level of predation to which a furbearer population is subjected also influences its probability of survival. Too much predation is, of course, detrimental to furbearer populations, as the history of the fur trade instructs us. But so too is too little predation. Many Aboriginal people know that an animal population which is hunted or trapped is often healthier than one which is not, as the rate of reproduction is higher, there is less disease, and more available food to go around. Thus, in areas where there is a long history of trapping, human predation is a significant factor in maintaining the health and vitality of furbearer populations.

The greatest environmental threat to wild furbearer populations, and thus to the human populations that depend on them, is habitat destruction. Numerous papers in this section discuss the impacts of logging, clear-cutting, and other forestry activities; highway and pipeline alignments; mining; oil and gas exploration/development; and hydroelectric projects on furbearer habitat. The latter is perhaps more pervasive than all the others combined. Natural factors, such as forest fires, may destroy furbearer habitat temporarily, but may be beneficial to furbearers over the long run. Native people of the northern prairies recognized this through their use of fire to control and maintain favourable habitat for hunting and trapping of animals.

Given all the potential environmental threats to furbearer populations, their habitat, and the people that depend on them, another key element has emerged as an integral environmental variable influencing the sustainability of fur trapping … co-management, or more specifically the lack of true co-management regimes governing the use and conservation of furbearers and their habitats. Increasingly, government bureaucrats and scientists have recognized the need for, and importance of, enhanced management of fur trapping and furbearer habitats. While the real and effective contributions of Aboriginal people and their ecological knowledge to co-management have yet to be realized, many federal, provincial, and territorial government departments have explicitly acknowledged the roles of both in co-management. Unfortunately, local systems of management and the ecological knowledge (traditional and otherwise) that informs them often take a back seat to, state management systems and scientific knowledge. Yet, it is the people closest to the animals and their habitats that have the most knowledge to contribute towards
ensuring the conservation of furbearer habitat and the sustainable utilization of furbearers.

The encroachment of the techno-industrial complex onto lands used by Natives hunters, trappers, and fishers have forced Aboriginal people to seek greater control over the use of their lands and resources through the recognition of Aboriginal and treaty rights. For the most part, and with varying degrees of success, they have succeeded in negotiating comprehensive land agreements, self-government arrangements, and treaty entitlements which devolve to them greater control over their lands, economies, and lifestyles. Yet, true co-management, where there is parity in terms of decision-making, application of knowledge and expertise, etc., remains more in the realm of fiction than fact. Frequently, state management concepts, models, ways of doing things, etc. are imposed on Aboriginal people without their input. Fur trapping could be a model of sustainability for the industrialized world. However, without true co-management structures and plans, where Aboriginal people have an equal opportunity to contribute, use and apply their wisdom, knowledge, philosophies in the use and conservation of furbearers and their habitats, the sustainability of fur trapping will forever be in jeopardy.
Section 4:

Environmental Variables that Influence the Sustainability of Fur Trapping


Diseases and parasites which affect furbearers are discussed. These diseases may only have an effect on the animal's reproductive success when some other factor in the environment affects population density or otherwise places stress on the animal. In combination with such factors as PCB-contaminated food, disease may prevent the animal from reproducing. Unhealthy animals might also produce poor quality pelts. In order to effectively manage furbearer populations an understanding of the prevalence of disease is needed.

(Keywords: diseases and parasites, environmental sustainability, furbearer management).


This report evaluates the effects of Alberta's forest industry on its fur trapping industry. Although it was not possible to come up with absolute statements specifying the degree to which timber harvesting negatively impacts wild fur production, and subsequently trapper income, research indicated that there is a potential for decreased furbearer production and decreased trapper income after timber harvesting. Trappers' concerns focused three main issues: 1) compensation for livelihood loss resulting from habitat alteration, 2) trapper access to forested furbearer areas, and 3) lack of communication between trappers and forest industry personnel. The report concludes with 29 well-developed recommendations which promote and protect the livelihoods of Alberta's fur trappers.

(Keywords: forest industry impacts, habitat alteration, education, compensation, communication).


See Section 1.

The ultimate factor in determining the long-term health and size of a furbearer population is the quality of its habitat. However, very little emphasis has been placed on the specific habitat requirements of furbearers. Management has been concerned with the control of human harvest rather than specific habitat management. Even if the level of harvest is managed effectively to prevent over-harvest, the managed population will not thrive if the habitat is destroyed. Suitable habitat must be identified, described and provided in order for viable populations of furbearers to survive. This paper examines furbearer response to habitat modification and various management considerations.

(Keywords: furbearer habitat, environmental sustainability, habitat management, land use, forestry).


The furbearer management practices of Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces are examined from their historical past to present considerations. Regulations and controls, species management, bounties and ongoing research are discussed. Aboriginal treaty rights, humane trapping, resource sharing and education issues are examined. The primary issues to be faced in the near future are: 1) the need to improve public relations, 2) the need to improve public information and education programs, 3) the need for compulsory trapper education, 4) the need for more funding and more staff, and 5) the need for more research and improved management tools.

(Keywords: trapper education, Aboriginal rights, humane trapping, environmental sustainability, furbearer management).


This article concerns the impact of terminology used in land-claims agreements on the concepts and interests of Aboriginal parties. Specifically, it examines how well the word 'wildlife' describes the Dene/Métis concept of the animals they hunt. It suggests that alternatives exist that are reconcilable to Euro-Canadian ideas, and provide a better approximation of Dene/Métis perceptions and interests in these animals, than does the term 'wildlife.' The article concludes by arguing that the impasse to adopting more appropriate terminology lies not in finding conceptual parallels, but rather in the lack of political will on the part of Canadian governments to incorporate such terminology into these agreements. (from author's abstract).

(Keywords: wildlife terminology, Aboriginal concepts, politics, co-management).


This report reviews the anticipated effects of the realignment of the Alaska Highway upon furbearing animals along the proposed route. The objectives of the study were to: (1) prepare an inventory of terrestrial and aquatic
furbearing habitats along the proposed realignment route; (2) to evaluate the
effect of the realignment on these animals; (3) to make recommendations on
how to minimize the impact of the proposed realignment on furbearing
animals.
(Keywords: Yukon highway realignment, furbearer habitat, minimization of impact)

Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry. Revised Edition.* Vancouver: Douglas
and McIntyre.

See Section 1.


According to the model proposed in this paper, resource use patterns shift
from community-based control to family-based control with intensification
(as in the commercialization of the beaver harvest). However, if
community- or family- based control breaks down (as in the case of
intrusion from the outside), open access conditions may be created, with
resultant depletion of the resource.
(Keywords: environmental sustainability, land management
and land use, resource allocation, native hunting territories).

Berkes, F. (1988). Environmental philosophy of the Chisasibi Cree people of
James Bay. In *Traditional Knowledge and Renewable Resource
Institute for Northern Studies (now Canadian Circumpolar
Institute), University of Alberta.

The ability to use resources in a sustainable manner stems from a
combination of two factors: (1) the possession of appropriate local
ecological knowledge and suitable methods/technology to exploit resources;
and (2) a philosophy and environmental ethic to keep exploitative abilities
in check, and to provide ground rules by which the relation among humans
and animals may be regulated. The first of these two factors — traditional
knowledge — has already been discussed and documented extensively for
the eastern Cree people. This paper emphasizes the second of the two, and
specifically focuses on the following Cree beliefs: (a) it is the animals, not
people who control the success of the hunt; (b) hunters-fishermen have
certain obligations to fulfill towards the animals to ensure a productive hunt;
and (c) a continued, proper use of resources is important for sustainability.
The hunter’s obligation towards animals are intertwined with social
obligations, so the environmental ethic of the Chisasibi Cree is an integral
part of a comprehensive philosophy of life. Cree environmental philosophy
is relevant to the implementation of sustainable resource-use practices. It is
also relevant to the “ecosystem approach,” in which human social systems
need to be considered part of natural ecological systems. (from author’s
abstract).
(Keywords: James Bay Cree, traditional and ecological
knowledge, environmental philosophy and ethics,
sustainability, ecosystems approach).

*Northern Reference Series No. 5, Page 51*

This chapter describes Ontario's Private Lands Fur Management Program and its objectives. With the increase in urban sprawl and an increase in the number of trappers, there was an increase in problems with a greater number of trappers on private land. Poaching, trap and pelt thefts, and conflicts over trapping territories increased. The Private Lands Fur Management Program was implemented to correct these problems and enhance furbearer management. This program gives trappers on private lands the same responsibility as those on registered tralines to act as wild furbearer managers.

(Keywords: trapping conflict - Ontario, environmental sustainability, furbearer management).


See Section 1.


This volume provides an Aboriginal perspective on humankind's relationship with the natural environment and its resources. It describes various barriers to the acceptance of an indigenous perspective, and describes in considerable detail indigenous peoples' relationship with their environments. It also discusses various threats to this relationship and how globalization, modernization, expansion of the techno-industrial complex, and the marginalization of women and youth undermine the sustainability of indigenous economies and cultures. In addition, the contributions of indigenous knowledge and perspectives to sustainable development and utilization for the wider society are addressed. This book is indispensable for those wishing to promote the sustainability of Aboriginal economy and fur trapping, ends with a series of guiding principles for policy changes including: 1) protection of the traditional way of life, 2) documentation, promotion, and protection of traditional knowledge and practices, 3) development of healing programs to ensure the maintenance of sustainable societies, 4) development of education programs for cultural survival, 5) encouragement and support of economic self-reliance, and 6) development of communication strategies to protect and promote traditional knowledge and lifestyles.

(Keywords: Aboriginal people, sustainability, traditional economy, indigenous knowledge, indigenous perspectives).


To make a living in the bush, one must have both a knowledge of the land and the necessary skills. This essay illustrates game plans with which the
Rupert House Cree make use of their trapping territories. Ideological and physical factors are reviewed to demonstrate how trapping territories are exploited through a variety of strategies that take into account the size and nature of the territory and the needs of individual trappers. The history of resource exploitation in the area is used to isolate factors to changing Cree approaches to land use.

(Keywords: environmental sustainability, land use, trapping territories, native traplines, social influences).


This study guide is designed for those people who are preparing to write the Alberta trapper's test to obtain a fur management license. The objectives listed in this guide are steps toward three major goals: conservation of the wild furbearer resource, humane wild fur harvesting and standardized wild fur handling. The accomplishment of these goals will allow for the continued viability of the trapping lifestyle. The guide comprises six sections: wild furbearer biology, wild furbearer management, equipment, wild fur area operations plan, wild fur harvesting and wild fur handling.

