

**‘OUR SOCIETY LACKS CONSISTENTLY DEFINED ATTITUDES
TOWARDS THE BLACK BEAR’:**

THE HISTORY OF BLACK BEAR HUNTING AND MANAGEMENT IN ONTARIO,

1912-1987

by

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ABSTRACT

What kind of animal was a black bear? Were black bears primarily pests, pets, furbearers or game animals? Farmers, conservationists, tourists, trappers, and hunters in early twentieth-century Ontario could not agree. Even as the century progressed, ideas about bears remained twisted and there was often very little consensus about what the animal represented. These varying perceptions complicated the efforts of the provincial Department of Game and Fisheries and its successor agencies, the Department of Lands and Forests and the Ministry of Natural Resources, to develop coherent bear management policies. Perceptions about black bears often conflicted and competed with one another and at no one time did they have a single meaning in Ontario. The image of Ontario's black bears has been continuously negotiated as human values, attitudes, and policies have changed over time. As a result, because of various and often competing perspectives, the province's bear management program, for most of the twentieth century, was very loose and haphazard because the animal had never been uniformly defined or valued. Examining the history of these ambiguous viewpoints towards the black bear in Ontario provides us with a snapshot of how culture intersects with our natural resources and may pose challenges for management.

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Introduction

Lou had an unexpected encounter with the wild. When the Toronto-based archivist travelled to a northern Ontario cottage to catalogue donated material, she found herself charged with caring for an unlikely pet, a black bear that had lived on the property for years. Over a short period of time, fear of the wilderness creature gave way to love, and Lou soon found herself involved in a complicated, and even carnal, relationship with the bear. Elsewhere in northern Ontario, five-year old Anna witnessed a vicious assault by a black bear on her family's campsite. The family had done nothing to provoke the attack, yet Anna and her younger brother found themselves orphaned, fending for themselves in the Canadian wilderness.

Both of these stories are products of human imagination. Marian Engel prompted some controversy with her portrayal of sexual relations between Lou and a black bear in her 1976 novel, *Bear*. Claire Cameron's account of an attack in her 2014 novel, *The Bear*, was inspired by an actual bear encounter that circulated as a story through Algonquin Park when she was an outward bound guide in the 1990s. She imagined the experience of that attack for her readers in graphic and unsettling detail. For each novelist, the black bear is less a real creature than an opportunity to explore in fiction the complicated human connection to wildlife. In doing so, each novelist seeks to draw on images of the black bear that will resonate with readers. Engel's bear is wild and unpredictable yet almost human, Cameron's bear is wild and unpredictable, with lethal consequences.

In drawing on popular images of the black bear, Engel and Cameron give their fictional explorations of the human condition great power. Our images of bears have other consequences. By exploring the human management and regulation of black bears in Ontario, we can better understand how the stories and attitudes we have about non-human nature can have real consequences for management. Bears provide an intriguing point of entry for such an exploration for the very reasons that Engel and Cameron understood – we have often seen bears as both wild and dangerous, and yet somehow closer to humans than other wilderness creatures. Historian Jon T. Coleman points out that bears’ eyes face forward, allowing humans and bears to look at one another eye to eye. Like humans, bears can stand up and be mobile on two legs, and they are omnivores, capable of ingesting almost anything. Perhaps most creepily, Coleman discusses how “hunters marvelled at the eerie resemblance between a small skinned bear and a dead human.”¹ As a result, humans have had a complicated relationship with their wild counterpart. As German author Bernd Brunner has written, our forebears simultaneously “venerated, killed, caressed, tortured, nurtured, ate, respected, and despised” bears.² How these complicated and often contradictory attitudes shaped decisions about the management and regulation of relations between humans and bears in one particular jurisdiction – the Canadian province of Ontario, home to the third largest population of bears in North America -- forms the subject of this dissertation.

Bears are Not Human

¹ Jon T. Coleman, *Here Lies Hugh Glass; A Mountain Man, a Bear, and the Rise of the American Nation* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012), 99.

² Bernd Brunner, *Bears: A Brief History*, trans. Lori Lantz (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 5.

Black bears are not human nor are they just human symbols. They are animals apart from us, whose history, nature and behaviour we have begun to try to understand. The American black bear (*Ursus americanus*) is a member of the Ursidae family, as its Latin name suggests, a genus that originated as part of the Canidae family, approximately twenty-five million years ago.³ During the Ice Age, black bears roamed the forests of the contemporary southern United States and Mexico because the rest of the continent was buried beneath vast swaths of ice and snow. As the ice receded and habitable areas in the interior opened up, black bears pushed further into central North America and modern-day Canada.⁴ As human populations expanded and grew, the range of the bear receded. Nevertheless, in Canada today, the black bear *still* occupies about 85% percent of its historical range. Because the American black bear does well in almost any temperate or boreal climate region, provided there is proper habitat and food sources, it also occupies a wide range of geographic areas in North America in general, ranging as far north as Alaska and as far south as northern Mexico.⁵

In the wilderness, a typical adult male black bear weighs between 120 to 280 kilograms (265-617 pounds), ranging in length from 130 to 190 centimetres (51-75 inches) from the tip of the snout to the end of the tail. Adult females generally are about one-third smaller, weighing between 45 to 182 kilograms (100-400 pounds) and measuring between 110 to 170 centimetres in length. The typical lifespan of black bear in the wild is twenty years but some individuals in un hunted areas have lived for more than

³ George B. Kolenosky and Stewart M. Strathearn, "Black Bear" in *Wild Furbearer Management and Conservation in North America* (Toronto: Queen's Printer, 1999), 443.

⁴ Taylor, 1-7.

⁵ Paul Shepard and Barry Sanders, *The Sacred Paw: The Bear in Nature, Myth, and Literature* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1985), 35.

thirty years.⁶ Although their colour can vary across the continent, in Ontario black bears are usually black, except for a brownish muzzle, and a distinctive white V-shape across the throat or chest. They also range in colour depending on location. East of the Mississippi River and towards the Rocky Mountains black bears can have coats ranging from brown, cinnamon, or even blonde.⁷ A unique variant, the Kermode or spirit bear, has a beautiful white coat. It is indigenous to the coastal rainforests on Princess Royal Island and a few other locations in British Columbia.⁸

A year in the life of an American black bear revolves around denning and cub production in the winter months and feeding between the spring and fall seasons. Even today, scientists are still fascinated by denning, which is regarded by some as a physiological marvel. During hibernation, bears do not eat or drink, and eliminative bodily functions temporarily cease. Unlike other hibernating animals, bears are able to recycle their production of urea into carbon dioxide, water, and ammonia.⁹ Most cubs are born between late December and early February, while the mother bear is still hibernating. The mother bear generally begins giving birth sometimes between her third and fifth year, delivering one to four cubs every two or more years.¹⁰ Scientists used to believe that bears had one of the lowest reproduction cycles of any land mammal in North

⁶ Kevin Van Tighem, *Bears: Without Fear* (Victoria, BC: Rocky Mountain Books, 2013), 122.

