

SUNRISE

THEATRE
Phone OX 5-3013
Continuous Shows Daily

Thursday and Friday Feb. 1-2
Marlon Brando - Katy Jurado
in
"ONE EYED JACKS"
shows - 3:20 - 6:30 - 9:00

Saturday Feb. 3
Double Feature
Clark Gable in
"THE TALL MEN"
also
Ron Foster in
"SECRET OF DEEP
HARBOR"
Continuous shows starting
11:30 A.M.
Last Complete show 8:00 P.M.

Sunday and Monday Feb. 4-5
Jerry Lewis in
"THE ERRAND BOY"
shows Sun. - 1:20 - 3:20 - 5:15
9:05.

Tuesday & Wednesday Feb. 6-7
Brigitte Bardot in
"THE TRUTH"
Shows - 3:20 - 5:40 - 8:00

Thursday and Friday Feb. 8-9
Jimmy Clanton - Zasu Pitts
in
"TEENAGE MILLIONAIRE"
shows - 3:20 - 5:15 - 7:10 - 9:05

Don't Forget Wednesday at
10:30
It's "TWIST NIGHT"

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Pinebluff Mink Ranch Is Family Operation

Raising mink in the Sandhills seemed like a risky venture, but after nearly three years of successful operation, the Pine Needles Mink Ranch, just south of Pinebluff on No. 1 highway, is proof that it can be done.

With around 140 mink thriving in their individual cages under two long sheds on his lakeside property, Clyde A. Hunt says his project is beyond the experimental stage. These animals that are customarily associated with cold climates are producing good pelts which are sold regularly on the New York fur market.

Mr. Hunt started his mink operation with five animals, at Greensboro, a year or two before he moved to Pinebluff. He says he's still learning and that it takes

a lot of experience to be a fur breeder: preparing food, skinning the mink at "pelting" time (this is now going on), stretching the "green hide" on a long tapered board, rubbing it with a soft cloth to remove the skin oils, and numerous other techniques and operations used in the business.

Works in Greensboro

The Pine Needles Mink Ranch is a family operation. Mr. Hunt is continuing at his job in Greensboro—an inspector at the Western Electric plant—so he is gone all week. His wife, the former Selma McDonald, a native of Pinebluff, and their 12-year-old son, Carlton, keep the ranch operating when Mr. Hunt is not at home.

Mrs. Hunt drives to Laurinburg twice a week with a pickup truck for a load of food for the mink. Carlton helps prepare the food and feed and water them. And they keep a check on the many cages and their occupants, to see whether any of the animals have escaped, are sick or otherwise need attention.

The mink eat a scientifically prepared mixture of chicken and beef by-products, obtained from poultry plants and slaughter houses; horse meat; and a mink chow prepared commercially by feed companies, containing vitamins, antibiotics and other elements needed in the mink's diet. The food is ground up by the Hunts, fresh daily, and about a half pound is placed once a day on top of each of the individual wire cages in which the mink live. They eat it by reaching it through the wire. At the outside end of each cage (see photo of cage shed on this page) there is a water cup which is kept filled.

A big walk-in refrigerator which was recently set up near the mink sheds will be of much value, Mr. Hunt said, in storing food.

Visitors Welcome

Visitors are welcome at the Pine Needles mink ranch—except during the breeding season and when the "kits" are young, that is from March to June.

Mink breed once a year in March. The gestation period averages about 50 days and from one to 11 kits are born in late April or May.

When the young are in the cages with their mothers, it is very important, Mr. Hunt says, that the animals not be disturbed. If alarmed, the females sometimes kill their young. The kits are weaned at about six weeks. They grow fast and are full size at nine months.

At pelting time, Mr. Hunt kills and skins his own mink. With practice he is skillful enough to skin one in three to five minutes, stripping the skin off over the head like a nightshirt, without a break in it and keeping the whole skin intact. Then comes the stretching and rubbing and then a batch of skins are sent off to processors in New York who treat them to be sold as either "raw" or "dressed" pelts, the price for dressed skins running about \$3 per pelt higher than that of the raw.

Males More Valuable

Male pelts, because they are larger, sell for up to twice as much as comparable female pelts. Ordinary pelts ("culs") recently sold on the New York market at around \$22 for a dressed male and \$13 for a dressed female.

Prices in March or April will run about \$5 higher per skin, Mr. Hunt said, and prices on certain of the light color "mutation" skins can run much higher than that.

Mr. Hunt is a member of the Mutation Mink Breeders Association, a nation-wide organization that markets the skins for members in New York, reports on current market prices and offers other services. The Hunts raise several of the mutation "pastei" shades of mink that are marketed under the Mutation Breeders Association trademark, "Autumn Haze."

One of the fascinations of mink breeding is carrying on experiments in cross-breeding to obtain new color shades of fur that will please buyers. The lighter shades are by far the most popular now with buyers—the popularity being determined by the ladies who purchase the finished product in coat, stole, scarf or other garment.

Mrs. Hunt has a scarf, made from their own mink, which was seen in a fashion show at the Southern Pines Country Club last year. This and a number of finished furs, the Hunts are glad to display to visitors, as well as various novelty items that show the unusual uses to which small bits of mink fur are put—a bow tie, a corsage, tiara, a perky little hat with a veil as well as tiny fur cats and dogs made from the fur.



LIVELY—Handling a mink requires skill, quickness and an unceasing respect for the animal's viciousness that does not seem to diminish, even after generations of being raised in captivity. C. A. Hunt shows how it's done: a good grip on the tail by which the mink is pulled out of or lowered back into its cage. Note the heavy elkskin gauntlet gloves—a "must" if a handler wants to keep all of his fingers. Each glove has a flap on its back which the mink often bite instead of the part enclosing the handler's hand. Sometimes the animals' teeth penetrate the heavy leather. Mr. Hunt says he's never picked up an adult mink that hasn't bitten his gloves. (Pilot photo)



DENS AND CAGES—Carlton Hunt, 12-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Hunt of Pinebluff works daily in helping operate the family's Pine Needles Mink Ranch. Inside the long shed protecting the cages, he wears on his right hand one of the elk-skin gauntlets essential in handling mink. Under his hand is a brick that holds down a trap door in the top of a cage. His left hand rests on a box or "den" that opens into the inner end of each cage, in which the mink sleep or have their young. Sometimes a big, strong mink can push the trap door open, despite the weight of the brick. Several have escaped in this manner and a few have also gotten out of the wire fence enclosing the whole cage area, presumably returning to life in the wild. (Pilot photo)



MINKS' HOME—On either side of this center walkway down the middle of this sideless shed are dozens of cages, each containing a mink, suspended above the ground, at right angles to the center walk. This view shows a "den" or box for each mink, on the inner end of each cage. The roof is of plain sheet metal over the rafters and both sides and the ends are open, allowing plenty of air circulation. This is one of two such sheds at the Pine Needles Mink Ranch. (Pilot photo)

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