(Keywords: furbearer conservation, resource management, furbearer biology, technology, wild fur harvesting and handling).


See Section 1.


This paper presents three examples of projects related to wildlife management that have been successfully conducted with collaboration of Native groups of northern Quebec. The examples deal with Inuit and elders, Inuit and beluga, and Cree Indians and caribou. The positive aspects of these ventures as well as the shortcomings, are discussed.

(Keywords: co-management of environment, sustainability, traditional environmental knowledge).


See Section 2.


Northern Reference Series No. 5, Page 53
The author discussed field research and the importance of access to the land, native community problems and the possibilities. Research on the future of practising hunting, fishing, and trapping societies is only recent and starts with many assumptions. He recommends research into socioeconomic development issues, economics of hunting, fishing, and trapping, legal issues, political issues, environmental issues, and cultural knowledge.

(Keywords: socioeconomic, economics, environmental issues, native traditional knowledge, political, and legal issues).


This report presents the results of an environmental investigation by Foothills Pipelines (Yukon). The aims and objectives of the study were: (1) to identify the ecological requirements of certain furbearers as they relate to the Klondike Highway pipeline route; (2) to provide information on the seasonal distribution and number of ungulate and furbearing species along the proposed pipeline route; (3) to provide any additional relevant information on mammalian populations within the study area. The information obtained was intended to be used in the planning and design of a natural gas pipeline system within the study area.

(Keywords: furbearer habitat, natural gas pipeline, planning).


The Keewatin Wildlife Federation Harvest Study has been successful in adapting a survey technique common in a Euro-Canadian setting, but intrinsically foreign to the Inuit, to elicit statistically valid harvest information from hunters. The analysis of the harvest data with the aid of computers provides the distribution of selected species by geographic zone, and the breakdown of harvest into various categories by age group of hunters.

(Keywords: harvest assessment, Inuit roles, aboriginal knowledge).


This chapter provides several examples of where Indian treaties protecting traditional ways of life have been used to protect the environment. If the environment is not protected, there will be no animals for natives to hunt, fish, or trap. In order for the treaty rights allowing for a traditional way of life to be fulfilled, these animals must exist. Thus, treaty rights can be used as an environmental weapon. Resource co-management in Wisconsin is discussed as an example of where pollution-free zones can be maintained jointly by Native organizations and the state. Lastly, the chapter looks at how, by following the manner in which natives have lived off of the land, sustainable development becomes a possibility.
Environmental and Economic Issues in Fur Trapping

(Keywords: Aboriginal-nature state relations, Native Americans - Wisconsin, treaty rights, environmental sustainability, resource management).


Both ground and aerial track counting techniques are evaluated with the interpretation of data being compared to harvest data to determine population trends in martens, lynx, and hares. The hares represent the prey for other species and are considered important to the management of furbearers. This report includes graphs, charts, illustrations, and recommendations.

(Keywords: environmental sustainability, furbearer management research).


By 1900, the Beaver, whose North American population was estimated at 60 million prior to the arrival of Europeans, was nearly exterminated by the fur trade. Protection laws and programs have enabled the Beaver to recover to its current population of 6-12 million. However, this recovery has been met by mixed reception. Wildlife officials in many states have been forced to practice management by nuisance complaint, trapping, and relocating beavers that have dammed culverts and flood roads and fields.

(Keywords: wildlife management, resource management).


This comprehensive report describes several aspects of the fur trade industry in Canada. It provides an economic analysis of the Canadian fur industry, and a description of the foreign and domestic market environments for the fur trade. Threats to the fur trade, most notably, the anti-fur movement and legislative threats, are described. The responses of government and industry to the anti-fur campaigns are evaluated, and several conclusions are offered to promote the industry, including the need to promote the environmental friendliness of the fur trade. Public attitudes concerning the use of animals, media perceptions of the fur industry, and industry perceptions of public opinion are presented. The future of the fur industry rests upon 1) devising new strategies to counter the anti-fur lobby, and 2) effectively developing, promoting, and marketing furs. Finally, the appropriateness of the current Fur Industry Defense Program strategy and delivery mechanisms are evaluated.

(Keywords: Fur Industry Defense Program, market and environmental analysis, anti-fur campaigns, government and industry response, marketing and promotion).


This small, yet succinct publication is written for those involved directly in the fur industry, either as supporters or protestors. Referencing The World...
Conservation Strategy (IUCN 1980), and Our Common Future (final report of the World Commission on Environment and Development), Herscovici makes several important points about the sustainability of fur trapping. Fur trapping is based upon a central principle of environmental ethics, namely "reciprocity", which may be understood on several levels, including: 1) respect for the land (environmental conservation), 2) respect for wildlife species (sustainable utilization), 3) respect for individual animals (humane standards), and 4) respect for the diversity of human cultures. A fifth principle of effective environmental conservation is the need to keep the public well informed about fur trapping and why it is an excellent example of an industry incorporating the principle of sustainable utilization. To this end, this book concludes with several recommendations where the fur industry can take leadership, including liaison and cooperation with responsible environmental and animal-welfare groups.

(Keywords: sustainable utilization, environmental ethics, environmental conservation, cultural diversity, animal rights, human rights).


This is a collection of project reports monitoring of furbearer harvest and environmental factors pertaining to population fluctuations. Principal furbearer species in the Southwest Alaska region include marten, land otter, beaver, and mink. Wolverine are found in low densities and lynx occur cyclically. Because furbearer harvest levels are a function of market prices, weather, habitat conditions, natural fluctuations, and trapping effort rather than species availability, harvest do not reliably indicate population status. However, information from trappers, observations from the field, and harvest data suggest Southwest populations are stable.

(Keywords: furbearer management, sustainability, trapping and harvest reports, environmental influences).


In the face of ongoing, and often drastic, social and cultural change in the North, aboriginal people are grappling with the potential of industrial employment for introducing even more damaging change. On the other hand, wage employment often offers more secure and safer ways of earning a living than do traditional productive activities. As well, employment gives wage earners the wherewithal to purchase desired and needed technologies and consumer goods. Hobart examines three wage-employment situations in Northern Canada to determine the consequences of industrial employment on Inuit communities. Levels of hunting and trapping activities were used as indicators of cultural change, with the assumption that drastic declines in such activities are indicative of an abandonment of traditions in favour of industrial opportunities. Hobart found traditional activities increased when
people had the opportunity to earn wages. Wages allowed more people to possess sophisticated technology to be used in hunting and trapping. In each case, job rotation, commuting, and selective task assignment increased the attractiveness of wage employment. Hobart concludes that it is possible to design industrial employment to minimize threats to tradition, while maximizing opportunities to continue traditional activities. (from author's abstract).

(Keywords: Northern Aboriginal people, social and cultural change, mixed economy, industrial employment, traditional activities).


The author assumes industrial development of Northern resources will continue into the foreseeable future, creating a situation that Aboriginal people will have to accommodate. Aboriginal people were quite unprepared for the technical demands of industrial activities, and experienced a protracted period of adjusting to the realities of the resource industries. Nevertheless, even in the most arduous conditions, they learn and apply necessary skills reliably and productively. While aboriginal workers adjusted well to the sociology of camp-work sites, they experienced distress at being away from home and their families. When they returned home on leave, alcohol abuse and wife assault frequently occurred. As well, workers felt a loss of self-esteem and community prestige for giving up their roles as hunters. Relocation of whole families, or male heads of households, places great stress on the family, as revealed by increases in social pathologies. Communities are also affected by loss of appropriate social actors and leaders. Consumption of store food might rise, but so too does hunting productivity through the purchase and use of technology. Rotation work, where an employee leaves the home community for relatively short work shifts and then returns, is less of a threat to local culture than is relocation which takes an entire family out of its home context, often permanently. (from author's abstract).

(Keywords: wage employment, industrial development, social pathologies, rotation work, hunting productivity).


This pamphlet describes man's dependence upon natural resources, his role as hunter, gatherer and trader, and the responsibility to protect the environment and live in harmony with it. Trapping is an excellent opportunity for maintaining ecological balance and wildlife management, and it provides an income for native people. Fur farming, marketing skins, dressing skins, and furrier retailer are changing in response to a call to protect nature and the environment.

(Keywords: ecological balance, wildlife management, Native income).

This paper addresses the connection between traditional health, global environmental issues, indigenous cultural and economic stability with the importance of a land base and a sustainable existence from the basis of traditional teachings about responsibility to the earth. In order to heal, the indigenous people must return to the traditional ways, teachings of the elders, and their subsistence livelihood.

(Keywords: subsistence economies, sustainable environments, indigenous knowledge, cultural and social responsibilities).


Much attention has been given to the 10-year cycle in the population of forest fur-bearing animals in Canada and its effect upon the fur trade and wildlife generally. This paper investigates the relationship between the quantity of furs sold at the annual London auctions and the prices achieved at the auctions. It is found that for most animals, and in particular for lynx and muskrats, there is no statistical evidence that the cycles in supply have been induced by cycles in prices. (from author's abstract).

(Keywords: forest furbearers, natural cycle, economic cycle).


A critical response to the 66th annual general meeting of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters assesses the response to native claims to land use and resource management rights. The irony lies in the oath taken to faithfully defend the natural resources of Canada and the political agenda that has little to do with conservation.

(Keywords: political influences, conservation, hunting and trapping management, resource management).


See Section 1.


See Section 1.


This is the harvest summary for furbearers in Alaska. Management recommendations are provided for all of the furbearer species in all of the management areas of Alaska. Estimates of annual harvest are derived from:
fur bearer sealing certificates, fur export reports, and reports of acquisitions of furs. Since furs kept for personal use are not reported, actual harvests exceed the estimates and attempts are made to accommodate this in the management plans.

(Keywords: fur bearer harvest - Alaska, environmental sustainability, resource management, Alaska).


This article includes the views of some of the trappers in direct quotes. The author expresses a Dene perspective of their experience gathering information for the mapping project. Her summary of the experience supports extensive land use for hunting and trapping as a way of life. The mapping project shows that Dene people have considerable experience in surveying the environment and their attitude toward the land is far more substantial than is fully appreciated by the oil and gas companies and government.

(Keywords: sustainability, land use, political influences, demographics, resource management).


This chapter describes furbearer management in Ontario. Discussions focus on the administration, the program structure and actual species management as well as current management issues of importance. Education of trappers and the public is seen as an important goal.

(Keywords: environmental sustainability, furbearer management - Ontario, trapper education).