⁷ Kolenosky and Strathearn, 443.

⁸ Van Tighem, 126-127.

⁹ Kolenosky and Strathearn, 444.

¹⁰ Van Tighem, 122.

America, but new research by biologists challenges this view, since they found that black bears can continue to reproduce successfully into their mid-twenties.¹¹

Feeding takes up the most significant proportion of time in the lifecycle of black bears. While black bears are omnivores, the overwhelming majority of their diet consists of plant matter.¹² During the summer months, they eat soft mast crops such as blueberries and raspberries, high-energy food sources that allow them to gain weight for hibernation. When insect populations erupt, bears will gorge themselves; Dave Taylor has shown, in one study, that some black bears ate 25,000 caterpillars a day.¹³ As fall nears, black bears turn their attention towards hard-mast crops such as nuts and acorns. It is sometimes easy to forget that black bears are also predators; in the spring following hibernation when other food sources are meagre, black bears hunt and kill other animals, particularly moose calves and deer fawns. The attacks on humans that interest Claire Cameron and capture the popular imagination are quite rare, although fatal instances remind us of the bear's predatory nature.¹⁴

Tracking the History of Humans and Animals

This dissertation is informed by broader historiographical themes that include wildlife management, sport hunting, and the burgeoning histories of human-animal relationships that go beyond questions of management or hunting. In thinking about

¹¹ Kolensoky and Stratheran, 446 and Hank Hristienko and John E. McDonald Jr, "Going into the 21st Century: A Perspective on Trends and Controversies in the Management of the American Black Bear," *Ursus*, vol. 18, 1 (2007), 78.

¹² Taylor, 68; Stephen Herrero et al., "Fatal Attacks by American Black Bear on People: 1900-2009," *Journal of Wildlife Management* 75, 3 (April 2011), 596.

¹³ Taylor, 72.

¹⁴ Stephen Herrero et al., "Fatal Attacks by American Black Bear on People: 1900-2009," *Journal of Wildlife Management* 75, 3 (April 2011), 596-603.

humans and animals, some scholars have focused on the question of wildlife management. In recent decades, the history of conservation efforts has shifted from a focus on top-down government policy-making, to a consideration of looking at policy from the bottom up and non-governmental management regimes. The history of hunting represents another traditional approach to the study of human- animal relations. Early works tied hunting to the story of conservation policy, but have given way to studies that analyse hunting in the context of broader social and cultural change. A third approach to human-animal relations, influenced by the advent of animal studies, has scholars examining the varied ways in which human societies conceive of animals.

One of the first Canadian works to be considered as an environmental history was Janet Foster's, *Working for Wildlife*.¹⁵ Originally published in 1978 and currently in its second edition, Foster's work traced the development of Canada's wildlife management policies from 1885 to 1922, crediting a cadre of civil servants in the federal government with fostering a concern for wildlife conservation in the country.¹⁶ While wildlife is important to her study, Foster's attention is fixated upon a creature that Farelly Mowat

¹⁵ Many have defensibly argued that Foster's work was the first of its kind to bring issues of wildlife management and hunting into the vantage point of Canadian historians, but was she really the first to look at the origins of Canada's conservation movement? In Arthur Ray's 1974 study, *Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Role as Hunters, Trappers and the Middlemen in the Lands Southwest of Hudson Bay, 1660-1870, 198-200*. Ray presents some interesting insights on the antecedents of Canada's conservation movement. In the latter portion of the book, Ray discusses how the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) Governor, George Simpson, vigorously tried to enforce new mechanisms upon the First Nations traders in order to secure long-term viability for the company. Many of these initiatives included banning the use of steel traps, prohibiting the trapping of endangered species for periods of one or more years, and stopping the practice of taking furs out of season. Even though much of Simpson's initiatives never came to bear fruit, the early seeds of Canada's conservation movement were germinated on the shores of Hudson Bay in the 1820s.

¹⁶ Janet Foster, *Working for Wildlife: The Beginning of Preservation in Canada*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 4.

referred to as *homo bureaucrat*.¹⁷ Although her state-centred work is considered by many to be a benchmark in the field, her predominant focus on white men such as James Harkin and Gordon Hewitt has netted her some criticism in recent years.¹⁸ Building where Foster's work left off, Environment Canada commissioned J. Alexander Burnett in 1996 to finish the history of the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS). In *A Passion for Wildlife*, he continues by approaching the issues of wildlife management and conservation from a state centred perspective. He venerates the policymaking bureaucrats in the CWS as “unsung Canadian heroes.”¹⁹ Both Foster and Burnett, then, lionize the contributions of the federal government while overlooking those made by members of the regular citizenry, including First Nations peoples and rural residents.

Pushing back against some of these state-centred, top-down accounts, John Sandlos oriented his work further away from the bureaucracy by focusing on First Nations and conservation in *Hunters at the Margin*. In it, he counters the work by Foster and Burnett by arguing that part of the Canadian government's rationale behind its wildlife conservation policies in the north was to “assert unconditional authority over the traditional hunting cultures of the Dene and Inuit.”²⁰ Viewing these regulations as paternalistic and designed to impinge upon Native autonomy and curtail traditional culture, he takes aim at *Working for Wildlife* and *A Passion for Wildlife* by charging that “the history of wildlife conservation in Canada is more complex than [these] overly

¹⁷ Farley Mowat, *Never Cry Wolf* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963; reprint, 1992), vi.

¹⁸ Historians such as John Sandlos have taken issue with Foster's analysis and will be examined later in this section.

¹⁹ J. Alexander Burnett, *A Passion for Wildlife: The History of the Canadian Wildlife Service* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2002), x.

²⁰ John Sandlos, *Hunters at the Margin: Native People and Wildlife Conservation in the Northwest Territories* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 8.

laudatory interpretations” and calls for a more expanded understanding of First Nations and Inuit peoples in the conservation process.²¹ Sandlos is not without critique. While he is interested in studying the local impact of government policy on the ground, *Hunters at the Margin* is still very much an account that is focused on the federal government’s role in the construction of wildlife management.

