

January 29, 1947

Memorandum to the Staff

Re: Summary of County Bounty Histories

The information below was compiled from county bounty records collected by District Game Managers. Final tabulation of county records was supplemented in several instances by data already on hand in our Game Division files.

From the time of the earliest known bounty in 1847 in Hillsdale county, county bounty systems in Michigan expended a total of \$545,569.61. The major species of predators - timber wolf, coyote, lynx, bobcat (wildcat), black bear, and fox - accounted for slightly less than half of this, or \$264,033.33. Minor species, including hawks, owls, weasel, woodchuck, rats, sparrows, renegade dogs, and miscellaneous unclassified species accounted for the remainder, or \$281,536.28. It was interesting to note that one county, Iosco, for several years has had a bounty on the muskrat.

Within recent years, the fox has been responsible for the expenditure of more county bounty funds than any other species. In the three years from 1944-1946, when many counties had a bounty on the fox, \$113,342.00 was paid on this animal. During the early years of the bounty, wolves, coyotes, lynx, and bobcats (usually referred to in the county records as "wildcats") accounted for the bulk of the money appropriated. The yearly expenditures of money on these predators have somewhat reflected their local population trends. However, economic conditions, particularly during war years, also affected numbers bountied. Opportunism on the part of influential persons in the county occasionally was responsible for a bounty on any one species. One county clerk in a northern county stated that a certain Township Supervisor once brought in a fox for payment, and after finding that the fox was not listed under animals on which bounties were paid, prevailed upon the Board of Supervisors to pass a separate resolution for a bounty so that he could bounty this animal.

Fraud in the administering of county bounties was rampant just as it has been in other bounty systems. Cases were noted where bountied animals thrown into refuse cans were retrieved and again presented for payment. The County Clerk in one southern county told how he once threw away a number of sparrow heads near the county courthouse and later discovered the same boys who bountied the birds picking them up so that they could be turned in for payment the second time. Importation was often evident. One county clerk in an upper peninsula county says he can remember when hawk and owl heads packed in salt were shipped in for payment especially from the Whitefish Bay country. Many county officials in counties with a higher fox bounty than the surrounding counties were strongly of the opinion that they were paying for foxes taken in these neighboring areas. One northern county eventually discontinued its bounty on sparrows because it found that children were bringing in small birds of many kinds as well as sparrows. The inability of many persons, including the bountying officials, to distinguish between bountied and unbountied species has probably resulted in the destruction of many valuable song and insectivorous birds.

A number of county officials in charge of administering the bounty expressed dissatisfaction with the system. Of the 38 counties with fox bounties in 1946, 18 officials believed the bounty has reduced fox populations in their counties, 7 thought it of little value, and 13 were either non-committal or could not be reached for comment. The majority of the officials contacted thus put themselves on record as favoring the bounty, but it would be interesting to obtain their personal reactions to the question if they were not committed to public support of the local system. Several of those contacted in these and non-bounty counties called attention to the inconvenience of administering the bounty, with its odors and handling of disagreeable heads, hides, etc.

The expenditure of \$545,569.61 by counties alone is a sizeable sum in any language. Yet, it is undoubtedly a conservative figure because the bounty data collected were incomplete in nearly all, if not all, counties. In some counties no data were available. Records have a habit of getting lost, and in a number of counties the older records were known to have been destroyed.

To the above figure of over a half million dollars can be added the bounty money expended by the state on its bounty system. From the year 1838, when bounties were first paid on wolves, the state paid out up to January, of 1947 the sum of approximately \$1,639,483.60. This figure is considered only approximate because it includes the sum in round numbers of \$1,500,000.00 which was known to have been paid between 1869 and 1944, plus the money expended on wolves between 1838 and 1869, and on wolves, coyotes, and bobcats (upper peninsula only), between 1945 and 1946, inclusive. Adding the county bounty total to that paid by the state we have a total overall figure of \$2,185,053.31 - well over two million dollars!

Despite this vast sum of money paid out in the history of the bounty system in Michigan, it would be difficult to prove that the bounty has controlled, or even materially affected, the population of any species. The timber wolf has decreased in numbers, but it is thought this was largely the result of its inability to withstand the encroachments of civilization, although the bounty may have accelerated this decrease. The majority of the other species have fluctuated in numbers throughout the years, but many have shown a general increase, apparently in spite of the bounty. At least one species, the coyote, has not only increased but has extended its range in the state.

The tables attached illustrate in figures the cost of the county bounty systems in Michigan. Table 1 gives a summarized history of each county, Table 2 a breakdown in the cost figures on the various species bountied, and Table 3 a breakdown of fox bounties during the three years from 1944 - 46.

