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FREEING THE RANGE COUNTRY
OF PREDATORY WILD ANIMALS

Uncle Sam maintains an army of approximately 350 professional hunters who by policing the western range country protect many million dollars' worth of live stock from damage and death by predatory animals. The Bureau of Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture, estimates that annual losses of from \$20,000,000 to \$30,000,000 a year were heretofore sustained through the slaughter of domestic stock by mountain lions, bears, wolves, coyotes, and other wild beasts which prey on horses, cattle, sheep, and swine. The average destruction by predatory animals is estimated to be \$1,000 worth of live stock annually for each wolf and mountain lion, \$500 worth for each stock-killing bear, and \$50 worth of damage by each coyote and bobcat. The Government hunters utilize every possible means - guns, traps, poisons, and the like - to decrease the numbers of range rascals which ravage domestic herds and flocks. They police the Rocky Mountain States from Washington to Texas, and are constantly in receipt of calls from regions where predatory depredations occur.

Three Principal Methods of Destruction

With the adoption of the hunter service, three methods of destroying predatory animals were inaugurated - shooting, trapping, and poisoning. During the first year 424 wolves, 9 mountain lions, 11,890 coyotes, and 1,564 bobcats were exterminated. Extensive activities were also devoted to the matter of suppressing rabies in the range country. An outbreak of rabies in Nevada was ultimately largely suppressed.

Illustrative of the damage done by wild beasts, in Colorado a single wolf killed nearly \$3,000 worth of cattle in one year. In Texas two wolves killed 72 sheep, valued at \$9 each, during a period of two weeks. One wolf in New Mexico killed 25 head of cattle in two months, while another killed 150 cattle valued at about \$5,000 during a six months' period.

In Wyoming two male wolves were killed which during one month had destroyed 150 sheep and 7 colts. Another pair were reported to have killed about \$4,000 worth of stock during the year preceding their capture. The county agricultural

agent at Coalville, Utah, reported that wolves had killed 20 percent of the year's calf crop in his section. A wolf captured in New Mexico was known to have killed during the preceding five months 20 yearling steers, 9 calves, one cow, 15 sheep, and a valuable sheep dog.

After personal investigation during a recent year, the President of the State Agricultural College of New Mexico reported that 34,350 cattle, 155,000 sheep, and 850 horses are killed annually by predatory animals in that State, these losses amounting to \$2,715,250 and involving the sacrifice of 16,000,000 pounds of meat and approximately 1,320,000 pounds of wool,

At the present time the Government hunters police 13 districts, each with a trained inspector in charge, which cover Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, and South Dakota, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. The hunters of the various districts are paid in part from the Federal Treasury and in part from cooperative funds and moneys supplied by State appropriations, and from contributions from live-stock organizations and individuals.

Methods Have Been Greatly Improved.

Study and experimentation have resulted in great improvement in the methods and practice employed in eradicating predatory animals. The poisoning campaigns have increased in number, and have been more effectively organized each succeeding year. Their success has been such that in many areas stock growers are urging their application during the appropriate season. These campaigns have been followed by a marked decrease in the number of coyotes in the sections poisoned, and a corresponding decrease in the loss of sheep, cattle, pigs, colts, and poultry. Reports from stockmen indicate that on many ranges and lambing grounds the former heavy annual losses have become negligible, or have been entirely eliminated.

During a recent five-year period a total of 128,513 dangerous rogues of the range have been killed and skins secured. This enormous bag consists of 109,346 coyotes, 15,374 bobcats and lynxes, 2,936 wolves, 540 mountain lions and 317 bears. In addition, coyotes numbering more than the above total were killed by the organized poisoning campaigns. Estimates based on information supplied during 1920 by farmers and stockmen indicate that the destruction of approximately 50,000 predatory animals under the direction of the Biological Survey resulted in the saving of live stock for the year valued at about \$6,000,000, calculated on prices prevailing during that period. During a period of 5 years the sales of skins taken by Federal hunters totaled \$240,423.63, and that amount was turned in to the United States Treasury.