One of the longstanding themes in the literature on wildlife management in Canada is the issue of conflict between the bureaucratic organizations, that are often the focus of accounts, and the individuals on the ground. In his article, “Rationality and Rationalization in Canadian National Parks Predator Policy” Alan MacEachern examines the evolving and changing attitudes in the early twentieth century towards predatory animals in Canada’s National Parks system. He argues that within these sanctuaries, wolves and coyotes were treated with contempt through a vigorous program of eradication, in order to protect the more desirous creatures such as deer and mountain sheep.²² As science slowly vindicated predatory animals, attitudes were slow to change in the Parks. For MacEachern, “regardless of how official predator policy changed in Ottawa, within the parks themselves entrenched attitudes about predators remained,” as wardens still vilified the animals and viewed them as a source of supplemental income through the bounty program.²³ Even though Ottawa’s bureau chiefs may have readily adopted the changing attitudes towards predators, this position was not wholeheartedly

²¹ Sandlos, 10.

²² Alan MacEachern, “Rationality and Rationalization in Canadian National Parks Predator Policy” in *Consuming Canada: Readings in Environmental History*, ed. Chad and Pam Gaffield (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1995), 198.

²³ *Ibid.*, 199.

accepted by the wardens on the ground whose perceptions of predators had been shaped by emotional and financial considerations.

In *States of Nature*, Tina Loo combines a state-centered view of policy formation but also devotes considerable attention to non-government figures, including hunters and members of the general public. Loo maintains a balanced approach to the question of non-state actors and policy. Her findings are critical to my study because she recognizes that the formation of wildlife policy can never be detached from human interest. Despite efforts by biologists and wildlife managers to remain objective, she argues that “policy decisions have been as much matters of sociology as they are of biology, of emotion as much as intellect.”²⁴ Therefore, the animals with which we coexist cannot be controlled or abstracted. Rather they must be placed in the wider process of local community development. It is impossible to approach our wildlife from a compartmentalized human perspective because no matter what we do, our interests will always become entangled with policy. The formation and construction of wildlife policy does not occur in a bureaucratic vacuum. As a result, the history of wildlife management must be an encompassing narrative that reveals how various perspectives throughout a given locale cooperated and competed to develop and influence policy or management strategies.

Karen Jones brilliantly demonstrates how non-governmental forces can influence policy in her article about Farley Mowat’s book *Never Cry Wolf*. In it she examines how Mowat’s 1963 novel served as a powerful consciousness-raising tool, alerting the Canadian public to the plight of wolves. While the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS)

²⁴ Tina Loo, *States of Nature: Conserving Canada’s Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 214.

vehemently opposed Mowat's work, dismissing it as amateur naturalism, it was clear that the book was significant as a protest medium and Jones places it in the same category as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. Although *Never Cry Wolf*'s narrative ran counter to the CWS's wolf management system, the book was an important watershed moment as it "galvanized action from a concerned citizenry," which in turn, played a role in the government's reassessment about its management of wolves.²⁵

In the foreword to Greg Gillespie's book, *Hunting for Empire: Narratives of Sport in Rupert's Land, 1840-70*, Graeme Wynn reminisces about hunting-related automobile bumper stickers that he has observed over the years. One of the more popular aphorisms that he recalled was "Hunting is done to death." While this slogan may elicit a chuckle or two out of the hunter and non-hunter alike, it prompted Wynn to ask, "is there anything more to be said about hunting from a scholarly perspective?"²⁶ This might seem like a disconcerting starting point for an environmental history that is largely situating itself within the realm of hunting and wildlife management but it bears discussion.

Environmental history is a vibrant field but it is also still developing, and I think one would be hard pressed to suggest that investigative studies of hunting within this area have been exhausted. Although hunting has been examined in great detail in philosophy, such as José Ortega y Gasset's seminal work *Meditations on Hunting* and more recently by other philosophers and writers, this author believes that there is still a lacuna that

²⁵ Karen Jones, "Never Cry Wolf: Science, Sentiment, and the Literary Rehabilitation of *Canis Lupus*," *Canadian Historical Review* 84, 1 (March 2003), 14.

²⁶ Graeme Wynn, foreword to *Hunting for Empire: Narratives of Sport in Rupert's Land, 1840-70*, by Greg Gillespie (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), xi.

needs to be filled within Canadian environmental history.²⁷ Histories of hunting are not simply narratives about the pursuit of game-animals; they are an exploration of the values, attitudes, and beliefs that humans harbour towards our natural resources. As a result, there is still much more that hunting can offer to Canadian environmental historians.

Some historians have even gone as far as to credit hunters with the origins of the conservation movement in the United States. John F. Reiger, first published the *American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation* in 1974 and it is now in its third edition. In his 1986 edition, he boldly charges that “recent historians have ignored hunting as an unworthy topic for study, or found it an embarrassment that somehow taints their heroes.” He argues that “American sportsmen, those who hunted and fished for pleasure rather than commerce or necessity, were the real spearhead of conservation.”²⁸ Reiger has attempted to rehabilitate the image of the hunter and angler in the United States but the consensus within the literature finds that he has vastly overstated his case.²⁹ While sportsmen certainly played a significant role in the conservation movement, focusing on them exclusively does not result in a “fuller, truer picture of the history of American conservation,” as Reiger claims.³⁰

²⁷ Please see José Ortega y Gasset, *Mediations on Hunting* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1972); James A. Swan, *In Defense of Hunting* (New York: Harper Collins, 1994); Nathan Kowalsky, ed. *Hunting Philosophy for Everyone: In Search of Everyone* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010)

²⁸ John F. Reiger, *American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, revised edition, 1986), 18-21.

²⁹ Reiger acknowledged this in an email between himself and the author in June 2011. He stated, “first off, disregard the 1975 edition of my book and get the 2001, revised, expanded, and greatly improved third edition. It is essentially a new book.”

³⁰ Reiger, 49.

Recognizing the limitations in Reiger's work, Thomas R. Dunlap published a monograph not long after the second edition of *American Sportsmen* was released. In *Saving America's Wildlife: Ecology and the American Mind, 1850-1990*, he challenges Reiger's assertions and argues that hunting was not the "cradle of the conservation movement."³¹ He charges that Reiger's study overreaches because his correlation between early conservationists being hunters is flimsy since most adult men in the time period were hunters, so "it is hard to see, on the evidence Reiger presents, that hunting led, in quite the direct way he wishes to see, to conservation."³² Instead, Dunlap finds that the drive towards conservation in the United States was about far more than regulating how animals were taken from the forest. Rather, he contends that the shift towards a conservationist mindset was part of a broader change in attitudes amongst Americans that now recognized the virtues and value in wilderness and wildlife.

While hunters and other sportsmen were definitely part of this push, Dunlap rightly credits the impetus to save America's wildlife as part of a larger change in thought. Although his study was published more than twenty-five years ago, it remains an important work in the field because of the significance it places on the role of changing human ideas, attitudes, and perceptions in shaping our policies and management strategies toward natural resources in general and wildlife in particular. As my work will demonstrate, black bear management policy in Ontario was as much determined by

³¹ Thomas R. Dunlap, *Saving America's Wildlife: Ecology and the American Mind, 1850-1990* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 9.

