

Anti-Fur Activists Gearing Up

"Does your mommy own a fur coat? My mommy had her fur ~~cut~~ away," says a cute baby fur on a poster created by an anti-fur animal protection group.

The group, called "No Fur," was recently set up by Tokyo resident Megumi Yamano and ~~along~~ others with the intention of bringing to Japan the anti-fur movement that has been active in the U.S. and Britain.

The group claims that about 100 million animals worldwide are slaughtered for their fur every year, and that fur coats are an unnecessary luxury.

According to the Japan Fur Association, the fur market in Japan is worth 200 billion yen a year, with mink accounting for 30 percent of the total trade.

Most of the fur is imported from Scandinavian countries, the Soviet Union and the U.S. Practically all the mink in Japan comes from animals bred specially by the fur industry.

Fox, rabbit, beaver, sheep and squirrel fur are also used, with a large proportion of these animals specially bred for the purpose.

The group questions the morality of breeding animals in order to wear their skins.

Foxes, squirrels and beavers can only be caught in the wild, and some species like the red fox, are very few in number.

Valuable species of animals all over the world such as saibies and wolves are caught in traps and killed for their fur, the group maintains.

On Dec. 18 the No Fur group plans to set up a demonstration at Marajuku Station in Tokyo. Videos about animal protection are also being lent for free by the group.

A spokesman for the Japan Fur Association said that breeding animals for their fur is the same as breeding cows or pigs in order to eat their meat.

"Whether one wishes to wear fur or not is up to each individual to decide according to their needs. As long as it's socially acceptable and rare animals are not killed, it should be allowed," he said.

"If there's something wrong with the breeding methods, we're quite willing to improve them," he said.