Humans are integral parts of ecosystems and when they do not consider themselves as such wildlife management is unsuccessful. In order to understand the mechanisms behind the operation of ecosystems there must be a search for repeated patterns. By observing such repeated patterns, it can be demonstrated that humans and other predators harvest renewable resources with striking similarity. These patterns suggest that certain characteristics of predator-prey systems may result in the continued existence of "prudent" predators and their prey. Fur management in Ontario has evolved some of the characteristics of a "prudent" predator-prey system. By looking at other "prudent" predator-prey systems the future direction of fur management may be suggested.

(Keywords: human-ecosystem relations, predator-prey systems, environmental sustainability, wildlife/fur management).

Many Northern regions of North America have come to rely heavily on extraction of non-renewable resources for their income, at the expense of traditional land-based economies. Such extraction leads to boom and bust income, and is destructive to long-term planning for sustainable development. Natural resource trust funds, as exemplified in Alberta, Alaska, Montana, Wyoming, and New Mexico, would help to provide the stability that is currently lacking in Yukon and the Northwest Territories. Maintained by setting aside part of the current income from non-renewable resources, they yield capital and income that can be used to encourage the mixed, self-sustaining local communities appropriate for the North. (from author's abstract).

(Keywords: non-renewable resources, boom and bust incomes, traditional land-based economies, sustainable development, natural resource trust funds).


The responsibility for managing fur resources in British Columbia is shared between the Wildlife Branch and licensed trappers. This report outlines management guidelines for mink and indicates the role that trappers can play in the management of this important species.

(Keywords: sustainability, trapper education, political influences, fur resource management).


See Section 2.


In a comparison between the plight of the hunter and the attitudes toward farmers, the author concludes that owing to subsistence hunting quotas for aboriginal people, the operators of fur farms in Russia's Chukotka never have to worry about what to feed their charges. The grey whale is slaughtered at a whaling station for oil and the leftover meat is used for the Chukotka fox farm.

(Keywords: fur faming, political variables, animal rights).


Cree knowledge of the characteristics of game, coupled with respect for the knowledge and leadership of hunting bosses and elders is anchored in these individuals' ability to make effective decisions about activities on the land. The co-operative kinship and friendship groupings that surround these core individuals and basic skills of the household to make a living off the land is a community-based resource management source.
Environmental and Economic Issues in Fur Trapping

(Keywords: native land management, environmental sustainability, social influences)


This is an environmental impact study undertaken to assess the impacts involved in realigning the North Canol Road, mineral exploration and mining developments. The objectives of the study were: 1) to compile an inventory of furbearer habitat and existing populations, 2) to identify critical and sensitive furbearer habitats and populations, 3) to estimate the capacity of the area to support furbearers and trapping activities, 4) to determine the present harvest rates of the furbearer populations, 5) to assess the impact of development activities, 6) to identify any conflicts between current developments and trapping, and 7) to propose any mitigation measures and management strategies. The study concludes that habitat disturbance will likely affect furbearer populations, and therefore trapping activity, and these will be further affected by increased access into the trapping areas. It is advised that a fur-management unit system and a method for mediation of trapper compensation claims be implemented.

(Keywords: furbearer habitat - Yukon, resource management, North Canol Macmillan Pass development, environmental sustainability).


This study traces the relationship between vegetation cover and furbearing populations to assist in resource analysis and land-use planning. The report focuses on one area in the Liard Valley and establishes both a baseline population and habitat utilization and determines the effects of logging on furbearers.

(Keywords: furbearer habitat, vegetation/furbearer relations, land-use planning, logging impact).


Furbearer inventory studies and trapper questionnaires were used as a basis for investigations conducted in the Yukon River Basin which aimed at characterizing population distributions, levels, trends, and habitats of furbearers. Historical and current fur harvest and fur trapping activity are described as well as the fur resource capability and any possible impacts on the furbearers of user groups are discussed. Hydroelectric development is viewed as most likely to cause the greatest impact in the area through habitat loss. Management recommendations are provided: 1) to recognize trapping as a legitimate land-based industry, 2) to standardize how trapper compensation claims are processed, and 3) to regularly monitor furbearer populations and their harvest. Maps are indicating trapping concessions,
beaver food cache results, and muskrat pushup densities for the area are also included.

(Keywords: furbearer harvests - Yukon, resource management, environmental sustainability, Yukon River basin, hydroelectric development, forestry, mining).


This chapter covers the management of furbearers in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories. Information is given on administration, practices, program structure, and species management. Current management issues are examined and considered of utmost importance, as are treaty rights and land claims.

(Keywords: environmental sustainability, furbearer management, treaty rights/land claims).


See Section 1.


The author concludes his observation of the wildlife management issue, Aboriginal hunting rights, game ranching and fur farming with the reminder that wildlife and wilderness is also very important to non-native people and they should not be overlooked. In a world becoming generally more opposed to any killing of any animals, it is essential that critics understand the importance of hunting and trapping to cultural values and that the harvested populations be sustained. The unique knowledge and cultural practices of northern native people must be kept intact, along with quality scientific research.

(Keywords: wildlife management, aboriginal rights, environmental influences, renewable resource use, traditional roles).


The future of northern trappers is in the hands of a group of individuals who may never have set foot on a trapline. The rhetoric between animal rights leaders and native leaders confuses the issue for a trapper, Norman Sam, who chooses a subsistence lifestyle for himself and his family. The death of the sealing industry is an indication of the fur industry's dilemma.
Greenpeace’s withdrawal from the anti-fur campaign is their recognition of its effect and the destruction of Aboriginal economy.  
(Keywords: Aboriginal economy, trapping lifestyle, animal rights, anti-fur, anti-sealing).


See Section 1.


This report discusses three aspects of northern furbearer ecology and behaviour in relation to forest management. First, it identifies twelve economically important forest-dwelling Yukon furbearers. Second, it examines the relationship between fuelwood cutting and fur harvesting in two 25-year-old Yukon burns. Third, it summarizes the current knowledge of the effects of timber harvesting practices on northern furbearers.  
(Keywords: furbearer ecology, forest management, furbearer management, Yukon).


The politics of hydroelectric development is closely examined with emphasis on social, cultural, and economic consequences to native communities. By drawing a parallel with the historic treaty and scrip processes, the author points out that there is "virtually no change in attitude of southern-based governments to northern native rights". By claiming there is a similar intention to remove the large tracts of land used by native peoples for hunting and trapping, the author questions the term "common good". Case studies include Cumberland House and the Squaw Rapids Dam; Easterville and the Grand Rapids Dam; and South Indian Lake and the Churchill River Diversion Project. The effects of dam construction on these communities demonstrate that the "common" good for which the dams were built has been detrimental to the livelihood of Native peoples. This book examines the threat to sustainability of traditional lifestyles and cultures as well as furbearers and their natural habitat.  
(Keywords: traditional lifestyles, traditional economy, hydroelectric development, furbearers and habitat, politics, resource management, environmental sustainability).


The discipline of wildlife management is grounded in scientific principles. Yet, the application of these principles may be constrained by incomplete
knowledge of ecological outcomes and because management objectives are often modified to meet the demands of various user-groups. This paper discusses the basic scientific principles used in wildlife management, namely: population dynamics, density effects, compensatory mortality, population cycles, carrying capacity and habitat relationships. These principles are used to manage both populations and habitat. The "art" of wildlife management is also discussed, where the science of management is affected by issues such as budget, personnel, and public pressure from special interest groups.

(Keywords: resource management, environmental sustainability).


The ecological effects of some pollutants may not be immediately visible and may go undetected for years. Yet these pollutants could be very detrimental to the ecosystem. Trappers and resource managers, because of their close association with the environment, may be able to detect changes in the ecosystem and animal populations before anyone else. Therefore, these people should have knowledge of the potential effects of toxic substances on wildlife.

(Keywords: toxic pollutants, resource management, environmental knowledge, environmental sustainability).


Canadians must be educated about both sides of the environmental story in order to make wise choices. Canada's fur industry, for instance, must be promoted from an environmental standpoint. Consumers are often given only one side of the story and are often too ready to accept unfounded, radical publicity from fur activities on the inhumane treatment of animals. Instead, consumers need to realize what a vital industry this is to our country, native people, and to the environment.

(Keywords: The fur industry, environment, sustainability, resource management).
Section 5:

Economic Variables Influencing the Sustainability of Fur Trapping

Few articles annotated in this section address specifically the economic factors that influence the sustainability of fur trapping; this issue being discussed within the broader social, political, and economic contexts of the fur trade. Some of the more tangible economic factors that directly affect the sustainability of fur trapping include the cost of production, market prices, and consumer demand. These, in turn, are directly effected by public opinion and resultant political decisions.

The costs of production and processing have increased dramatically in the past few decades owing to environmental activism. Pressure on government and the fur industry by animal rights groups have resulted in the development of a humane trapping industry. Replacement of the leg-hold trap, by other, "more humane" technologies, have increased costs to trappers, and thus the sustainability of trapping. At the same time, stricter environmental regulations have forced the closure of many tanning/dressing plants across Canada -- chromium, a key element used in the tanning process is harmful to the environment -- resulting in increased costs to the manufacturing sector. Most fur manufacturers and retailers now have to send their furs outside the country to be tanned. New, but more costly, methods of fur tanning/dressing have been developed and are allowing Aboriginal people to become involved in other aspects of the fur industry (e.g., Nippissing).

The fur farming industry, concentrating on mink, fox, and a few other species, presents little threat to sustainability of the fur trapping industry. The two industries, in fact, are often allies in the quest to maintain the public profile of fur in the mind of the consumer. Synthetics pose a greater threat to the fur industry. While not as thermally efficient, or arguably attractive, as fur, synthetics are less expensive and have greater appeal to the ethics of the urban consumer, since "no animal has to die for the sake of fashion." Yet, the production of synthetics, which are generally made for petroleum products, is often more environmental damaging than fur trapping, which, it can be argued, is a sustainable industry that benefits furbearers, furbearer habitat, and the Aboriginal and northern people who depend on them. Studies that emphasize and provide data in support this position would assist government and industry efforts to educate consumers and their political representatives.

Several papers advocated greater local, northern, and Aboriginal control over all economic aspects of the fur industry from fur pricing to manufacturing to retailing. Some authors proposed substantial economic support for trappers and their way of life through income security and other government assistance programs, while others felt that revenues to support the traditional renewable resource economy is best derived from rents and royalties on native controlled lands; the latter, of course, necessitates the negotiation and recognition of Aboriginal property rights through land claims negotiations and other political means. Other papers advocated that fur trapping, as a source of economic and other benefits not available by any other means, should be protected through regulation and legislation.

