Alien Invasion: The American Mink



## Introduction: Great Britain: 1929

## Origin: North America

## Uses: Fur Farming (primarily used for women’s’ coats, jackets, scarves)

## Consequences:

* Decrease in the proportion of Salmon in river systems
* Impact on aquatic animals (especially the Water Vole) and nesting birds.
* Depletion in the population of wild mink due to the escaping of domestic mink, as domestic mink are larger than the wild ones.
* Mink carry fleas and ticks which cause diseases. This disease is called TME (Transmissible Mink Encephalopathy) which caused a 60% mortality rate in Wisconsin in 1985.

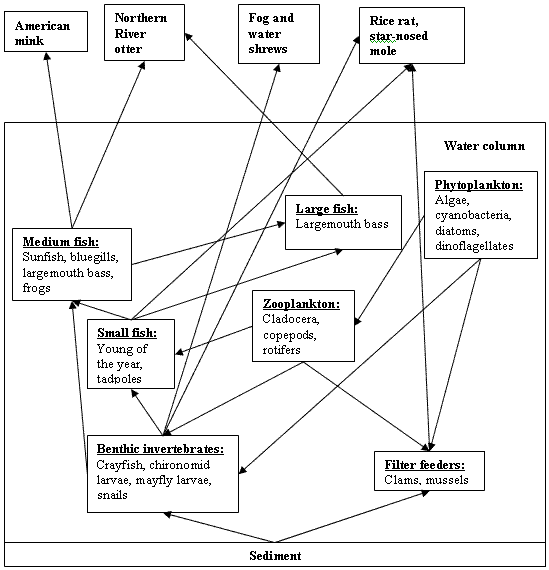
Decreases in the amount of animals have resulted in a decline in some economic activities, for example fin-fishing, game shooting, and poultry farming due to the predatory instincts of the American Mink. The population of Water Voles have declined by 95% over the last 50 years.

## Solutions:

* Culling the Mink to reduce the population, and therefore try to salvage the UKs native wildlife
* Allow the Mink to remain and the UKs native wildlife to decline.
* Improved farming regulations concerning the Mink as well as improving the fencing around the farms to reduce the number of Minks escaping.
* Lethal Trapping. These are suggested to be placed on riverbanks or floating banks, however this could also endanger otters.
* A suggestion has been to reintroduce the native European otter.

## Conclusion:

Whilst the American Mink has been seen to make an impact on the amount of fish, and aquatic mammals especially the water vole, I believe that the decrease in the population of these species would have occurred whether the American Species was an invasive species or not, because the as seen below the Otter is a predatory animal and has a similar diet to a Mink. The American Mink are normally round in waterways across Britain however, there have been occasions where they are found inland, this is dependent on the amount of adequate food available.



Resources:

<http://www.invasivespeciesscotland.org.uk/invasive_non_native_species/american_mink.asp>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_mink#Relationships_with_humans>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-12323300>

<http://www.lancashireinvasives.org/pages/9_american_mink>