³² Dunlap, 178.

longstanding attitudes and shifting valuations towards the animal as research and government regulation.

And yet, the drive towards conservation in both Canada and the United States was as much about conflict and contestation as it was consensus and other historians have highlighted the social context of hunting and regulation. Louis S. Warren brilliantly demonstrates this in his 1997 study, *The Hunter's Game*. In it, he argues that the implementation of a universal conservationist program in the United States involved much more than just protecting wildlife; it was about negotiating power relations between people. In many ways, the introduction of wildlife management legislation was a component of the wider “surge of federal power over forests, water, public lands, and wildlife” and as a result, many resisted these policies.³³ He reveals the complexities of this in his examination of the conflict surrounding deer management in Pennsylvania. Rural landowners and urban sportsmen achieved a conservationist consensus in the early twentieth century in the state when it was believed that deer levels had reached their nadir. Once the deer population rebounded through cooperative efforts, farmers and hunters clashed as the animals wreaked havoc on crops, impinging upon the livelihood of agriculturalists.³⁴ For Warren, this “was a competition between markets in produce and markets in recreational hunting, and between the power of local people to define their own interactions with the land and the power of the state to restrict those interactions.”³⁵

³³ Louis S. Warren, *The Hunter's Game: Poachers and Conservationists in Twentieth-Century America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 10. John Sandlos has also argued this in his book, *Hunters at the Margin*, suggesting that the federal government's hunting regulations in the Northwest Territories was as much about controlling indigenous populations as it was about wildlife management.

³⁴ Warren, 49.

³⁵ Warren, 69.

Building off of Warren's work, Karl Jacoby enhances our understanding of American conservation in *Crimes Against Nature*. Examining three distinctive locales in the United States – New York's Adirondack Mountains, Yellowstone National Park, and the Grand Canyon – he seeks to uncover the “hidden histories” of conservation in America by contextualizing them in larger questions about the distribution of power, the imposition of ideals, and control. By redefining the rules governing the use of the environment, Jacoby asserts how “conservation also addressed how the interlocking human and natural communities of a given society were to be organized.”³⁶ As a result, his study aims to demonstrate how local communities actively, and sometimes violently, resisted government conservation programs when they infringed on their livelihood or undermined local forms of resource management. Darcy Ingram found a similar thread in his history of Henri Ladouceur, a notorious poacher in Quebec's Beauce region. Ladouceur was a criminal in the eyes of the provincial government but his actions were also indicative of larger impulses to assert local control and power in the face of the encroachment of the state. For Ingram, “poaching became for rural inhabitants both a means of meeting their material needs and of asserting their rights to local fish and game.”³⁷

More recently, Darcy Ingram elaborated on his earlier published works and completed the first comprehensive overview of conservation and wildlife management in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Quebec. His *Wildlife, Conservation, and*

³⁶ Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 5.

³⁷ Darcy Ingram, “‘Au temps et dans les quantites qui lui plaisent’: Poachers, Outlaws, and Rural Banditry in Quebec,” *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 42, no. 83 (May 2009), 18.

Conflict in Quebec focuses on the historical antecedents of conservation in the province by placing it within the wider context of the patrician culture that had a longstanding history in Quebec. He examines the small group of wealthy British and Protestant men who wielded significant power. According to Ingram, they “sought to improve the world they lived in and they brought these sensibilities into their development of wildlife conservation strategies in Quebec.”³⁸ Their commitment to the ethos of improvement undergirded the early protection system in the province but brought them into conflict with rural residents and First Nations as they sought to increase private land leases and prohibit certain hunting methods and equipment. As time passed, broader developments in issues surrounding land tenure, growth of cities, rising middle class culture, and population growth allowed a new generation of sport-minded conservationists from the middle and upper classes to eclipse the patrician culture that laid the foundations for the province’s management system.³⁹

The works of Warren, Jacoby, and Ingram broaden the social context of conservation movements by shifting away from the standard celebratory accounts that we can see in other works by scholars such as Foster and Reiger and focusing on the local actors. Similar to the works of Loo and Sandlos, these are not strictly state centred narratives and by bringing their fields of focus down to the local level, they provide readers with a much more nuanced account of conservation in the United States and

³⁸ Darcy Ingram, *Wildlife, Conservation, and Conflict in Quebec, 1840-1914*. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013), 7. Please also see his earlier work, “Au temps et dans les quantites qui lui plaisent”: Poachers, Outlaws, and Rural Banditry in Quebec.” *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 42, No. 83 (May 2009): 1-34, although much of this was included and revised for the final chapter in the book.

³⁹ For a more detailed review, please see Michael Commito, Review of *Wildlife, Conservation, and Conflict in Quebec, 1840-1914* in *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, Vol. 66, 3-4 (Hiver-Printemps 2014): 465-468.

Canada. My own study seeks to follow these works by advocating that an exclusively state-focused history of hunting and wildlife management policy will fail to yield an accurate history. Legislation initiated at the state level did not always represent the views or expectations of those living on the ground. For example, despite making black bears big-game animals in 1961, the provincial government encountered substantial resistance from residents, particularly in rural areas, who were not willing to conform to the government's view of black bears. These residents viewed bears as vermin, and new legislation would not quickly undo decades of this longstanding perspective.

Other Canadian scholars have also taken innovative approaches to the subject of hunting by examining the activity within a wider cultural context. Tina Loo has produced a gendered analysis of hunting in late nineteenth century British Columbia to demonstrate how hunters invoked concepts of masculinity in their sporting code and in doing so, marginalized and excluded Aboriginal and other subsistence hunters from the province's developing system of conservation and hunting regulations.⁴⁰ Similarly, Greg Gillespie also found that nineteenth century sportsmen in Rupert's Land also consumed their kills to enhance their masculinity. He argued that the perception was that "men ate meat but real men hunted and killed their own meat. Real men hunted and ate big game."⁴¹

If historians needed more proof that the well has not run dry on the history of hunting, it came in 2009 with the release of Jean L. Manore's and Dale G. Miner's edited collection, *The Culture of Hunting in Canada*. This anthology contains reprints and new

⁴⁰ Tina Loo, "Of Moose and Men: Hunting for Masculinities in British Columbia, 1880-1930," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 32, 3 (Autumn 2011), 297-319.