Perhaps, the single greatest factor influencing the sustainability of fur trapping today from an economic standpoint is the impact of the animal rights movement or anti-fur lobby on consumer demand and national policy. Constant
Environmental and Economic Issues in Fur Trapping

pressure on European governments by animal rights activists and the protest industry continues to threaten to destroy the market for Canadian furs in Europe. Although few sources included in this section recommend finding, capturing, and maintaining new markets for trapped furs, it is obvious that this must done. Sustained and cooperative efforts by government and industry to educate the general consumer about the sustainability and “ecosystem friendly” nature of fur trapping vis-a-vis the production of synthetic products, ending trapping as a viable way of life, etc. must be undertaken.
Section 5:

Bibliographic References and Annotations


See Section 1.


See Section 2.


This eight-page paper discusses the influences of the garment manufacturer, the fashion industry, land-use policy, and society's perceptions on the trapper. The opposing forces of resource exploitation and man's dependence on nature resources for food, shelter and clothing demand that management "ensure the integrity of the environment, the perpetuity of the resource and the elimination of stressful/painful harvesting techniques". Recommendations focus on improved trapper education, more humane trapping systems, better public education, the need for trapper organizations to confront anti-trapping movements, financial stabilization of fur prices, and trapping income. The latter was approached with the suggestion to move all components of the fur industry up north, where furs would be locally processed and manufactured into garments, and competition with southern manufacturers would be avoided by producing garments with a northern flavor.

(Keywords: garment manufacturer, fashion industry, impacts on trapper, trapper education, public education, northern development, humane harvesting).


This paper provides a critique of Justice Berger's recommendations to maintain the Dene traditional way of life within a modern economy. Berger recommended that the production of renewable resources be modernized and expanded, new industries be created to increase employment and new economic sectors should be expanded. Cash to build the infrastructure required be provided by government funds. Asch states that herein lies the problem with Berger's recommendations. By obtaining funding from government grants, the native economy will be led away from a traditional institutional and value framework. In order for a viable native economy to exist, which is consistent with Dene traditional institutions and values,
capital must come from rents and royalties collected on native controlled lands.

(Keywords: traditional economy, Aboriginal lifestyles, resource management, economic sustainability).


The future of hunting and trapping in northern Alberta, in the eyes of many, is a dying way of life. Yet this view is only a matter of ideology, where it is believed that hunting and trapping will die out and the people will "progress" to a higher, more progressive, economic stage. This ideology must be countered with a close examination of hunting and trapping. In the areas where hunting and trapping are important, such reasonable activities provide a good, cost-effective source of food. It only makes sense for northern residents to develop hunting and trapping activities, rather than reduce them. This can be compared to farming, another primary production activity. In order to sustain the hunting and trapping economy the rapid, uninformed, resource development must be halted. Hunting and trapping, if viewed as compatible with the modern world, could be supported and developed instead. A number of suggestions as to how the hunting-trapping economy can be sustained are offered. The author refutes the popular notion that hunting and trapping are either fast disappearing as economic activities, or that they deserve to die in the face of progressive uses for lands, resources, and labour. He argues that not only does hunting and trapping give people an income and sense of life's purpose, but these activities should receive the kind of popular support available for farmers. Hunting and trapping should be protected in regulation and legislation as a source of important economic benefits not available from any other source. (from author's abstract)

(Keyword: public perceptions, Aboriginal economic development, hunting and trapping, economic sustainability).


The attacks of the anti-harvest movement raise difficult issues of trade law and policy and are a threat to the livelihood of many Canadians. With the collapse of the European market for sealkins, the sealing industry was devastated. Now, the focus of the anti-harvest movement has shifted to trapping. Most of the anti-harvest organizations have taken the stand that all trapping is inhumane. There is a legitimate fear that trapping could be as affected by the anti-harvest movement as the sealing industry was. This paper examines the seal and fur issues with respect to Canada's international commitments. The future of the North Pacific Fur Seal Commission, and the way in which Aboriginal groups are searching for a means to protect international trade for the products of indigenous economies are discussed.
Environmental and Economic Issues in Fur Trapping

A political campaign is required to convince the consumer that fur products are reasonable commodities in today's market.

(Keywords: anti-trapping, anti-sealing, trade law/policy and international commitments, political campaigns, sustainability).


See Section 1.


See Section 4.


The Indigenous "traditional economy" is actually several economic systems which provide goods and services in a renewable fashion and is based on Indigenous knowledge of the environment. This traditional way of life is threatened by public policy, western perceptions of "primitive" traditional societies, and misconceptions about hunting and trapping perpetuated by anti-fur campaigns. Various alternatives for strengthening the traditional economy are discussed. Aboriginal people must have control in land and resource management in order to successfully combine traditional land use with other competing uses.

(Keywords: Aboriginal economy, indigenous knowledge, public policy and perceptions, Aboriginal control, resource management).


See Section 1.


See Section 1.


See Section 1.

This article challenges our society's preference to view nature as a tranquil, sanitary place where violence and pain are infrequent. This perception encourages support of anti-fur movements and the production of synthetic fabrics which is not sustainable. "When you compare this production to the trapper living off the land, practising environmentally sound harvest methods, the arguments against trapping as a livelihood seem, at best, misguided". *(Keywords: anti-fur movement, public perceptions, synthetic fabric production, sustainability).*


The production and sale of furs allowed the Native trapper to buy necessary commodities. By intervening in the production and exchange of furs the state could control Native access to commodities. This paper discusses three areas of policy intervention related to fur: the regulation of land use, primarily through the registration of tralines; attempts to transform the fur-market pricing mechanism by stabilization and direct marketing; and the role of the state in providing credit to small producers. The social character of these interventions is examined to show the general northern-state policy toward fur. The state allowed fur prices to plummet in the 1950s by rejecting support for commercial trapping. This drop in prices, deterioration of exchange relations, and social transfer of payments contributed to undermining the Native petty commodity economy. Meanwhile the means of production were depleted or abandoned owing to wildlife management policies and poor exchange relations. Movement of natives from the land and away from their traditional way of life into a "lumpen-proletariat" was thus encouraged. *(Keywords: Native trapping, traditional economy, government regulations, destruction of Aboriginal lifestyles).*


See Section 1.


See Section 1.


See Section 4.

See Section 1.


See Section 1.


See Fillion et al. (1989), Section 1.


See Fillion et al. (1990), Section 1.


See Section 1.


See Section 2.


See Section 2.


See Section 2.


See Section 1.

The Central Canadian perspective of the variable nature of the fur trade is presented through interviews with people involved in various aspects of manufacturing and marketing of furs. Daniel Forget, a Quebecois trapper, Terry Vourantonis, president of the Canadian Fur Trade Development Institute; Alvin Glickan, a 45-year veteran of the global skin business; Oscar Carbonell, a broker and other fur designers and retailers discuss market prices, international responses, impacts of the anti-fur lobby, increasing competition, fashion trends, and the demands in the fur industry.

(Keywords: fashion trends, economic trends, fur marketing, impacts of anti-fur lobbying).


See Section 1.


See Section 1.


See Section 1.


A review of an Inuit cultural fashion show proudly displays a history of traditional meanings. Each garment is made using techniques passed down from one generation to another. The collection illustrates how the western style is slowly spreading further. Wolverine is scarce, therefore, seamstresses use muskox and dog skins as a substitute in order to create the western Arctic image.

(Keywords: fur fashion economics, native perspective, traditional fur use)


See Section 2.

The focus of the essays in this book are the legal aspects of the natural resources trade. Included are essays from a number of disciplines in order to provide a policy context for discussion of specific legal concerns. The essays are divided into five sections: 1) an overview of the political and economic factors affecting Canadian natural resource trade; 2) legal aspects of trade distortion; 3) private ordering of trade relations; 4) regulatory aspects of Canada's natural resources trade; and 5) trade and the defence of non-economic values. Section 5 also deals with the regulation of water exports and the fur trade.

(Keywords: natural resource trade, legal aspects, political and economic factors, regulatory aspects, non-economic values).


See Section 1.


See Section 1.


See Section 1.


See Section 1.


See Section 1.
Section 6:

Other Variables (Ethical, Political, Legal, etc.) Influencing the Sustainability of Fur Trapping

It is difficult, however expedient, to separate the environmental variables that influence the sustainability of fur trapping from economic issues. Similarly, neither can these variables be divorced from others that influence the sustainability of fur trapping. Numerous papers in this section discuss, often in combination, the moral/ethical, political, legal and other challenges to the sustainability of fur trapping.

The anti-fur industry continues to threaten the welfare of the fur trapper, the fur industry, and furbers and their habitat by pushing emotion-based morals, judgments, and ethics onto the public through misinformation and emotional propaganda. Animal rights groups have played to the media to gain access to funding and support for their increased militancy. However, such campaigns are often suspect, not just because their primary goal is to separate the public from their money, but they serve to alienate humans from nature. It is understandable that this questionable environmental ethic, which advocates non-consumptive uses wildlife and preservation of nature's esthetics over industries and livelihoods that depend on the sustainable use of renewable resources, has emerged in the urban centres of the Western world. Industrialization has destroyed much of nature, and continues to do so. Having destroyed and then recreated in their own image the environments in which they live, urban people have developed a protectionist attitude towards and concern for whatever wild areas and wildlife remain. Separated from the life and death struggle that is nature, and wanting to play a vital part in preserving what little is left of natural ecosystems, urbanites have increased their anti-hunting and anti-trapping sentiments. While urbanization -- 1996 marked the first time in human history that more than 50% of the world's population lived in cities -- has resulted in an increase in non-consumptive, protectionist attitudes towards nature and wildlife, globalization facilitates the "Americanization" of many cultures, undermining cultural diversity and promoting intolerance for different cultural traditions, lifestyles, and philosophies. Thus, urbanization and globalization, like industrialization, poses a threat to the sustainability of fur trapping.

The concern about humane trapping is directly attributable to the animal rights movement. Often ignored in this debate, however, is the fact that "humane" is a cultural construct, and relative to the individual and the culture in which they live. Although animal rights activists ignore the difficulties of balancing human needs with habitat and other requirements of wildlife, they have drawn attention to the fact that human beings need to reinvent and restructure their relationship with nature so that is sustainable for generations to come. However, the motivations and arguments of the anti-fur lobby are fundamentally flawed, and need to be exposed in a well-coordinated, focused, non-confrontational effort by government and all fur industry stakeholders, including Aboriginal groups. At the same time, the benefits of trapping to furbers, furber habitat, and the northern Aboriginal peoples whose cultural traditions and lifestyles are sustained by them must be clarified, succinctly summarized, and presented to the public.