D. F. Switzenberg

DFS/dg

Table I

BOUNTY HISTORY SUMMARY - COUNTY BOUNTIES

County	Species Bountied	Years County has had Bounty on any Species	Total Years	Total Amount Paid	Remarks
Alcona	Fox and coyote	1936-1946 (Coyote)	11	\$ 6,550.00	
Alger	Wolf, coyote, wildcat, crow, rats, owls, hawks, weasels, gophers, woodchucks, sparrows.	1885 (wolf) 1927 (misc.)	25	350.00	
Allegan	Fox, hawks, owls, weasel, rats, sparrows, "noxious animals"	1899 (sparrows) 1919 (misc.) 1944-46 (fox)	24	17,020.30	
Alpena	Coyote	1946	1		
Antrim	Fox	1944-46 (fox)	3	2,906.00	
Arethusa					
Baraga	Wolf, coyote, bobcat, lynx, fox, owls, hawks, weasel, rats sparrows, woodchuck	1885-1936 (ten species)	52	18,860.71	
Barry	Fox	1943-46 (fox)	4	4,875.00	
Bay					
Benzie	Coyote, fox	1939 (coyote) 1946 (fox)	8	4,517.00	
Berrien	Fox, hawks, owls, crows, spar- rows, rats, weasel, woodchuck.	1921 (misc.) 1946 (fox)	14	33,048.02	
Branch	Fox	1945-46 (fox)	2	704.00	
Calhoun	Fox	1943-46 (fox)	4	2,664.00	

County	Species Bountied	Years County has had Bounty on any Species	Total Years	Total Amount Paid	Remarks
Cass	Fox, sparrows, rats, woodchucks, crow, owls, hawk, weasel, unclassified	1915 (unclassified) 1946 (fox)	22	\$ 28,858.56	
Charlevoix	Fox	1944-46 (fox)	3	1,617.00	
Chibougan	Possibly fox, coyote, & crows	1918-32 (?)			
Crookewa	Fox, wolf, coyote, lynx, bobcat weasel, hawk, owl, rats, sparrow	1891 (wolf) 1934 (wolf)	43	22,811.94	
Clare	Coyote	1930-46 (coyote)	16	40.00	
Clinton	Fox, "dogs", rats, sparrows, crows, woodchuck, weasel.	1926 (misc.) 1935 (sparrows) 1944-46 (fox)	13	25,192.05	
Crawford					
Delta	Wolf, crow, rats, sparrows	1929 (3 species) 1931 (3 species) 1935-40 (sparrows)	12		
Dickinson	Wolf, bobcat, coyote	1895 (wolf) 1928 (wolf) 1925 (wolf) 1939 (3 species)	7	100.00+	
Eaton	Fox	1945-46 (fox)	2	2,889.00	
Emmet	Sparrows & crows?	1932?	?	No figure available	
Genesee	Sparrows	1913	1	No figure	
Gladwin	Fox?	1930 + ?		No record of payment	
Gogebic	Bobcat, wolf, lynx, sparrows, unclassified	1887-1932 (3 species)	46	36,235.12	
Grand Traverse	Fox, crow, sparrows	1933 (sparrows) 1937-38 (crow) 1944-45 (fox)	5	1,220.89	

County	Species Bountied	Years County has had Bounty on any Species	Total Years	Total Amount Paid	Remarks
Artistot	Fox, "dogs"	1935-38 (crows) 1945-46 (fox)	6	\$ 1,860.00	dogs "worrying" sheep subj to bounty
Billsdale	Fox, wolf, sparrow, rats, "noxious birds and animals"	1847-48, 1851-5, 1878, 1930-1 (wolf) 1945-46 (fox)	36	18,918.97	
Boughton	Wolf, bobcat, lynx, fox, owls, hawks, weasel	1903 (misc.) 1918 (misc.)	17	21,262.00	
Buron	Coyote, crow	1935 (crow) 1946 (coyote)	17	1,157.40	
Forham	Fox, sparrows, rats, misc. bounties	1920-25 (misc.) 1942-46 (fox) 1927-32 (rats) 1937-39 (rats)	19	32,838.93	
Govia	Fox	1942-46 (fox)	5	5,144.00	
Lonco	Muskrat	1946 & prior years	1 +		
Man	Lynx, wolf, coyote, bobcat, fox, weasel, hawks, owls	1887 (wolf) 1921 (misc.) 1936-42 (3 species)	42	30,535.00	
Orabella	Fox	1944-46 (fox)	3	3,740.00	
Packson	Fox	1945-46 (fox)	2	1,728.00	
Putnam	Fox	1943-46 (fox)	4	7,715.00	
Ralkaska	Fox	1945-46 (fox)	2	528.00	
Sept	Fox	1943-46 (fox)	4	5,278.00	
Shesnaw	Bobcat, coyote, wolf, lynx, fox, owls, hawks, weasel, rats, crows, sparrows, woodchucks	1897-1924 (5 species)	28	13,999.74	
Take					