⁴¹ Gillespie, 51.

research on topics ranging from game regulations and First Nations hunting rights to contemporary issues that have politicized hunters in recent years such as the federal long-gun registry and the spring bear hunt debate. Identity is the dominant theme throughout this seemingly disparate collection of articles. For hunters, the pursuit of wild game remains an activity that has deep significance. For many, it is intimately connected to the construction of their own identity. For example, many hunters were elated in 2011 when Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Conservatives unveiled plans to repeal the federal long-gun registry.⁴² Many hunters saw the registry as an invasion of their privacy and an infringement on their way of life and cultural identity. As a result, the collection makes it clear that historians and scholars have much to gain by exploring the world of hunting because it offers insights into a myriad of topics such as class, ethnicity, gender, and even contemporary issues. On writing about whether hunting has anything left to offer historians, Jean L. Manore suggested much remains to be done. She argues that “the topic of hunting can and does evoke the passions of both hunters and non-hunters alike, yet little interest by scholars has been expressed, and little understanding of hunting by non-hunters has been achieved.”⁴³ Her efforts, along with Dale G. Miner’s, are proof of this. While the *Culture of Hunting in Canada* is a great potpourri of essays, the literature is

⁴² Jane Taber, “Killing gun registry a victory for ‘salt-of-the-earth people,’ Tory MP says,” *Globe and Mail*, 25 October 2011 <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/ottawa-notebook/killing-gun-registry-a-victory-for-salt-of-the-earth-people-tory-mp-says/article618612/> (accessed 5 November 2014)

⁴³ Jean L. Manore, “Conclusion: Learning about Passions, Policies and Problems,” in *The Culture of Hunting in Canada*, ed. Jean L. Manore and Dale G. Miner (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 265.

still lacking a breadth of comprehensive studies in national, provincial, and specialized topics about hunting in Canada.⁴⁴

Within the realm of the Canadian environmental history, it is clear that stories of hunting and wildlife management are focal points of inquiry. What seems to be more peripheral are the histories of human-animal relationships that are not rooted in these subjects. One of the first historians to buck this trend was George Colpitts with his *Game in the Garden*. Seeking to uncover the history of the relationship between humans and animals in Western Canada, he approaches his subject by adopting a “social explanation to explore attitudes towards wildlife.”⁴⁵ In charting the change in human attitudes towards various species of wildlife in the Canadian west, Colpitts documents how these conceptions were rooted and affected by broader social issues such as preservation impulses, economics, and even xenophobia. In doing so, he demonstrates the impact that human mind-sets can have on animals, often dichotomizing certain forms of wildlife over others, prizing those that are deemed valuable and persecuting nuisance creatures that are viewed as vermin. For Colpitts, by exploring the historical antecedents that have shaped Western Canadian attitudes towards wildlife, he hopes to “move the human mind beyond

⁴⁴ Not mentioned in discussion is the works of historians covering Maritime hunting and fishing issues. These are some of the notable works but again, comprehensive hunting and fishing histories for the region are lacking. Please see Bill Parenteau, “A ‘Very Determined Opposition to the Law’: Conservation, Angling Leases, and Social Conflict in the Canadian Atlantic Salmon Fishery, 1867-1914,” *Environmental History* 9, 3 (July 2004), 436-363; Bill Parenteau and Richard W. Judd, “More Buck for the Bang: Sporting and the Ideology of Fish and Game Management in Northern New England and the Maritime Provinces, 1870-1900” in *New England and the Maritime Provinces: Connections and Comparisons*, ed. Stephen J. Hornsby and John G. Reid (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 232-251; Colin D. Howell, “Borderlands, Baselines and Bearhunters: Conceptualizing the Northeast as a Sporting Region in the Interwar Period,” *Journal of Sport History* 29, 2 (Summer 2002), 251-270.

⁴⁵ George Colpitts, *Game in the Garden: A Human History of Wildlife in Western Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002), 11.

the dated conception of wildlife as a resource to be ‘managed,’ ‘husbanded,’ ‘harvested,’ or ‘preserved.’⁴⁶

Wolves have occupied a significant place in both the Canadian and American environmental literature. Jon T. Coleman has charted the discordant engagements between humans and wolves from the American colonial era to the present day. His work is important as he suggests that “the history of colonization of North America was an animal history, and no creature prompted as much discussion or fired as many imaginations as wolves.”⁴⁷ Coleman charts the violent relationship between humans and wolves, most of which was shaped by misconceptions, fears, and ideas that had vilified the animal for hundreds of years. Scientific studies would later exonerate the predator, seen as a threat to humans. Coleman’s study reveals how cultural attitudes and human emotions led to wolf extirpation in most parts of the United States and how enhanced understanding and new information has also led to wolf reintroductions and the prospect of coexistence. Historian Karen Jones has also examined the long history of wolf extirpation and recovery in Canada and the United States. Through her narrative she recounts the predator control policies that condemned wolves for the sake of hunters, livestock ranchers, and ungulate populations across the Great Divide.⁴⁸

Histories of wolves invariably involve deer, since the latter’s protection from the former has been a major justification behind wolf extermination or removal policies.

⁴⁶ Colpitts, 13.

⁴⁷ Jon T. Coleman, *Vicious: Wolves and Men in America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), ix.

⁴⁸ Karen R. Jones, *Wolf Mountains: A History of Wolves along the Great Divide* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2002), 11; Please also see these Karen Jones, “Writing the Wolf: Canine Tales and North American Environmental-Literary Tradition,” *Environment and History* 17, 2 (May 2011), 201-228.

American historians have examined the complicated interplay between humans, wolves, and deer in areas where all three competed for resources. Warren, in *The Hunter's Game*, discusses how even if hunters and farmers often had competing visions about deer – the former as prized trophies in need of protection, the later often as pests to crops – usually united against the deer's enemy, wolves.⁴⁹ Other historians, such as Christian C. Young, have shown how human intervention to kill wolves and save deer has led to disastrous results. In the Kaibib National Forest in Arizona in the 1920s, the state embarked upon a concerted program of predator extermination to preserve the more valuable deer population. By eliminating wolves, the deer herd grew exponentially, leading to increased competition for finite food sources, which led to massive starvation. While science at the time had not demonstrated the wolf's usefulness to local ecosystems, Young argues that the Kaibib incident is a cautionary tale that reminds us our “knowledge about nature will perhaps always be entangled with our belief about the value of certain species, about order in natural systems, and about balance in ecological communities.”⁵⁰ Of course, the extirpation of wolves in Kaibib was just a case study of a larger impulse in the United States in Canada to rid areas of predators such as wolves and coyotes because they viewed as threats to deer and other animals that held greater value.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Warren, 65.

⁵⁰ Christian C. Young, *In the Absence of Predators: Conservation and Controversy on the Kaibib Plateau* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 215.