Trapping and the sustainable utilization of renewable resources remains in the national interest for many reasons, environmental, social, cultural, as well as economic. At the very least, the destruction traditional economies and fur trapping
Environmental and Economic Issues in Fur Trapping

will result in increased social pathologies, and thus government expenditures for social assistance, health-care costs, retraining, etc. However, for fur trapping to be sustainable, there must be the political will to insure that this be so. Aboriginal rights and treaty rights need to be recognized and honored, and legal issues centered around Aboriginal property rights must be resolved. Generally, there has been a lack of recognition of Aboriginal and treaty rights, as well as government regulation and general property laws. As the commercial aspect of trapping is inseparable from its subsistence and sociocultural aspects -- all are integral parts of an overall system of human-environmental relations -- it is this system of relations that should receive treaty and constitutional protection.

Effective management structures governing the use and conservation of furbearers and furbearer habitat is another variable influencing the sustainability of trapping. The efficacy of such regimes, however, depends on several factors including the will to give parity to Aboriginal trappers, and their ecological knowledge and expertise, in policy and decision-making. Use of culturally appropriate concepts and systems, as opposed to the imposition of state management models, should help to reduce the "ritual conflict" between the "conservation bureaucracy" and political ecology of northern Aboriginal people.

At the same time, international trade measures and restrictions, such as the proposed EU ban on furs from nations using the leghold trap, need to be countered on a political level. Not only are such measures a violation of GATT/WTO, they contravene many international agreements that support the rights of indigenous people and other nations to manage their own resources in an ecologically sustainable manner. Political action both at home and abroad will play a decisive role in determining the sustainability of the fur industry.
Section 6:

Bibliographic References and Annotations

Aboriginal Trappers Federation of Canada (Aboriginal Harvesters Canada). *Trapline*, Akwesasne, Cornwall, Ontario.

A monthly newsletter begun by the Aboriginal Trappers Federation of Canada in 1990 for Native trappers. However, the publication was soon terminated because of lack of funds, only to be restarted in 1995 under Aboriginal Harvesters Canada. Articles deal primarily with countering the anti-fur lobby, European trade restrictions, government support of the fur industry, Aboriginal rights and other issues facing native trappers. The sometimes negative treatment that this newsletter gives to other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal publications does not advance Native needs and concerns vis-a-vis the fur trapping issue.

(Keywords: Aboriginal trapping, government assistance, humane trapping, trapper education, wildlife management, communications).


See Section 1.


See Section 2.


See Section 5.


This report presents an overview of trapping in the Yukon. Topics discussed include the evolution of trapping, the role of First Nations trappers, and contemporary issues facing the fur industry, including animal rights and furbearer management.

(Keywords: First Nations, trappers, animal rights impacts, furbearer management).

See Section 4.


See Section 5.


See Section 5.


Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people both have interests in fur trapping, but it is Aboriginal people who have a more vital stake in it. The anti-harvest movement which has fought to end seal hunting and the trapping of fur-bearing animals, is more a threat to the economic and cultural well-being of Aboriginals then it is to other Canadians. This movement found that international trade was the "Achilles' heel" of the sealing industry, and hopes that it will be the same for the fur industry. In this paper international trade law as one legal aspect of this issue in modern Aboriginal resource use is explored. This paper begins with the controversy that swept over the Atlantic seal hunt, because of its significance as a forewarning for fur trapping. The attack on trapping and the ideologies that motivate it are then discussed. Also examined are the responses to these attacks, involving intertwined elements of law and policy. (from author's abstract)

(Keywords: Aboriginal trappers, anti-fur movement, international trade law, anti-sealing, counter responses, humane trapping).


See Section 1.


See Section 1.

It is thought that as the rate of development in the North increases and more Natives take part in the wage economy the use of "country" foods from hunting, gathering, and fishing will decrease. This study examines the use of these foods in the communities of Norman Wells, Fort Simpson, Fort Norman, and Wrigley before and after the Norman Wells Oil Expansion and Pipeline Project. It was found that the use of country foods remained the same with families that were considered high users. Medium users increased their use of country foods and low users decreased their use of country foods. The overall results indicated exactly the same level of use of country foods. As the continued use of traditional foods implies the continuation of other traditional practices and values, the results of this study show that the Native traditional way of life can at least survive relatively small development projects.

(Keywords: Aboriginal economy, wage economy and modern development, use of "country foods", cultural continuity).


See Section 5.


This Task Force reviewed the World Commission's report, *Our Common Future* and the *National Task Force Report*, making recommendations as to how their principles could be implemented in British Columbia. Twenty-two recommendations were made in the following areas: the function, role and membership of a permanent Round Table on economy and environment; the elements of a provincial conservation strategy to support sustainable development; a communications/public education program; and the desirability of adopting other National Task Force and World Commission recommendations. Dispute resolution mechanisms were also considered.

(Keywords: resource management, conservation strategy, communication/education programs, sustainable development).


See Section 2.

See Section 2.


See Section 4.


This paper discusses how to present the trapping issue to the public to encourage positive public relations. It advocates a confident, pro-active, and non-confrontational approach when discussing trapping and provides the knowledge required to do so. Included topics within the paper are wildlife values, conservation, government’s role in fur management, reasons for trapping, life and death in the wild, and dealing with anti-trapping groups.

(Keywords: public education/relations, fur management, anti-trapping groups).


This report contains the responses of the Departments of External Affairs, of Environment, and Indian and Northern Affairs to the report, *The Fur Issue: Cultural Continuity, Economic Opportunity*. Twenty-nine separate responses to issues raised in this report are provided, including the Federal government’s support for 1) Aboriginal trapping and hunting rights, 2) maintaining flexibility in social assistance programs to encourage Aboriginal trapping, 3) Aboriginal cottage industries, 4) humane trapping systems, 5) trapper education, 6) native involvement in development of trapping methods, 7) native participation in wildlife management and conservation, 8) Aboriginal trapping organizations, and 9) coordinated communications programs for the fur industry.

(Keywords: Aboriginal trapping rights, government assistance, humane trapping, trapping education, wildlife management, public communications).


See Section 1.

See Section 1.


See Section 1.


The humane trapping research program has been funded through to 1992. By this time $7 million will have been spent by the Fur Institute of Canada and the International Fur Trade Federation on the development of more humane trapping systems. Research has been carried out at the Alberta Environmental Centre, the University of Minnesota, and at Washington State University. A successful killing trap for mink has been developed and research is concentrated on work with fisher, raccoon, ermine and arctic fox. Red foxes caught in "soft-holding" traps show that their stress indicators levelled out over a 30-minute period to a level consistent with free-ranging foxes running or eating. Certain stress indicators were higher when using the conventional leg-hold trap than when using the padded foot trap and trap caused injuries were also higher. Similar data was found for red foxes caught in live-hold traps.

(Keywords: humane trapping, technology, animal rights).


See Section 5.


See Section 5.


See Section 4.


The myths about the harvesting of wild fur are presented along with the facts. Myths about the numbers of trappers, the beneficiaries of trapping income, the hardship imposed with the loss of this industry, leghold traps, political land claims and exemption of aboriginal/indigenous peoples are all discussed briefly with a myth-fact format.
(Keywords: traps and trappers, aboriginals in the fur trade, wild fur harvesting).


See Section 4.


This review describes how the anti-sealing campaign adversely affected the livelihoods of sealers in Labrador and Newfoundland and of the Inuit of northern Canada, who did not hunt harp seals, pups or whitecoats. It then outlines how a similar campaign might affect trapping and fur ranching in this country. Also touched upon are two other activities (animal research and factory farming) that have been attracting sporadic, but well-publicized attention from animal rights groups and seem likely to be the next targets of animal rights campaigns in this country. (from author's abstract)

(Keywords: anti-sealing, Inuit, anti-trapping, animal rights, humane trapping).


See Section 1.


The Native people of the Northwest Territories should be able to choose if they wish to live a traditional lifestyle, a modern lifestyle, or a mix between the two. To be able to choose requires some form of self-government. The movement from federal government control to self-government is a major transition. Centralization versus decentralization is one important issue to be dealt with which becomes embroiled in other issues of land claims, division of the territories, economic development, the Energy Accord, and self-government. The development of a government that serves the needs of Aboriginal people and the tensions surrounding the political development are the premise of this book.

(Keywords: Northern Native people, traditional economy, mixed economy, self-determination, political development).


See Section 4.
Fast, H., and F. Berkes. (1994). *Native Land Use, Traditional Knowledge and the Subsistence Economy in the Hudson Bay Bioregion*. Ottawa: Canadian Arctic Resources Committee and the Municipality of Sanikiluaq.

See Section 1.


Ideas for humane traps were categorized and appraised by a Scientific and Technical Sub-committee. Those traps which were thought to have humane potential were mechanically tested for impact and clamping forces and rated against killing thresholds and then were approach tested where animals were allowed to enter the traps which had been wired open. The traps which showed good humane potential were tested under simulated field conditions and then in field conditions. Sixteen of the original 104 killing traps were approved. Research was also conducted on the physiology of semi-aquatic furbearers and on the humaneness of underwater trapping of these animals, and on the use of killing-snares. Recommendations on the type of trap to use for particular species are provided.

(Keywords: humane trapping, animal rights, technological development).


This paper discusses the articulations sought and established by the Eastern James Bay Cree of northern Quebec during negotiation of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. Included in the articulations are: macro-system recognition of Cree cultural and social structures and practices; guaranteed allocations of wildlife and exclusive species and areas; and guaranteed annual incomes for hunters. These articulations came about as hunters tried to respond to threats to their subsistence way of life. Questions are raised about the political effectiveness of the articulations and social and cultural implications.

(Keywords: James Bay/Northern Quebec Cree, traditional economy, Aboriginal - Nation state relations, resource management, land-use, politics).


This paper describes the context and logic of the negotiation of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, the first modern Aboriginal rights agreement in Canada, and the first such agreement to recognize explicit aboriginal rights, and to provide means designed to maintain and support subsistence activities. This paper indicates: the political setting and legal actions leading up to and constraining negotiations; the relationship of negotiations to the hydroelectric development scheme; the reasons the Cree
decided to pursue negotiations; the key objectives and positions of the native and government parties; the general negotiating strategies adopted; the organization of negotiations; the Cree reasons for accepting the final agreement; and some of the reasons for the reactions of the various environmentalist and native groups to the negotiations. The significance of the agreement and resulting legislation is discussed relevant to future Aboriginal rights negotiations. (from author's abstract).

