

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE

ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

April 3, 1978

Rep. John L. Martin  
Chairman, Legislative Council  
c/o Speaker's Office  
State House  
Augusta, Maine 04330

Dear Representative Martin:

In accordance with House Paper 1709, which ordered the Committee to study the problems and dangers posed by the coyote populations in Maine, we enclose herein the final report of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Senator Andrew Redmond

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Representative Charles Dow

enclosures  
JB/sy,

REPORT OF THE JOINT STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

STUDY ON COYOTE POPULATIONS  
IN MAINE  
H.P. 1709

Senate

Andrew Redmond  
Ronald E. Usher  
Charles P. Pray

House

Charles G. Dow  
Kenneth A. Mills  
Robert A. MacEachern  
Kenneth E. Tozier  
Richard E. McKean  
John H. Rollins  
Philip F. Peterson  
Robert J. Gillis, Jr.  
John E. Masterman  
David S. Paul

Legislative Assistant

John Bailey

March 20, 1978

## INTRODUCTION

The Eastern Coyote arrived in Maine perhaps as early as the 1930's. In the last few years, however, the coyote population has increased dramatically. Many sportsmen feel that coyotes are a real threat to Maine's deer herd. Because of this the 108th Legislature charged the Joint Standing Committee on Fisheries and Wildlife to study the coyote situation and assess the problems and dangers posed by coyote populations, and to make recommendations concerning possible solutions.

On March 2, 1978 the Committee held a work session on coyotes, and the following people were invited to participate:

Robert Boettger, Chief of Wildlife Division

Henry Hilton, Assistant Fur Research Project Leader

Vern Moulton, Warden Lieutenant

Rodney Sirois, District Warden, St. Pamphile, P.Q.

Beth Parks, Graduate Student, University of Maine, Orono

Dr. Voit Richens, Acting Leader, Maine - Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, University of Maine, Orono

Existing Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife activities concerning the coyote problem were found to be concentrated in the following areas:

1. Species management planning. This plan acknowledges that it would be very difficult to completely eradicate the coyote, but encourages increased harvesting of the species. The harvest goal is 1,500 per year by 1990.

2. Assessing populations. Coyotes now number somewhere in the thousands in Maine.

3. Conducting seminars on coyote trapping. An expert has been brought in from the West to help trappers learn how to trap coyotes. Trapping success has increased, and between October and December of 1977 390 coyotes were tagged.

4. Seeking better pelt markets. Currently pelts bring about \$45.

5. Controlling local problem spots. Department and other personnel are used to control coyotes in local problems areas, particularly deer wintering yards. These control measures aren't very successful because of the extensive cover available, and the wariness of coyotes. Also sometimes trappers object to wardens killing or trapping coyotes, because it may cut into their supply. The Department may give trappers permission to trap coyotes after February 15 in local problem areas.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Coyotes are very effective killers, and can definitely down a healthy deer. Coyote and bobcats appear incompatible, and coyote may be replacing bobcats as primary predators. Coyotes are omnivorous, but deer are probably their primary food during the winter. The illegal deer kill reported to wardens for 1977 included 249 from dogs, 20 from bobcats, and 39 from others, including coyotes. This report definitely does not include all kills, especially for coyotes, as coyote populations are highest in areas away from settlements. The true number of deer killed by coyotes is not known.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee makes the following recommendations:

The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife should get improved information on the number and distribution of coyotes in Maine. In particular they should get better information on the number of deer killed by coyotes.