⁵¹ Please also see Michael J. Robinson, *Predatory Bureaucracy: The Extermination of Wolves and the Transformation of the West* (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2005). Robinson discusses how wolves were extirpated from the American Midwest in order to satisfy the concerns of America's powerful livestock industry that was established in the region. In Canada, please see Alan MacEachern, “Rationality and Rationalization in Canadian National Parks Predator Policy” in *Consuming Canada: Readings in Environmental History*, ed. Chad and Pam Gaffield (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1995). MacEachern examines how predators such as wolves and coyotes were treated with contempt in Canada's National Parks system because they competed with human interest, namely their predation on more desirable animals such as deer

Bears have not made as much of an impact in the environmental historiography as wolves or deer but this has begun to change with Alice Wondrak Biel's work that examined the evolution of the relationship between humans, black bears, and Grizzly bears in Yellowstone National Park. Her *Do (Not) Feed the Bears*, is the most important work for my study for a number of reasons. Using Yellowstone National Park as a contact site, she convincingly demonstrates that as the relationship between humans and bears evolved in the park, it was not the bears that changed, but rather, "it's their image that has been made and remade, in concert with a set of attitudes that encompassed more than changing policies and regulations."⁵² Building from this argument, I will demonstrate that Ontario and its citizens have continually negotiated the black bear's image and in turn, show the impact that this had on management policy. Ontario's black bears have been perceived as malleable animals; they have been bountied as pests, hunted as big-game, valued as furbearers, and often adopted as pets. All of these different views demonstrate that it is not the black bears that have changed but rather our perceptions and attitudes towards them. My study will make an immense contribution to the literature because, despite their prominence and popularity in our culture, bears have been woefully understudied by historians.⁵³

and mountain sheep. He notes that even as scientific discovery slowly began to vindicate predatory animals and indicate their usefulness in the wider ecological systems, there was not a universal paradigm shift in the Parks system. On the ground level, MacEachern states that "regardless of how official predator policy changed in Ottawa, within the parks themselves entrenched attitudes about predators remained," 199.

⁵² Alice Wondrak Biel, *Do (Not) Feed the Bears: The Fitful History of Wildlife and Tourists in Yellowstone* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 5.

⁵³ More recently George Colpitts studied the relationship of visitors to Canada's western National Parks with bears that were often problematically referred to as *highway bums*. Please see, "Films, Tourists, and Bears in the National parks: Managing Park Use and the Problematic 'Highway Bum' Bear in the 1970s," in *A Century of Parks Canada, 1911-2011*, ed. Claire Elizabeth Campbell (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2011), 153-178. In the Ontario literature, even outside the realm of environmental history, references

Animals are often at the heart of these histories and while they are sometimes not the main focus of analysis, they are dealt with indirectly as they are often the targets of conservationist policies or of hunters themselves. In recent years, animals have increasingly come more into the focus of scholars. Previously positioning animals as objects of minimal importance, some historians have begun focusing on them as some of the central figures in environmental histories, especially in the burgeoning field of animal studies. Such animal studies have been characterized by Jennifer Adams-Martin as focusing on “animals as subjects and not simply objects of human influence.”⁵⁴ While some historians and scholars are undoubtedly sceptical about the usefulness of animal studies or even animal history, Erica Fudge has adroitly countered their criticisms, by pointing out that we are really only studying “the history of human attitudes toward animals.”⁵⁵ She advocates that we push beyond the simple exploration of past representations of animals. But I believe that her initial point offers the most usefulness to historians. For example, a history of black bear hunting is not merely about the evolution of regulatory changes to this activity. It is also about the history of human ideas and attitudes towards the animal and how the stagnation or shifts in streams of thoughts, in concert with broader societal changes, influence our thinking about wildlife. The history of black bear hunting in Ontario thus offers a history of the relationship between humans

to black bears are almost nonexistent. In their commissioned history of the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, Richard S. Lambert and Paul Pross recount over two hundred years worth of provincial natural resource management but only mention black bears in passing on page 469. Please see Richard S. Lambert and Paul Pross, *Renewing Nature's Wealth: A Centennial History of the Public Management of Lands, Forests and Wildlife in Ontario, 1763-1967* (Toronto: Hunter Rose, 1967)

⁵⁴ Jennifer Adams Martin, “When Sharks (Don’t) Attack: Wild Animal Agency in Historical Narratives,” *Environmental History* 16 (July 2011), 452. Please also see Please see Harriet Ritvo, “Animal Planet,” *Environmental History*, 9 (April 2014): 204-220.

⁵⁵ Erica Fudge, “A Left-Handed Blow: Writing the History of Animals,” in *Representing Animals*, ed. Nigel Rothfels (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 6.

and bears in that province or the contrast of consumptive versus non-consumptive uses of nature, to enhance our total understanding of Ontario's past by providing another avenue through which to explore the province's intellectual history.

Harriet Ritvo has been one of the first scholars at the vanguard of animal history.⁵⁶ In her classic work, *The Animal Estate*, she examines the rhetoric and relationship between humans and animals in the Victorian age. Through the course of her analysis, she reveals that examining the linkages between humans and animals shines a light on how humans treated animals and how people interacted together. By exploring the themes of pet ownership, food, captivity, and hunting, Ritvo finds that domination and exploitation is the central theme within the Victorian human-animal relationship.⁵⁷ While the nature of this relationship evolved over time, often emphasizing other factors such as stewardship over exploitation, these still remained integral modifiers to the relationship. Following Ritvo's lead, other scholars have begun to examine more specialized topics within the realm of animal history. For example, in her study of nineteenth-century Paris, Kathleen Kete contends that "Petkeeping involves us in the culture of ordinary people."⁵⁸ She shows class affected and was affected by the relationship between humans and their companions, revealing that petkeeping emerged as a bourgeois practice.

This study will contribute to the above-mentioned literature in a myriad of ways. Since this dissertation is partly a study of bear management it will enhance the existing

⁵⁶ Please also see her more recent work, Harriet Ritvo, *Noble Cows and Hybrid Zebras: Essays on Animals and History* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2010)

⁵⁷ Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 5-6.

⁵⁸ Kathleen Kete, *The Beast in the Boudoir: Petkeeping in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 2.

work on the history of wildlife management by showcasing how government policy mixes with broader social interests, thereby complicating how management is implemented on the ground. This project also focuses on hunting and will add to the growing work on the culture of hunting in Canada. By examining the history of black bear hunting in Ontario, we are not only examining the specific pursuit of this animal but the various human ideas and attitudes in the province that helped shape the activity and enforce its regulations. More prominent than any other focal point throughout this dissertation is the black bear itself. Examining the history of the relationship between humans and black bears in Ontario provides us with a conduit for examining how our values and perceptions of natural resources, such as wildlife, has a measurable impact on its place within non-human environments. This work will address a deficiency in the literature, namely that black bears are an underrepresented figure in the fields of environmental and animal history. By providing the first comprehensive overview of the relationship between humans and black bears in Ontario, this work offers much to historians, policymakers, and the general public in not only in Canada but North America in general.