(Keywords: James Bay/Northern Quebec Cree, Aboriginal rights negotiations, subsistence lifestyles, land claims, hydroelectric development).


See Section 2.


This paper examines relationships between the Cree of James Bay and external societies, the conflicts that arise from those relationships, and innovative ways of moderating the impact of conflict. The Cree are presented as people who had, and have, the capacity to determine the shape of relations with others, rather than as the victims of imposed relationships. Hydroelectric development in their traditional territories compelled the Cree to formulate new grounds for external relations, based not on isolationism, but on gaining new control over the changing situation. The objective was to retain a self-governing society with advantageous links to external policies and economies. The outcome was the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, completed in 1975. In creating the agreement, conflict centered on issues of development (control and use of resources) and sovereignty (distribution of political power). Since neither the Cree nor external governments could impose their will in these conflicts, negotiation was the appropriate instrument for settling respective roles in Northern Quebec. The bulk of the paper discusses the outcome of the negotiated agreement. (from author's abstract).

(Keywords: James Bay Cree, hydroelectric development, Aboriginal-Nation State conflict, self-governance, negotiated agreement).


See Section 4.

This paper reviews the role that renewable resource harvesting plays in contemporary northern Native communities. It is apparent that the significance of resources and harvesting activities extend well beyond the economic value of resources. Indeed, resource harvesting activities should be considered of fundamental importance in maintaining the social vitality of communities engaged in subsistence pursuits. In this view renewable resource harvesting in Native communities relates more to questions of culture, lifestyle and community, than to questions of neo-classical economics. This explains why the terms "ethnocide" or "cultural genocide" are used to describe the severe disruptions caused by outsiders' activities that compromise Native harvesting activities. The paper concludes by suggesting why the continued sustainable harvest of renewable resources remains in the national interest. (from author's abstract)

(Keywords: Native communities, natural resource harvesting, cultural genocide, sustainable harvesting).


This paper reviews selected changes affecting northern societies at the present time. By reference to two northern societies, the multiplex effects of outside influences upon these societies is shown to result in diminished local empowerment with great potential for negative health consequences. The socio-cultural significance of maintaining the traditional diet in these northern societies is emphasized. (from author's abstract)

(Keywords: Northern societies, cultural changes, local empowerment, health, sustainability)


This book includes papers given at a workshop on Native Peoples and Wildlife Management held in 1986 at a conference on "Knowing the North: Integrating Tradition, Science and Technology." The papers provide a variety of information on management related issues dealing with traditional ecological knowledge. Included is a bibliography of Native resource systems and Native knowledge of the environment.

(Keywords: Native resource systems, traditional aboriginal knowledge, resource management, sustainability).


This booklet provides answers about the fur industry and its importance to the Canadian economy and environment. Fur is a natural product and a renewable resource. Moreover, trappers are often the first to notice depletion, pollution, and other threats to wildlife. Through research, trapper education, frequent trap monitoring, and modern trap designs, the fur trade ensures that the animals used are treated as humanely and respectful as possible. In fur farming, codes of practice now impose
industry standards for all aspects of animal care, feeding, and killing. Since
the livelihood of the professional fur farmer depends upon producing top-
quality fur, the welfare of his animals is of prime importance. The lesson
from the Karakul sheep in Namibia, southeast Africa, demonstrates the
potential for exceeding the carrying capacity of the land and the limited
water supply if herdsmen do not slaughter a percentage of animals each year.
The protest industry is affecting the welfare of the fur trappers, the fur
industry, and the environment by justifying emotion-based judgements
passed on to the public through misinformation and emotional propaganda.
Animal rights activists ignore the difficulties of balancing human needs with
the habitat and other requirements of wildlife. Instead, they propose that the
exploitation of all domestic and wild animals should cease. The modern fur
trade is the result of meticulous craftsmanship. The furs are a natural,
renewable resource, practical and beautiful, non-polluting and provide a
high level of employment in family-run operations. This booklet challenges
myths about endangered species, and irresponsible trapping are answered
with facts.
(Keywords: anti-fur protest industry, renewable resources,
humane trapping, sustainability).


See Section 1.

Resource Wars: Native and Environmental Struggles Against Multinational

See Section 4.

Government of the Northwest Territories. (1962). Northwest Territories Graphs
Showing Fur Take and Average Prices by Species. Yellowknife: Game
Management Service.

See Section 5.

Government of the Northwest Territories. (1986). revised ed. This Land is Our
Life. Yellowknife: Department of Renewable Resources.

See Section 2.


Increasing complications around the European Commission Regulation
3254/91 include Aboriginal Rights, international trade agreements,
 misinformation and politics. A side article entitled "An Aboriginal
Alternative" proposes an Aboriginal label ensuring humane trapping. These
articles are also supplemented with various fur statistics from Canada and
Europe.
Environmental and Economic Issues in Fur Trapping

(Keywords: fur statistics, Aboriginal rights, international trade agreements, politics).


People may have strong convictions about the issue of trapping while being unaware of the arguments on which the controversy is based. Approximately 105,000 Canadians earn all or part of their income from the fur industry. It is the intent of the animal rights movement to abolish the entire fur industry by focussing on the source, the trapper. Because the animal rights campaign is so emotional, the Canadian government avoids almost any counterattack. This article prepares the reader to review the implications and facts from all sides of the issue.

(Keywords: animal rights, trappers, wildlife management).


See Section 4.


This book is based on a three part series originally prepared for the CBC Radio program "Ideas". The development and workings of the animal rights movement in the western world is examined. Originally, animal rights groups claimed goals of conservation and ecology. The author shows how, instead, animal rights groups have played to the media to gain access to funding and support for their increased militancy. The first part of the book analyzes the various philosophies surrounding the animal rights movement from Descartes to the traditions of the Cree. Part two involves discussions of the animal rights movement in relation to sealing, trapping, animal use in research and factory farms. The final part of the book describes how a new relationship is being established between people and wildlife. The animal rights activism brings all of the issues regarding humans and the environment to a head.

(Keywords: activism, animal rights, philosophies, human-wildlife relations, sustainability).


See Section 4.


See Section 4.

See Section 4.


Various legal problems associated with trapping by Aboriginal peoples are identified. Trapping is viewed differently by aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples. Aboriginals view trapping as only one aspect of bush life whereas non-Aboriginals view trapping as a distinct imported activity. When the law is applied, it is done so on the basis of flawed historical, anthropological and legal models of the aboriginal trapper. These models are critically examined to show the ambiguity in the legal status of trapping and the areas of trapping (the trapline and beaver preserve). In the second part of the chapter the use of treaties for the defence of aboriginal trappers and traplines is examined. The rights of the trapper are beginning to be referred to as *profit à prendre*, e.g. the right to take something, such as fish and game, off the land of another person. It is a right independent of ownership of the land and can be transferred, although it is based on continual and effective occupation and use. This notion contrasts with the conflicting one - that trappers are squatters occupying land owned by the Crown and resource developers.

(Keywords: Aboriginal trapping, legal problems, Aboriginal and treaty rights, traditional economy, bush life).


In this description and analysis of the position of trapping and traplines in law and regulation, Hutchins writes that the current rights of Aboriginals to trap are very poorly defined. As a result, trappers are victims of double jeopardy, denied recognition of individual rights both under aboriginal and treaty rights, and under government regulation and general property laws. He traces this situation to inappropriate, and often erroneous, models of trapping that assume trapping and hunting for food are completely different activities. Usually, trapping and hunting are a single integrated activity for most aboriginal people, and neither should be given false priority over the other. Hutchins argues there is nothing in any treaty suggesting the treaties themselves served to limit the right of Indians to hunt, fish, and trap for food only, that is to disqualify commercial harvesting as a treaty or Aboriginal right. On the other hand, in the prairie provinces this limitation is imposed by the Natural Resources Transfer Agreements. Hutchins says provincial and federal administrations, as well as the courts, have lately taken the position that commercial harvesting is inconsistent with the traditional pursuits of Indians protected as treaty or aboriginal rights. The
exact nature of a trapper's interest in a trapline is as yet far from perfectly understood, although in recent years there have been a small number of cases before the courts addressing this matter. Hutchins writes the courts are showing a willingness to view a trapper's right as being in the nature of a treaty right in those areas where treaties apply, of an aboriginal right, and of a property right; any of these statuses would allow trappers to defend their interest in courts. Hutchins suggests this change in legal view is the result of increasingly sophisticated knowledge about the exact nature of aboriginal people's local economies. In these economies, the commercial aspect of trapping and traplines is inseparable from the subsistence aspect: all are integral parts of an overall system of human-environment relations, and it is the system of relations that receive treaty and constitutional protection, not just property interests of individuals in specified parcels of land. (from author's abstract).

(Keywords: Aboriginal trapping, Aboriginal and treaty rights, hunting and trapping, Aboriginal economies, commercial harvesters, constitutional protection).


See Section 4.


Key issues addressed and questions asked include the right to use animals, are synthetic furs a better choice, can nature manage itself if fur markets disappear, is trapping a threat to animal populations, trapping control measures, trappers and conservation, national control, other ways of regulating wildlife, trapping and commercial excess, is trapping animals cruel, the need to reduce animal suffering, conservationists opinions of the fur trade, the importance of money earned from trapping, native livelihoods, subsistence-based cultures and fur sales, non-native trappers, incidental trapping the wrong animals, guns instead of traps, leghold traps, endangered species, exploitation of native trappers, fur farming conditions and animal welfare, killing for fashion, the responsibility of balance and conservation, fur trade ethics, the protest industry, and a description of the role of the International Fur Trade Federation.

(Keywords: wildlife management, conservation, humane trapping, Native livelihoods, fashion, ethics, the protest industry, sustainability).


See Section 4.

Environmental Protection Strategy Task Force on Sustainable Development and Utilization.

This paper describes what happened to the Arctic seal skin industry and why and how this collapse has affected the Inuit and other sealing peoples. The analysis emphasizes the impact on Inuit culture, society and economy and how the Inuit and their governments have attempted to revitalize the industry. Included are discussions on the historical, economic, socio-cultural, nutritional, and psychological importance of sealing to the Inuit. (Keywords: sealing, Inuit, animal rights, human rights, sustainability).


