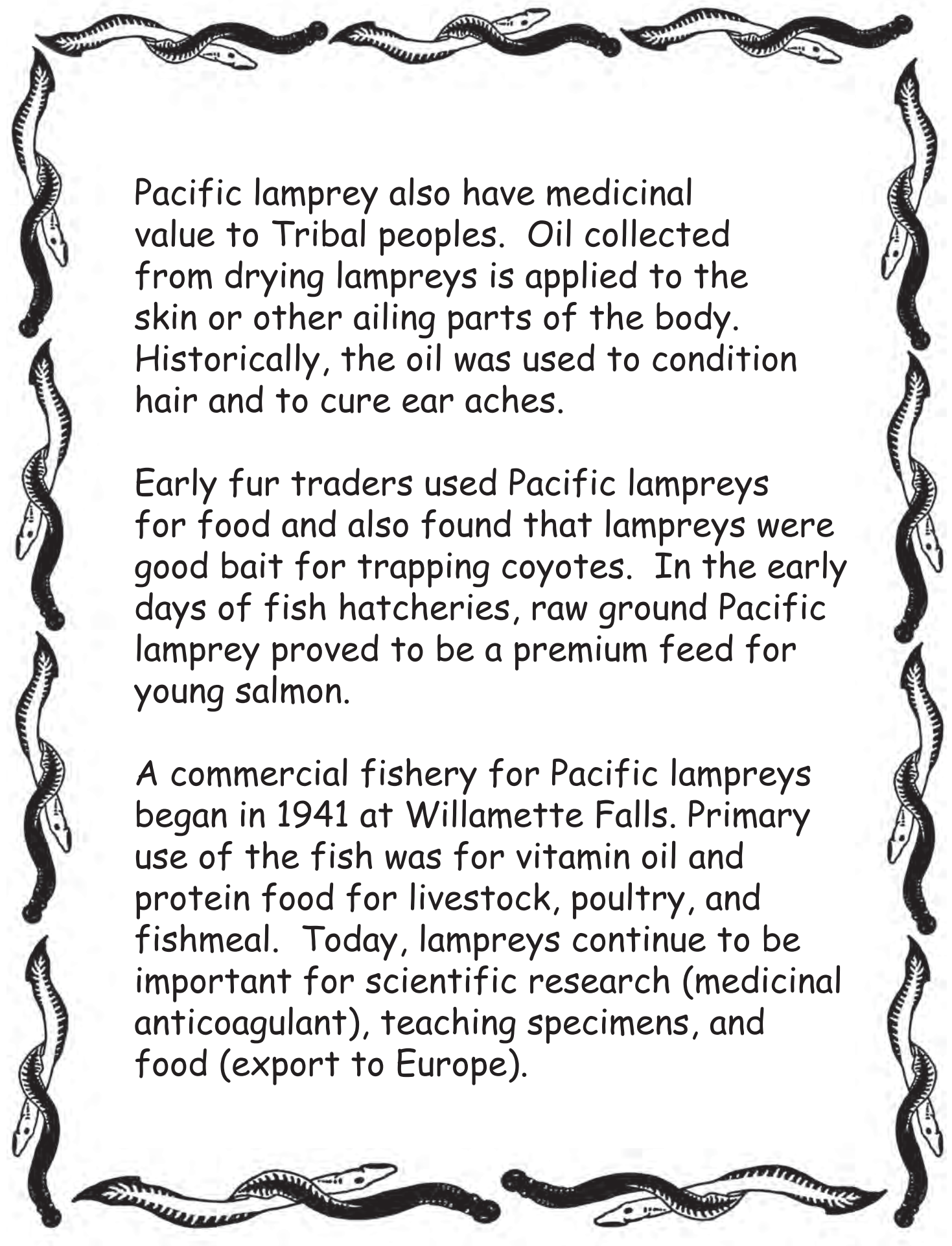


Cultural Significance

Pacific lampreys are one of the many religious and subsistence foods of the Native Americans in the mid-Columbia River Plateau. Although lampreys are called *ksuyas* or *asum* in the Sahaptin native tongue, many people refer to the Pacific lamprey as "eel." Fishing for lampreys is done by hand, dip net, or long pole and hook at sites where lampreys gather together, such as below falls or rapids.







Pacific lamprey also have medicinal value to Tribal peoples. Oil collected from drying lampreys is applied to the skin or other ailing parts of the body. Historically, the oil was used to condition hair and to cure ear aches.

Early fur traders used Pacific lampreys for food and also found that lampreys were good bait for trapping coyotes. In the early days of fish hatcheries, raw ground Pacific lamprey proved to be a premium feed for young salmon.

A commercial fishery for Pacific lampreys began in 1941 at Willamette Falls. Primary use of the fish was for vitamin oil and protein food for livestock, poultry, and fishmeal. Today, lampreys continue to be important for scientific research (medicinal anticoagulant), teaching specimens, and food (export to Europe).