Searching for Bear Tracks

This dissertation relies heavily on documentation produced by previously existing government agencies such as the Ontario Department of Game and Fisheries (DGF) and the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests (DLF), as well as the province's current incarnation of these predecessor organizations, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

(MNR).⁵⁹ Many of the files generated by these organizations, including annual reports, correspondence, and memoranda, were available from the Archives of Ontario at York University in Toronto. As this dissertation outlines, the significance of black bears as game animals or even tourist attractions was not realized until the latter part of the 20th century in Ontario, as a result, official documentation was often lacking but was supplemented through additional primary research at other facilities across the province. In addition to the official government documents, which I will detail below, I also relied on the information gleaned from numerous newspapers within the province and beyond, in order to help fill holes that existed. It should also be noted that newspapers were used extensively in the period prior to 1961 as records about black bears within the Department of Game and Fisheries and the successor agency, the DLF, were often scant. The author is aware of the limitations of these sources as they are not definitively representative of the general public but are still beneficial because they can provide us with insights for examining changing attitudes and opinions. Unpublished reports produced by personnel within the DFG, DLF, and MNR were accessed at the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Library in Peterborough, Ontario. A family camping trip to Algonquin Park in the summer of 2012 facilitated research at the Park's museum and archives where valuable records such as newsletters, scrapbooks, correspondence, and unpublished

⁵⁹ A note on the government agencies discussed in this dissertation. The Ontario provincial government created the Department of Game and Fisheries in 1907 and it operated as a distinct entity that was separate from the Department of Lands and Forests until 1946. After 1946, it was absorbed by the DLF, becoming the Fish and Wildlife Division under the umbrella of Lands and Forests. The Ontario Department of Lands and Forests was later renamed and reorganized in 1972, becoming the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). Following the 2014 Ontario general election, the Liberals renamed the MNR to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. For the sake of continuity and the fact that this study does not examine events beyond the late 1980s, this agency will be referred to as the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources or MNR when appropriate.

reports shed light on the human-bear relationship in Ontario's most renowned provincial park. Remote research was also carried out at the National Archives in the United Kingdom, wherein files from the British War Office supplemented the information and formed the basis for the analysis in the third chapter. The fifth chapter uses letters to the editor as an important medium to assess attitudes in Sudbury, Ontario and a discussion about the limitations and usefulness of this type of newspaper source can found in that chapter. Lastly, the Animal Alliance of Canada, an animal rights group based out of Toronto, also opened its doors and allowed me to comb through their files, which yielded correspondence and reports from within the organization itself but also others such as the MNR and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters.

While this work strives to be a comprehensive history of human attitudes towards black bears in Ontario, most of the voices and opinions within these pages belong to white, English-speaking Canadians. A glaring omission is the perspective of First Nations peoples. This is largely a methodological issue, as the author did attempt to collaborate with local Aboriginal communities in northeastern Ontario as part of an ongoing effort to remedy this deficiency but these attempts did not result in significant fruit. This is unfortunate as bears hold even more cultural importance to Ontario's Aboriginal people and the inclusion of these perspectives would add another dynamic to this story.

Secondary sources have detailed the importance of bears to Aboriginal cultures and how the animals were venerated in both life and death. The most comprehensive work in this field is perhaps A. Irving Hallowell's "Bear Ceremonialism in the Northern Hemisphere." In it he demonstrates the importance of bears to Aboriginal cultures across

a vast geographic area. Hallowell asserts that of the groups he studied, “no other animal was found to attain such universal prominence as the bear.”⁶⁰ Calvin Martin, in his work on the fur trade, notes how Micmac groups reserved honorific titles for bears, respectfully treated them after death, and holding ceremonies for when bears were eaten.⁶¹ Others have also written about the “role of the bear in American Indian initiation and dealing ceremonies, in shamanic rites, in the quest for guardian spirits, and in various dances.”⁶² Recently, Michael Pomedli has studied the importance of bears to Ojibwe cultures. He suggests that bears have been significant figures that are replete with meanings that range from ceremonial, symbolic, medicinal, and celestial. He highlights that although bears are “no longer readily available as food in many contemporary Ojibwe communities; they have now assumed a more spiritual meaning – they symbolically prevent disease, guard the Ojibwe from psychological harm, and guide moral intentions and actions.”⁶³ Bears in general have had and continue to have, immense importance in First Nations culture and the author is cognizant that this current is underrepresented throughout the text. While Indigenous perspectives and attitudes have been incorporated when possible, the author understands that these analyses are inherently limited. Thus, while this remains a history of human attitudes and ideas about black bears, it is chiefly from non-Indigenous perspectives.

⁶⁰ A. Irving Hallowell, “Bear Ceremonialism in the Northern Hemisphere,” *American Anthropologist* 28, 1 (Jan. –Mar., 1926), 148.

⁶¹ Calvin Martin, *Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 36.

⁶² David Rockwell, *Giving Voice to Bear: North American Indian Myths, Rituals, and Images of the Bear* (Niwot, CO: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1991), xii.

⁶³ Pomedli, 165.

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Through a series of five chapters or case studies, this dissertation examines the history of black bear hunting and management in Ontario. It demonstrates that perceptions of black bears are highly malleable and subject to continuous negotiation. At no one time in the twentieth century were black bears viewed in a singular way by people of the province. As a result, these various and often competing perspectives hampered the government's efforts to manage its black bears. This study thus contributes to the literature of hunting and wildlife management history in particular and Canadian environmental history in general. It will fill a lacuna in these areas and offer up larger analysis about how our attitudes and values shape the management of our natural resources, for better and for worse.

The structure of dissertation is chronological in organization with some chapters thematically arranged. The first chapter examines the early history of black bear hunting and management in Ontario, roughly from the mid-1920s until 1941. This chapter shows how formal and informal attitudes towards these animal affected management. Farmers viewed bears quite differently from conservationists and trappers viewed the animal through a different lens than did hunters. There was also a segment of the population who believed bears were suitable household pets. As a result, there was never a singular attitude or approach that humans had towards black bears in Ontario. Consequently, these varying perspectives complicated the provincial government's management strategies as it attempted to placate diverse groups that had competing and conflicting attitudes about black bears in Ontario. At any one time in the early twentieth century, the black bear,

depending on the perspective, could simultaneously be thought of as a furbearer, pet, vermin, and game animal.

This chapter argues that even as the province officially encouraged some residents to treat bears as vermin, officials in the DGF continued to market it as big game to tourists, and the general public began to see bears as more innocent “clowns of the woods.” Under the bounty system, first introduced in 1942, Ontario residents were given incentive to kill black bears in unprecedented numbers. Despite this new government legislation, which seemingly sanctioned longstanding, negative attitudes towards the animal, the Department of Game and Fisheries also continued to market the animal as a big-game trophy to tourist hunters. Perceptions in this period were also further complicated by the fact that besides viewing bears as marauding monsters and big-game animals, there was also a developing current in North American media that portrayed bears as “clowns of the woods.” As a result, these conflicting perspectives muddied the waters further and the government continued to struggle to define what a black bear was and how it should be managed.

