



**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
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**FEDERAL HUNTER EXPOSES FRAUD**  
**IN CLAIMS FOR BOBCAT BOUNTIES**

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Individuals who have been defrauding several counties in eastern Washington by unlawfully collecting bounty money have been exposed recently as a result of efforts by one of the predatory-animal hunters of the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Several counties in the State pay bounties of \$5 on bobcats and \$1 on coyotes on presentation of the pelts to the proper county official, who removes the right front foot when he allows the bounty. The claimant retains the skin.

An auditor of Whitman County, Wash., asked the Biological Survey hunter how many bobcats he usually caught in the county in a season's work. The hunter replied that ordinarily he did not take more than four or five in three seasons. The auditor intimated that perhaps the Federal hunter was not fully acquainted with local conditions, because that day a man had presented for bounty 34 bobcats and had declared on affidavit that he had caught them in the immediate vicinity within a period of 30 days. The matter was then reported to the sheriff, who soon apprehended the man. It was found that he had collected a total of \$652 in bounties on 129 bobcats and 7 coyotes and also that most of the skins presented as bobcats were of small ocelots, animals of the far Southwest, and of little southern wildcats, also taken outside the State.

Not long after this incident, another bounty hunter entered the State and presented 35 bobcats for bounty in Pend Oreille County. He then went to Stevens County and collected bounty on 48 more. He then collected on 30 more in Chelan County and later on 40 in Kittitas County. The county officials became suspicious, started an investigation, and succeeded in having the man arrested at Spokane. They found 75 bobcats and a sack containing 356 extra bobcat feet in his car. Close examination revealed that feet had been sewed onto some of the skins. The Biological Survey learned that this same man had appeared before the Whitman County Game Commission recently and had strongly condemned the Biological Survey's paid-hunter method of predatory-animal control.

The bounty system of encouraging the capture of wild animals has often led to fraud, say officials of the Biological Survey, who characterize the Washington cases as particularly pernicious examples. Fortunately the arrest of these fraudulent bounty hunters has broken up the activities of thieves in the State and the Biological Survey believes it should go far to demonstrate some of the serious disadvantages of the bounty system as an agency in predatory-animal control.

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