County	Species Bountied	Years County has had Bounty on any Species	Total Years	Total Amount Paid	Remarks
Bay View	Fox	1945-46 (fox)	2	\$ 775.00	
Calumet	Fox	1944-46 (fox)	3	1,837.00	
Chippewa	Fox, wolf, sparrows, rats	1895 (wolf) & succeeding yrs to 1946 on other species	14	4,921.62	
Livingston	Fox	1939-46	8	4,490.00	
Manitowish	Wolf, coyote, lynx, bobcat, fox, hawks, weasel, rats, sparrows	1892 (wolf) 1931 (misc.) 1935 (2 species)	38	16,791.53	
Marathon	Wolf, coyote, lynx, bobcat, fox, cubs, hawks, crow, weasel woodchuck	1885 (wolf)-1921	37	3,441.25	
Menominee					
Menominee					
Neenah	Coyote, wildcat, wolf, lynx	1934?	?		Reported from re- port by W.E. Bergh Aug. 31, 1934
Shawano	Fox, rats, sparrows, wood- chuck	1921-24, 1927-30 (species, 3) 1944-46 (fox)	11	3,255.38	
Winnebago	Fox, sparrows, rats	1943-45 (fox)	3	3,127.00	
Manitowish	Fox, wildcat (bobcat) crows, "gophers", hawk, owl, rats, sparrows, weasel	1924-29 (fox) 1923 + (8 species)	7	170.00	
Winnebago	Lynx, bobcat	1893-1913 (2 species)	16	656.00	
Winnebago	Black bear	1939-40 (bear)	2	60.00	
Manitowish	"noxious" birds and animals	1918-19	2	306.00	

County	Species Countied	Years County has had Bounty on any Species	Total Years	Total Amount Paid	Remarks
Montcalm	Fox	1943-46 (fox)	4	\$ 6,617.00	
Montmorency					
Muskegon	Fox, sparrows, rats, crow, woodchuck, hawks, owls, weasel	1914-33 (4 species)	20	21,060.34	
Newaygo	Fox, sparrows, weasel, wood- chuck, crow, rats	1926-27 (rats) 1944-46 (fox) 1931, 1933-34 (sparrows) 1939-40 (weasel & fox)	9	5,346.36	
Oakland	Fox	1944-46	3	3,969.50	
Oceana	Rats, sparrows	1926-34 (2 species)	9	5,481.76	
Ogemaw	Sparrows, crow, woodchuck	1938-46 (3 species)	9		
Ontonagon	Lynx, bobcat, wolf, coyote, fox, owls, hawks, weasel, sparrows, woodchuck, unclassified	1856-1921 (10 species) 1938-44 (coyote)	73	44,316.04	
Oscoda	Fox, bobcat, rats, sparrows	1913-14 (bobcat) 1930-31 & 1933 (2 species) 1941-42 (fox)	7	1,374.72	
Oscoda	Coyote, crow	1938 (2 species) 1944 (coyote)	7	994.10	
Otsego					
Ottawa	Fox	1943-46 (fox)	4	2,035.00	
Presque Isle	Woodchuck, crow, owls, hawks rats	1943-1945, & 1946 (4 species)	3	478.00	
Roscommon					
Saginaw	Fox	1946	1	346.00	

County	Species Bountied	Years County has had Bounty on any Species	Total Years	Total Amount Paid	Remarks
Sanilac	Fox, sparrow, rats	1912 & 1946	2	\$ 258.00	
Schoolcraft	Lynx, wolf, bobcat fox, hawks	1893 (wolf) 1920 (4 species)	30	13,468.74	
Shiawassee	Fox	1944-46 (fox)	3	2,859.00	
St. Clair	Fox	1946 (fox)	1	96.00	
St. Joseph	Fox	1942-46 (fox)	5	9,420.00	
Tuscola	Fox	1945-46 (fox)	2	1,357.00	
Van Buren	Fox, sparrows, rats, wood- chuck, weasel, crow, hawks, owls	1900-02 (sparrow) 1944-46 (fox) 1918-20 (sparrow) 1921-32 (misc.)	21	29,614.09	
Washtenaw	Fox	1945-46	2	1,881.00	
Wayne					
Wexford					
TOTALS				\$545,569.61	

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TABLE 2

<u>Major Species</u>		<u>Minor Species</u>
Fox	\$121,226.75	Including hawks, owls, weasel, woodchuck, rats, sparrows, muskrat, renegade dogs, and unclassified miscellaneous species.
Timber Wolf	115,788.58	
Coyote	10,380.00	
Lynx	8,973.00	
Wildcat (bobcat)	7,605.00	
Black Bear	60.00	
	<u>\$264,033.33</u>	<u>\$281,536.28</u>

TABLE 3

Fox Bounties 1944-1946 (3 years)

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. Taken</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>	<u>No. Counties with Bounties</u>
1944	6,081	\$23,500.00	27
1945	11,083	39,970.00	36
1946	<u>13,696</u>	<u>50,372.00</u>	<u>38</u>
	30,860	\$113,842.00	