This paper describes the articulation, or more appropriately the ritual confrontations, between the "conservation bureaucracy" of the nation state and the Chipewyan of Patuanak, Saskatchewan, over wildlife harvesting issues. Case examples are provided and an analysis is undertaken. It is concluded that the conflict constitutes the southern Chipewyan's rejection of Western precepts of environmental management as unsavory substitutes for their own conception of nature. The "political ecology" of northern Aboriginal people, which will grow as the techno-industrial complex expands into the northern regions of Canada, must be seen as an appeal for pluralism in the face of overwhelming assimilative and acculturative forces and considered in negotiating co-management agreements. (Keywords: Aboriginal/Nation-State Relations, environmental conservation, conservation bureaucracy, Aboriginal perspectives, political ecology, co-management).


Trapping is a way of life for many Native Canadians, but some animal rights groups argue, that must end. Animal rights activists defend their position with comments about livers for fashion, and it is time to give the Natives a chance to leave the bush and be assimilated into the economy. Native spokespersons defend their right to harvest as an integral part of their economic, cultural and spiritual well-being. (Keywords: animal rights movement, aboriginal rights, native traditional culture, economic sustainability)


This volume is a record of the final conference held by the National Symposium on the North for the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee. That conference, co-sponsored by the Fur Institute of Canada, was titled "The Use of Northern Wildlife: Animal Rights, Subsistence, and Commercialization". This was the first public meeting in Canada of hunters
and trappers from Greenland, Alaska, and Canada, animal rights and animal welfare representatives, government officials, scientists, the fur industry, and concerned citizens. Ethical, technological, scientific, cultural, economic and environmental perspectives were shared and discussed by the participants. The proceedings contained in this volume focus on the right of native peoples to hunt and trap wildlife, both for subsistence use and commercial trade.

(Keywords: Aboriginal rights, animal rights, humane trapping, traps, sustainability).


The results of a questionnaire imply that exposure to negative advertising of fur is not very widespread. The findings suggest that many people do not understand the purpose of trapping since a large part of the sample were uncertain about any prohibition of trapping practices. The report suggests there is a need for further research into public awareness and opinion.

(Keywords: industry education, animal rights, fur industry controversy)


See Section 2.


See Section 1.


Indigenous peoples worldwide must have the right to use and manage the natural resources upon which they depend. These cultures are dependent on animals for their food, shelter, clothing and transportation. They do not set themselves apart from animals and nature, but see the animals as the givers of life. This book examines the relationship between humans and nature from a Christian perspective where God is the giver of life and from an animistic perspective where the animals are the providers. The book is separated into chapters on sealing, whaling, trapping and the future of traditional peoples.

(Keywords: Indigenous rights, animal rights, resource management, traditional economy, sustainability).


See Section 2.

See Section 2.


See Section 2.


This report is a history of game management in the Yukon. A variety of topics are examined which include game ordinances, the game branch, economics and management of trapping, hunting, outfitting, habitat management, and native Yukon wildlife. Statistical tables are included in the appendix.

*(Keywords: game/trapper management - Yukon, habitat management, harvest statistics).*


This article discussed the options for Canada's Aboriginal people presented by the European Union's fur ban. Should Aboriginal people insist that Canada defend Aboriginal and Treaty rights to trap animals or rely on developing new fur markets. Part experience with European control methods place hope with the Canadian Government to defend Aboriginal people.

*(Keywords: Aboriginal rights, European Union ban, new markets).*


See Section 4.


See Section 2.


See Section 1.


Unless Canada can meet the EU demands re: the leghold trap, the import into Europe of pelts and furs of 12 furbearing species trapped by Canada's Aboriginal peoples will be banned. This action will have devastating

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economic, social and cultural consequences for many Aboriginal communities including: destruction of an integral component of Aboriginal economy; loss of millions of dollars in annual fur income to northern Aboriginal communities; undermining the ability of Aboriginal hunters/trappers to produce several hundred million dollars annually worth of nutritious "country food" and other in-kind income; increased social pathologies in Aboriginal communities; increased government expenses re: social assistance and health care costs; loss of traditional knowledge and connection with land; destruction of Aboriginal cultures and societies in many communities; and loss of wildlife and natural habitat. This paper describes the general social and economic characteristics of Aboriginal fur trapping groups; the social, economic, cultural and environmental impacts of the EU ban; and how it violates basic human and indigenous rights.

(Keywords: EU ban, politics of the fur trade, cultural, economic, and environmental impacts, human rights violations).


Unpublished Masters Thesis

See Section 1.


See Section 5.


The special rights of Indians to hunt, trap, and fish have been a continuing source of misunderstanding and conflict in the region now comprising the prairie provinces, at least since the time the treaties were signed. This paper examines the historical and legal origins of those special rights, and traces the modification of those rights through judicial precedent and legislative enactment up to the present. In recent years, there has been a rash of court cases arising out of the confusion over what rights the Indians have and where those rights may be exercised. An attempt is made to evaluate the effect of these cases on Indian hunting, trapping, and fishing rights, and to point out legal issues which remain unresolved. (from author's introduction).

(Keywords: Aboriginal rights, hunting, trapping and fishing, treaties, legal issues).


See Section 1.


See Section 1.


See Section 4.


This report is a collection of correspondence, including the agenda of the Aboriginal Hunters' and Trappers' Conference, and three motions presented by the Dene Nation at the Dene Chiefs' Assembly in December 1984. These motions are focused on the action to be taken by the Dene people to protect themselves from the destruction of the fur industry by anti-trapping sentiment and outside agendas interested in the fur industry.

(Keywords: political influences, traditional lifestyles, economic and social variables).


A detailed physical description of the Humane Trapping Research Facility is provided, including information about the access system and services, the buildings on site, animal holding facilities, test pens, electrical and video supply system, video observation and recording system and the security system. Photographs and figures of the facility are provided.

(Keywords: humane trapping/technology, sustainability, animal rights).


See Section 1.


See Section 1.


The terms "resource management" and "sustainable development" may be relatively recent, even though Aboriginal groups in Canada have been practising them for centuries. With the end of the fur trade, native and non-native groups were engaged in intense competition for land and resources, and native rights were continually ignored. Recently, some of the rights of
natives to use and manage land and resources have been gradually restored. The prospect of partnerships between natives and non-natives with the intent of co-managing the resources for conservation is a real possibility. The paramount importance of traditional knowledge in managing these resources is becoming acknowledged. Sustainable development based on Aboriginal traditional ways is an important component of aboriginal development strategies.

(Keywords: Aboriginal groups, resource management, co-management, sustainability).


See Section 1.


Whether or not animals should be harvested and how they should be harvested, are issues which will continue to be debated for a long time. This chapter looks at the various issues surrounding the future of trapping. Recent attitudes towards hunting and trapping show that the increased urbanization of society has increased anti-hunting/trapping sentiments. However, since older people tend to view hunting and trapping less disfavourably, as the population ages perhaps the anti-hunting/trapping feelings will also be softened. Also, public concern for protecting the aesthetics and existence of wildlife over consumptive uses of the environment is growing. Another large obstacle is that the largest market for furs has been Europe, yet Europeans have no history of trapping so anti-trapping campaigns have been able to gain a greater foothold there. Recommendations to ensure the future of trapping and offset these negative influences are provided.

(Keywords: public perceptions/urbanization, animal rights, humane trapping, resource management, sustainability).


If Ontario is to prosper, it will have to restructure for sustainability, reshaping its economy to reflect environmental costs and values. This work is a "blueprint" for how Ontario can restructure its economy for sustainability. Specifically, it forwards recommendations for 1) "greening" Ontario's economy (including planning on an ecosystem basis), 2) improving decision-making (including the use of Aboriginal knowledge in developing strategies for sustainability), 3) moving forward together (including the Aboriginal co-management of resources), 4) ensuring accountability, and 5) dealing with global warming. Contributing significantly to Restructuring for Sustainability was the final report of the Native People's Circle on Environment and Economy, which brought an Aboriginal perspective to the Round Table, addressing the roles of
traditional lifestyles (including trapping) in a mixed economy and Aboriginal rights to self-determination.

(Keywords: restructuring for sustainability, traditional knowledge, co-management, Aboriginal rights).


See Section 4.


The Fort Chipewyan Cree Band settled its treaty land entitlement claim in 1986. The settlement included a large component of cash in lieu of land and resources. Also sought were a reserve land base, trapping and harvesting rights in Wood Buffalo National Park, and a co-management role in managing the park. This paper looks at how the band developed strategies for the settlement process and how their vision of the land claims settlement was articulated. The Fort Chipewyan case can be used as a case study of the wider policy environment.

(Keywords: Fort Chipewyan Cree, treaty rights, resource management, land-use policy).


Conflicting governmental and Indian interpretations of the traditional livelihood references in Treaty 8 persist to this day, and have been the subject of court cases and other attempts at resolution. Thus, a review of the historical basis of the differing views is undertaken. In order to explore future-oriented solutions, the authors canvass potential remedies, including attitudinal and policy changes. The article is placed within the context of the broader changes nationally and internationally, such as the Waitangi Tribunal in New Zealand. (from authors' abstract)

(Keywords: Aboriginal livelihoods, attitudinal and policy changes, resource management, sustainability).


This report discusses and reports on the progress of the research priorities for the 1991/92 Humane Trapping Program. A variety of traps were tested for their humaneness and a portable prying tool to open traps was developed. Also a study of fishers reintroduced in Alberta was initiated. Previous annual reports are also available for years after the introduction of the program in 1989.

(Keywords: humane trapping/technology, animal rights).

See Section 2.


The Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project (1976) is the foundation of Inuit land claims in the Northwest Territories. However, this project's maps are inadequate to assist the Inuit with the identification of their land and to plan future land use. The Nunavut Atlas, produced by the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut's Land Identification Project is intended to cover these areas. Regional differences between such locations as Coppermine, Keewatin, and Grise Fiord must be accommodated. Each community should be able to negotiate its own land and the total land for Nunavut must be the sum of the lands negotiated by each community. Due to the barrenness of the land a small block of land for each community will not allow for any economic potential. Meaningful pieces of land, size being dependent on the regional differences for each community, must be retained to allow the Inuit to be economically self-sufficient. Many communities are also strongly connected with the sea. Therefore, Inuit need to have strong management powers over Arctic marine waters.

