

# The Fur Trade

**Some people think that wearing real fur is glamorous. Others argue that it's cruel. So what's the truth behind the fur label?**

## **How many animals are killed and why?**

Figures are hard to come by, but worldwide every year over a billion animals are killed for their fur.

There are two simple reasons: profits and vanity. People who kill animals and manufacture coats out of their skins make money out of it, and people who wear the coats think they look sophisticated and stylish.

It's not just coats - fur is used as trim on gloves, hats, cuffs and collars and to make pom poms and toys.



Lady Gaga thinks that wearing this Arctic fox fur coat makes her look glamorous



Foxes like this one are imprisoned in small wire cages on fur farms for their entire lives

Fur farming is banned in Austria, Croatia and the UK.

Over half of all the mink and foxes killed for their fur come from countries that are members of the European Union.

The countries that farm the most animals for their fur are China, Denmark, Poland, the USA, Canada, Greece and Finland.

## **Conditions on fur farms**

Animals are imprisoned in tiny, cramped, filthy wire-mesh cages for their entire lives until they are killed. Mink and foxes are wild animals and are naturally very active. In their natural habitat they would travel many miles each day. Being caged in huge sheds with thousands of other animals means they are literally driven mad with anxiety and fear.

## **Killing methods**

Animals on fur farms are killed using the most gruesome methods. They are electrocuted (through the use of electrodes in the mouth and anus), gassed and have their necks violently broken. If they are lucky, they will be given a lethal injection. If they are unlucky, they will be skinned alive - as often happens in China.



Millions of dogs and cats in China are killed so that their fur can be turned into trim and trinkets.

## **Fur farming**

80% of the animals killed for their fur are reared and killed on farms.

An estimated one billion (1,000 million) rabbits are killed on Chinese fur farms. Around 70 million mink and 4 million Arctic foxes are slaughtered annually for the fashion trade. Other animals such as polecats, raccoons and chinchillas are also farmed for their pelts.

An estimated two million cats and dogs are reared on farms in China and killed for their fur.

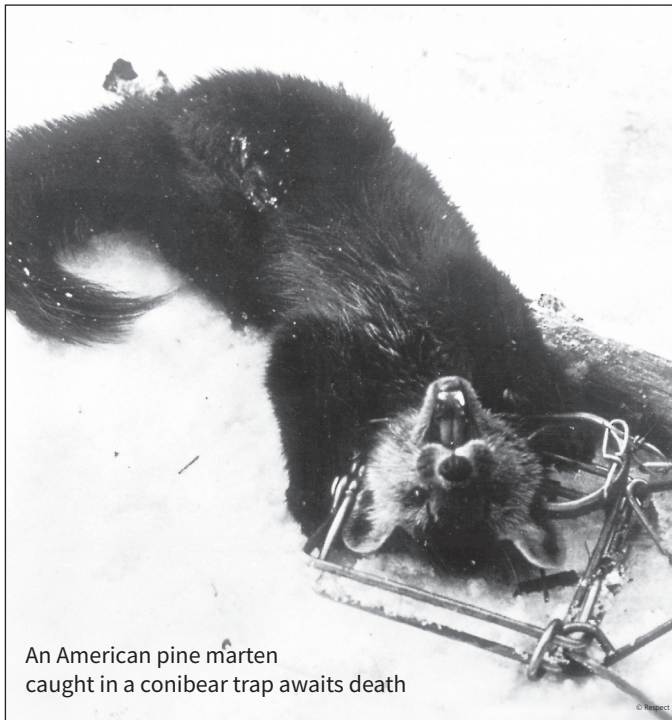


## Trapping

10 million animals are trapped in the wild every year for their fur. The main countries involved are Russia, the USA and Canada.

The most commonly used trap is the barbaric steel-jawed leghold trap. When set by the trapper, the spring-loaded jaws are opened and held in place with a metal clip. When an animal steps on it, the clip is released and the device snaps shut with incredible force.

Trapped animals will be in lots of pain, unable to escape, for hours or even days, until the trapper comes back to suffocate or beat them to death.



An American pine marten caught in a conibear trap awaits death

In some cases, animals will try to free themselves at any cost, including knocking out their teeth as they bite on the steel trap and chewing off their own feet.

These traps are considered so cruel that they are banned in 90 countries, including the UK. However, fur is still imported to the UK from countries where leghold traps are legally used.

### Animal species killed for their fur

#### Trapped in the wild:

**Beaver, Coyote, Grey fox, Lynx, Mink, Wolf, Martin, Muskrat, Sable, Skunk, Red fox, Possum, Raccoon**

#### On fur farms:

**Arctic fox, Chinchilla, Mink, Polecat, Rabbit, Raccoon**



## Faux Fur

These days lots of fashion houses and designers are boycotting fur. Many produce clothes using 'faux fur', or fake fur.

#### Fur-free designers include:

- Christopher Ræburn
- Stella McCartney
- Felder Felder
- Shrimps
- Vika Gazinskaya
- Vivienne Westwood



## Fur-Free shops

Lots of high street shops have pledged to be fur-free and not to sell real fur in their outlets.

#### Stores include:

- |                    |           |
|--------------------|-----------|
| • ASOS             | • Next    |
| • American Apparel | • TopShop |
| • Gap              | • Zalando |
| • H&M              | • Zara    |

## Shops that still sell fur include

- |                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| • Beyond Retro | • Harrods        |
| • Burberry     | • Harvey Nichols |
| • Cruise       |                  |

### Can you spot which hood trim is faux and which is real?



## Take action

- Don't buy clothes, toys, gloves, etc. with fur trim
- Boycott shops selling fur and contact the owner to tell them the reason for your action
- Support the campaign to introduce fur labelling legislation in the UK\*
- Ask your teacher to invite Animal Aid to give a talk on the fur trade to your class



\* See the Respect for Animals website for more info: [www.respectforanimals.org](http://www.respectforanimals.org)