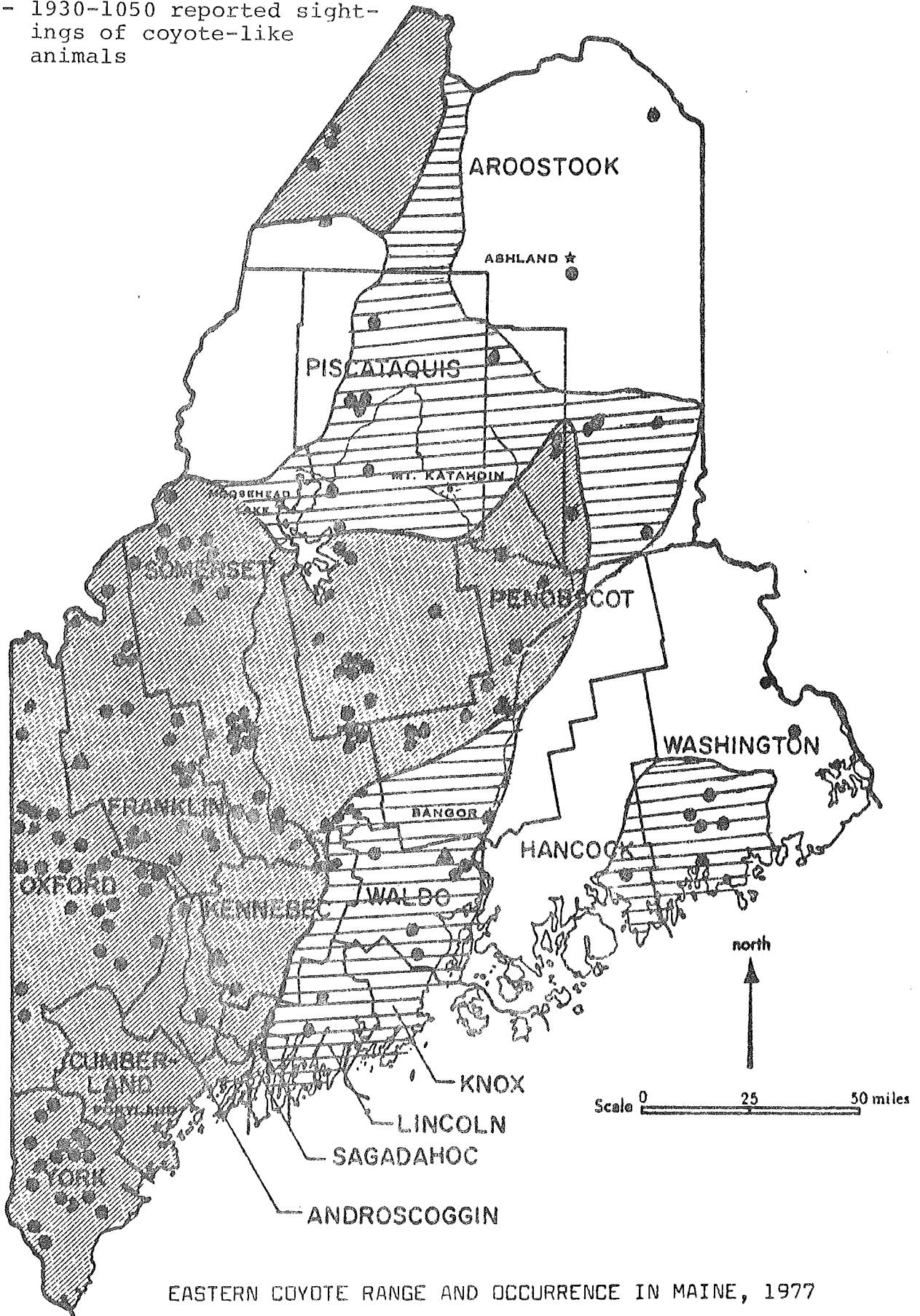
The Department should exercise more vigorously the authority of 12 MRSA § 2354, sub-§ 10 that states:

"The commissioner may cause department personnel to take coyotes at any time and in any manner he may prescribe."

The Department should continue other practical coyote control measures.

Key

- //// - range up to 1973
- ≡ - additional range since 1973
- - identified coyote carcasses
- ▲ - 1930-1950 reported sightings of coyote-like animals



EASTERN COYOTE RANGE AND OCCURRENCE IN MAINE, 1977