*(Keywords: Inuit/Nunavut, land claims, self-sufficiency, sustainability).*


This edited volume, arising out of a series of National Round Tables on Aboriginal Economic Development and Resources, addresses many issues surrounding aboriginal peoples and economic development that are germane to the sustainability of fur trapping, both directly and indirectly. It contains papers, many by aboriginal people, on international economic trends and opportunities for Aboriginal peoples, tribal economic development, strengthening traditional economies, the articulation of capitalism and traditional economies, expanding Aboriginal employment in the Canadian economy, and building institutions and policies for long-term economic development in Aboriginal communities. Also presented are a number of case studies or "models" of successful Aboriginal business ventures, a few of which are relevant to fur trapping. The emphasis is on encouraging Aboriginal entrepreneurship, linking Aboriginal economy with consumer needs and market demands, and encouraging government to support Aboriginal business initiatives through rigorous promotion of Aboriginal goods and services.

*(Keywords: Aboriginal economic development, traditional economy, capitalism, Aboriginal entrepreneurship, sustainable development).*


See Section 4.
Environmental and Economic Issues in Fur Trapping


See Section 5.


The subsistence land use of Kotzebue Sound was mapped in order to provide documentation that can be used in land decisions. This report describes the subsistence land use maps and provides a reference and index for the maps of the 10 communities involved. The subsistence use of each species was noted on maps denoting the outer boundaries of areas used.

(Keywords: Aboriginal land-use - Alaska, sustainability).


The Income Security Program for Cree Hunters and Trappers was the first guaranteed income program in North America. This report examines the effects of the program during its first two years of operation and the next dozen years, and relates the effects to recent changes and the future of the program. The program's effects are assessed in relation to other issues including: the continuity of Cree culture and related economic practices, social integration, individual initiative, transfer payments, local economic and social development, wildlife management and self-government.

(Keywords: Cree, Income Security Program, cultural and economic continuity, self-government, wildlife management)


This is an overview of the players in the anti-harvest movement and of the response that has been generated in Canada. The paper examines humane societies and the anti-trapping lobby and looks at how the term "humane" is a relative term depending on one's personal background. Various organizations exist in Canada which try to fight against the anti-trapping campaigns. Information about the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, the Canadian Association for Humane Trapping, the Federal Provincial Committee for Humane Trapping and The Fur Institute of Canada is provided. Also, different trapping mechanisms are discussed, as well as trapping ethics and how the fur industry must work to maintain its viability.

(Keywords: anti-trapping, animal rights campaigns, humane trapping/technological development).

Environmental and Economic Issues in Fur Trapping

See Section 4.


See Section 4.


The underlying intent of the European Union's Regulation 3254/91 is questionable. On an international level, the Europeans have agreed "other nations have the sovereign right to manage their own resources in an ecologically-sustainable manner". Trapping is an ecologically sound industry and the proposed ban on wild furs is an irony insofar as it blocks a livelihood that depends on a healthy animal and healthy environment to exist. The European ban is seen as a devastating threat to all renewable resource-based industries because it sets a precedent for future imports and exports.

(Keywords: EU ban, politics, trade restrictions, ecologically, sustainable development).


The Métis Nation of the Northwest Territories proposed a ban on European car imports that do not meet North American safety standards as a response to the ban on wild fur harvesting. White using the GATT dispute mechanism to challenge the European Union's ban is an option, it may also provide a platform for animal rights activists. This is a risky course of action, as the outcome could go either way.

(Keywords: EU ban, animal rights, Aboriginal response, GATT).


Although none of the 13 species listed in the European Union's ban are considered endangered, some species have blatantly been ignored or left off the list. No recommendations for which trap is appropriate or humane has been offered, which suggests an attempt to simply shut down the industry. Canada leads the world in trapping research and working together for international standards makes more sense.

(Keywords: politics, European Union ban, humane trapping, leghold trap).

See Section 1 about how information on trapping is needed in order to make appropriate decisions in fur management.


See Section 1.


See Section 4.


Devolution of powers to the regional or local level in the NWT, through such vehicles as native claims settlements, transfer of powers from federal to territorial or local authorities, and the establishment of co-operative management boards, is currently in progress. Do these developments really meet native people's demands for effective involvement in fish and wildlife management and are they conducive to conservation? Co-management, it would appear, means different things to different people. Two models of wildlife management are described: the state system and the indigenous system. The devolution process, as it is currently unfolding, is more likely to lead to the entrenchment of the state system at the local or regional level, rather than a significant transformation in the direction of the indigenous system. The outcome will, unfortunately, neither meet the concerns and aspirations of native harvesters, nor necessarily result in more harmonious and effective resource conservation. Devolution is a necessary, but not sufficient, step towards those ends. A more effective bridging of the two systems is proposed. (from author's abstract).

(Keywords: Aboriginal people, co-management, state management systems, indigenous management systems, resource conservation).


This book is just one of many examples of the propaganda perpetuated by the anti-fur lobby. It looks at all of the methods used for trapping fur-bearing animals throughout the world. Many photographs of live animals caught in traps are shown. Most of the methods are discussed as being
inhumane, although one method of using car exhaust to kill animals is
discussed as a humane alternative. The book urges people to stop buying
furs of any kind to destroy the market for furs.
(Keywords: anti-fur lobby, cruelty to animals, animal rights, 
humane trapping).

and Native Communities in Western Canada*. Winnipeg: The University of 
Manitoba Press.

See Section 4.

of Toronto Press.

See Section 2.

Secondary Fur Business Activities*. Edmonton: Alberta Fish and 
Wildlife, Energy, and Natural Resources.

See Section 1.

Ideology in the Canadian Arctic*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

See Section 1.

Department of Renewable Resources.

This is a course manual for trapper education workshops for Yukon 
trappers. It serves as a reference tool providing information on the biology 
of furbearers, trapline management, trapline preparation, humane harvest, 
fur handling, marketing, business management, safety and survival, and 
trapper rights.
(Keywords: trapper education, trapper rights, trapline 
management, humane harvest).

In Wild Furbearer Management and Conservation in North America*. M. 
Novak, J.A. Baker, M.E. Obbald, and B. Malloch (eds.). Ontario Ministry of 
Natural Resources.

See Section 4.


Optimism and predictions of increasing sales for real fur despite the past 
decline in fur purchases created by social and environmentally conscious 
women have some retailers believing fur is making a comeback. Women 
are ashamed of fakes and designers are risking attack from animal rights
groups. The industry is showing some recovery, yet the future can go either way.
(Keywords: animal rights, public opinion).


The threat posed by the anti-fur industry to Aboriginal lifestyles and traditional economies is discussed. Also presented is an account of the economic, cultural and social devastation that occurred in Inuit communities as a result of the anti-sealing campaign. Government and Native responses to the anti-fur lobby are highlighted. While the former has focused on the development of more humane trapping methods, and trapper and consumer education, the latter sought to establish organizations such as the Aboriginal Trappers Federation of Canada and Indigenous Survival International and lobby directly European governments and politicians. Despite the lack of funding, these Aboriginal organizations are beginning to accomplish what government has not -- they are directly challenging the wider society to treat native people with fairness, justice and respect for their ways of life.
(Keywords: Aboriginal lifestyles, traditional economy, anti-fur lobby, humane trapping, anti-sealing, Inuit, Indigenous Survival International).


See Section 4.


See section 4.


Conflicts focusing on the killing of wild animals in the Arctic areas are analyzed in reference to several specific cases: the harp seal, the bowhead whale, the northern fur seal and fur trapping. Discussed are the opposing claims of preservationists and consumptive users in the North, and the different factors that may affect the course of the conflict. It is suggested that no master variable is likely to determine the outcomes of these conflicts; however, political action on various levels plays a decisive role. The influence of developments in the broader sociopolitical content is also considered. (from author's abstract).
(Keywords: user/preservationist conflicts, animal rights, human rights, environmental issues).

See Section 2.


This paper summarizes the current status of the fur industry in the Yukon and outlines the Department of Renewable Resources involvement in the management of this resource. The Department identified two main objectives in respect to the trapping industry: (1) to assist in building the industry within the Yukon and (2) to support the industry internationally. *(Keywords: fur resource management - Yukon, government support, local and international).*
APPENDICES
Environmental and Economic Issues in Fur Trapping
Appendix A:

Interlibrary Loan Requests Outstanding

Allen, W.E. date. *Dene subsistence practices in the Canadian Subarctic: Longterm Sustainability or Short-term Exploitation?* Berkeley: University of California, Department of Anthropology.


Cummins, B. date. *The Registered Trapline System in Ontario and Native Reaction: The Ottawapiskat Case.*


Gamble, R.I. Native Harvest of Wildlife in the Keewatin Region, Northwest Territories for the period October 1983 to September 1984. Ottawa: Department of Fisheries and Oceans.


Appendix B:  

Individuals, Trapping and Aboriginal Organizations, and Government Departments Contacted

Alison Beal, Executive Director, The Fur Institute of Canada, 255 Albert Street Suite 804, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6A9 (Tel: 613-231-7099)  
- sending collection of relevant materials

Allan Herschovinski, Author, (Tel: 514-277-3792)  
- sending a bibliography of relevant materials (not received to date)

John Holman, Métis Nation of the NWT, Yellowknife, N.T. (Tel.: 873-7771)  
- sending all back issues of "On the Trapline: since 1993 (not yet received)

Linda Jagrose-May, The Fur Council of Canada (Tel.: 416-674-7878)  
- left messages (no reply to date)

Becky MacIntosh, Publisher: The Trapper, Grande Prairie, Alberta (Tel: 539-7870)  
- sent back issues of "The Trapper" (July 1996)

Duncan Marshal, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa  
- sent a parcel of materials (June 1996)

Pat McCormack, Assistant Professor, School of Native Studies, University of Alberta  
- provided contact names

Dr. Michael Payne, Head of Research and Publications, Alberta Community Development, University of Alberta  
-provided relevant materials list

Richard Price, Associate Professor, School of Native Studies, University of Alberta  
- provided contact names and relevant materials

Shirleen Smith, Graduate Student, Department of Anthropology, University of Alberta  
- recommended contacts and authors

Bob Stevenson, Aboriginal Trappers’ Federation of Canada, Personal Interview  
- sending copies of personal papers (e.g., The Right to Survive: Campaign Against Anti-Trapping Movements)

Doug Stewart, Department of Renewable Resources, Yellowknife, N.W.T.  
- sent list of relevant materials with Dept. Renewable Resources, GNWT (August 1996)

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Vegreville Trapping Center, Library, Vegreville, Alberta.
- no recent publications on trapping research. All publications linked into the GATE database.
Appendix C:

Relevant Materials Held in Renewable Resources Library, Government of the N.W.T.


Environmental and Economic Issues in Fur Trapping


