

MUSQUASH (MUSKRAT)

SECTIONS

Eastern: Pelts included in the Eastern section originating in Eastern Canada—east of the Manitoba-Ontario border and in the Eastern United States—east of Minnesota.

The Muskrats are large in size, have long guard hairs, bluish underfur and are silky in texture. Because the pelts differ from North to South, there are three sections within the Easterns.

Northern: Includes Eastern Canada, New York State, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont. Good colour and size with silky texture and blue underfur.

North Central: Includes Michigan and Wisconsin. Heavier leather, with good to average size, good to average colour and silky texture.

Central: Includes Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. Heavy leather with browner colour, coarser texture and good size.

Western: Originate in Western Canada—west of the Manitoba-Ontario border and the Western United States. The pelts are generally smaller in size, browner in colour and have less dense underfur. Two sections differentiate the Canadian & United States Muskrats in the West.

Northern: Includes Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta. Smaller sizes with average colour, weight and leather.

North Central: Includes North & South Dakota, Montana. Smaller sizes, and light weight leather. Brown to reddish colour.

SIZE

Muskrat pelts are sized by eye rather than by a board, although boards are available.

Properly boarded Muskrats from eastern sections will be 16 cm (6.25") wide at the butt, whereas the smaller pelts from western sections will be 14.5 cm (5.75") wide at the butt.

XXXL	Over 42 cm	Over 17"
XXL	42 cm	15.5"-17"
XL	39 cm	14"-15.5"
LGE	34 cm	12.5"-14"
MED	27 cm	11"-12.5"
SML	23 cm	9.5"-11"
XS	Under 23 cm	Under 9.5"

COLOUR

Muskrats are not sorted by colour, although there is natural variation in fur colour from black to pale silver or even white. Bellies vary in colour from whitish or silvery to light brown in all back colours.

Pelts from western sections tend to have coarser fur.

Black Muskrats have black guard hairs with clear, dark blue underfur.

Other shades have brownish tips in the underfur.



VARIATION IN COLOUR OF THE BACKS OF MUSKRAT PELTS



(a) silver (b) pale (c) light brown

VARIATION IN COLOUR OF BELLIES OF MUSKRAT PELTS

SEASONS

CODE

FAL

WTR

SPR

SEASONS

FALL

WINTER

SPRING

DEFINITION

Early caught skins.
Flat, sparse fur.
Leather is blue to dark blue colour and dry.
Blotchy leather in adults and very blue to light blue in juveniles.

Dense fur.
Slightly blue to clear leather (white or golden coloured) that is supple.
2 thin blue stripes running down back.

FULLY PRIME: Dense fur
Clear leather.

SLIGHTLY OVERPRIME: Slightly weaker fur.
Reddish, veiny, boardy leather.

OVERPRIME: Loose, weak fur.
Reddish, veiny, dry, thin, papery leather which may have well-defined kidney marks on the back.



(a) Fall adult (b) early Winter (c) late Winter (d) early Spring (e) good shedder (f) poor shedder

LEATHER-OUT PRIMING SEQUENCE OF MUSKRAT PELTS



(a) Fall (b) early Winter (c) late Winter (d) early Spring (e) shedder

FUR-OUT PRIMING SEQUENCE OF THE MUSKRAT

TOP: FUR-OUT PELTS | MIDDLE: CROSS-SECTIONS OF THE FUR AT THE NECK | BOTTOM: CROSS-SECTION OF THE FUR AT THE RUMP

WEIGHTS

CODE	WEIGHTS	DEFINITION
GD	GOOD	Well furred. Solid, heavy, supple feel.
AVG	AVERAGE	Well furred but not as heavy as GD.

CATALOGUE SECTION I

CODE	GRADE	DEFINITION
SEL	SELECT	Winter or Early Spring skins with Good Weight. Clean leather. No blemishes or imperfections.
I	FIRST	Winter or Spring skins with average weight. Clean leather. No blemishes.
I-II	FIRST AND SECOND	Fall or Poor Spring skins.
II	SECOND	Very Early Fall skins.
SDG	SLIGHT DAMAGED	Fall, Winter or Spring skins that have 1 to 2 small holes or a limited combination of scars.

CATALOGUE SECTION III

CODE	GRADE	DEFINITION
DGD	DAMAGED	Skins with 3 or more holes.
IV	FOURTH	Badly damaged skins (over 50% damage), burnt skins. Limited commercial value.