

SABLE (MARTEN)

Most Marten pelts are harvested in Canada (about 75%); the remainder are harvested in Maine, the mountainous areas of the western United States and in Alaska.

The Northern areas of Canada and Alaska produce a Sable that is larger in size and heavy in weight. The Central and Southern areas of Canada and the Northern United States produce Sables that are smaller in size and lighter in weight. Pelts from the Western United States are Flat, with loose underfur, light in weight and have a hazy tone to the colour.

SIZE

The following size classes are used if Sable pelts are sorted into Western and Eastern sections.

2XL	Over 58 cm	Over 23"
XL	53-58 cm	21"-23"
LGE	46-53 cm	18"-21"
MED-SML	Under 46 cm	Under 18"

COLOUR

Extra Dark: This colour is rare. The fur is uniformly very dark over the entire back. The guard hairs are very dark brown or black; the underfur is dark grayish blue at the base over the entire pelt, including the flanks. The tips of the underfur are dark grayish brown.

Dark: The fur is uniformly dark over the entire back. The guard hairs are dark brownish black or sepia-coloured. The underfur is grayish blue at the base but has a narrow brownish band at the tip.

Dark Brown: These pelts have a dark brown middorsal stripe, but the flanks are a paler brown. The guard hairs are dark brown and the underfur is gray at the base and yellowish brown at the tips. Both the underfur and guard hairs are slightly paler on the flanks than in the midline. The flanks of these pelts are dyed to match the middorsal stripe by touching up the hairs with a brush and dye.

Brown: Overall the colour of these pelts is lighter than the Dark Brown category. The flanks may be much paler than the middorsal stripe, but often these pelts are uniformly medium brown in colour. The underfur is gray at the base and yellowish (not orange) at the tips. The guard hairs are medium brown in the midline and light brown on the flanks.

Light Brown: These pelts have a medium brown middorsal stripe and light yellowish brown flanks. The guard hairs vary from dark brown in the midline to light brown on the flanks. The underfur is gray at the base and a yellowish brown-orange at the tips. The yellowish colour of the underfur shows clearly through the guard hairs.

Pale: In these pelts the guard hairs vary from light brown in the midline to yellowish brown on the flanks. The underfur is light gray at the base, and the yellowish orange band at the tips is wider and lighter in colour than in darker shades.

Extra Pale: The guard hairs vary from light brown in the midline to orange on the flanks. The yellowish orange band in the underfur is wider and lighter than it is in Pale pelts. The pelt has an overall orange appearance.

Canary: These pelts have a pale orange appearance. The underfur is gray only at the bottom of the hairs. The middle band of underfur is white and the tips are yellowish orange. The guard hairs are orange in the midline and yellowish orange on the flanks. Canary pelts are rare.



(a) extra dark (b) dark (c) dark brown (d) brown (e) light brown (f) pale (g) extra pale (h) canary

COLOUR CATEGORIES OF THE MARTEN PELTS
TOP: WHOLE PELTS | BOTTOM: CROSS-SECTIONS OF FUR

CATALOGUE SECTION I

CODE	GRADE	DEFINITION
SEL	SELECT	Best possible quality, fully Winter prime pelts. Full bodied, fully covered skins, silky in appearance. Evenly covered with guard hair and heavy underwool. Fur and leather free of imperfections.
I	FIRST	Very good quality. Fully covered skins similar to SEL, but appearance is not as silky. Shorter guard hair. Fur and leather free of imperfections.
I-II	FIRST AND SECOND	May be slightly open. Even underwool which is not as heavy or dense as in SEL or I.

II	SECOND	<p>Fur and leather free of major defects.</p> <p>II HEAVY: Overall appearance of the pelt is dull and lacks luster. Pelt has very dense underwool but lacks coverage.</p> <p>II AVERAGE: Pelt has similar appearance as II HEAVY but has flatter underwool. Overprime pelts will have a very open appearance, especially on the flanks.</p>
SDG	SLIGHT DAMAGED	<p>SDG (Gd.): I quality skins that have major defects. I-II quality skins that have minor imperfections.</p> <p>SDG (Av.): II quality skins that have minor imperfections.</p>
CATALOGUE SECTION III		
CODE	GRADE	DEFINITION
DGD	DAMAGED	<p>DGD (Av.): Similar to SDG (Gd.), but with a higher degree of pronounced damage. A high percentage of damage as a result of taints.</p> <p>DGD (Pr.): Damaged skins that are of inferior quality, or badly damaged better quality skins. Very small percentage of uSable fur.</p>
III	THIRD	<p>Unprimed pelt. Underwool is underdeveloped and has minimum guard hair coverage. Blue leather. Used primarily as liners. Early caught - Fall catch.</p>
IV	FOURTH	<p>Fur lies very flat, texture very coarse. Black leathered. Limited commercial value. Very early caught or Summer skins.</p>



(a) very early (b) early (c) prime (d) late
PRIMING SEQUENCE OF THE MARTEN
TOP: WHOLE PELTS
BOTTOM: CROSS-SECTIONS OF FUR

Imperfections

Tears, holes, taints, matts, snare marks, clips, chews. Pine tar or Spruce gum is the major causes of the matt. The deeper the matt, the more severe the imperfection.

Blemishes

Small surface matts are not serious if they are not disturbed.