The third chapter is presented as a case study of a memorable bear hunt in Timmins, Ontario in 1959. The hunt was organized by the city’s mayor, Leo Del Villano to get bearskins for the Queen’s Guards caps at Buckingham Palace and as a result it garnered international attention for months. It argues that this episode helped shift values and attitudes within the province towards black bears, which in turn, led to some tangible changes in management, most notably, the designation of black bears as game animals in 1961. For many, the publication of this activity in the province’s major and local

newspapers, introduced them to spring bear hunting, something that was previously unknown. With residents now learning about bear hunting through newspapers or televisions, many became highly critical of its existence and vocalized their concerns to the public and provincial government. This outpouring of controversy compelled the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests to overhaul its system of bear management and accord the animal more protection by designating it as a game species. This chapter also offers insight into Canada's wider relationship with Great Britain in the late 1950s since the hunt for the Queen's Guards was largely constructed as a dutiful patriotic exercise. At a time when English Canada was supposedly undergoing an identity crisis and severing ties to Britain, many Canadians eagerly offered up the province's black bears to maintain this close relationship.

The fourth chapter examines the greater protection that black bears received during the 1960s and 1970s under the guise of the animal's big-game status. With the repeal of the bounty system, the Department of Lands and Forests (DLF) increasingly looked to market bears as big-game to hunters. The DLF failed to introduce stringent regulations such as bag limits to govern the harvesting of bears and still condoned killing black bears when they competed with human interests. As a result, the government's approach during this period did not necessarily reflect the new legislation as much as it continued to echo the longstanding perceptions of residents. Throughout the province, hunters and non-hunters alike, were slow to soften their attitudes towards black bears, preferring to continue to see them as vermin and unworthy of big-game status. This period also saw residents and non-residents of the province increasingly find intrinsic

value in the animal, especially in places like Algonquin Park, that served as contact sites between people and bears. Yet, people were eager to interact with bears but only up to a predefined point. While residents and the government were not necessarily keen to embrace the province's newest game animal, non-resident hunters, particularly Americans, continued to hunt bears with great aplomb. American enthusiasm for spring bear hunting increased in the postwar period and became a veritable cottage industry for guides and outfitters in many parts of northern Ontario. While these groups certainly saw value in the bear as a big-game animal, this was not a sweeping change throughout the province. As a result, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, bears continued to be viewed ambiguously by various members of the province, including the government. While the DLF eagerly initiated a new era of management in 1961, its actions in the subsequent two decades did not accurately reflect the legislative changes to the *Game and Fisheries Act*.

The final chapter focuses on some of the most significant changes to the province's bear management system from 1971 to 1987. It argues that black bear management was still complicated by competing attitudes of the day but by the late 1980s, Ontario had achieved unprecedented complexity in management and understandings of the animal, up until that point in its history. Beginning in the early 1970s, the nascent environmental movement burgeoning throughout the Western world made a noticeable impact on bear management in Ontario. Members of the general public began voicing concerns about some of the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) [the successor agency to the DLF in 1972] policy towards black bears. This focuses on the case of another black bear hunting incident in Sudbury to demonstrate how ethical and

ecological considerations began to enter into the public discourse on the killing of black bears. While the public reacted to the episode in the newspapers, reports from professionally trained biologists and conservation officers within the MNR also attest to these considerations. In addition to their usual concerns about science and management questions, they began voicing moral and ethical concerns about the nature of black bear hunting and management. The chapter then turns to the Liberal government's changes to the province's management system. By the 1980s, the MNR knew more about black bears than it had at any point prior and therefore, it sought to enact measures to reflect this increased level of understanding. It aimed to protect the animal and manage it responsibly to ensure its long-term viability in the province. The *Bear Management Program* of 1987 signalled the apex in Ontario's push towards a sound and progressive black bear management. While questions about the relationship between humans and black bears in the province continue to linger until this day, this new program did much to erase decades of ambiguity and laxity that had plagued decision making about black bears.

These chapters and case studies weave together several narrative threads to shed light on the development of Ontario's black bear management program during the twentieth century. It argues how humans approach natural resources and our inherent attitudes towards them, shape our interaction and management of them. Understanding how we have viewed and approached black bears throughout our history can help guide us towards better management policies in the future. Once we understand that the ideas and attitude we have towards animals, such as black bears, have a measurable impact on how they are managed in the province's forests then the better we will be equipped to

work towards a relationship centred on coexistence.

Chapter 1

Walking Contradictions: Managing Ontario's Black Bears, 1914-1941

What kind of animal was a black bear? Were black bears primarily pests, pets, furbearers or game animals? Farmers, conservationists, tourists, trappers, and hunters in early twentieth-century Ontario could not agree. These varying perceptions complicated the efforts of the provincial Department of Game and Fisheries to develop coherent bear management policies. So too did the relative indifference of many in the province to the black bear. It had neither the economic sporting value as deer and moose, nor compared in the economic nuisance cost of such animals as wolves. As a result, prior to 1942, when farmers and other rural residents convinced the province to place a bounty on bears, provincial regulation of bears was relatively haphazard and lax. Nevertheless, one theme emerged that would persist through the entire century. Various groups viewed black bears from quite different perspectives and with quite different agendas, and these human views dictated how bears were treated and managed. At no time did black bears have a single meaning to the humans who dealt with them, or even more specifically to the provincial officials whose job it was to manage them. Humans were fickle and unpredictable in their attitudes towards black bears; their behaviour could be as contradictory as bottle-feeding a pet bear in the spring, then roasting it the following winter when it became too difficult to care for.

* * *

Aboriginals and settler Europeans have had a long history with black bears in the province, but for the most part, this relationship was not stringently managed through

legislation. In the late eighteenth century, the government of Upper Canada imposed a bounty on black bears and wolves. All residents of the province, except indigenous peoples, could collect five schillings for every bear they killed. The government repealed the program in 1796, concluding that Upper Canadians did not need an incentive to destroy bears.⁶⁴ The wolf bounty remained in place until 1807 before it was repealed and reintroduced in 1809, continuing until the latter half of the twentieth century.⁶⁵ Gradually, as more people settled in the province, the government introduced more restrictive and protective hunting laws as a way to conserve wild game stocks, marginalize First Nations peoples, and market these animals to sportsmen. As the bureaucratic structure that managed these natural resources increased, black bears were omitted from management decisions until the twentieth century. Very few regulations governed the relationship between humans and black bears. The animal did not generate much hunting interest and therefore did not require the same type of oversight that was extended to the province's big-game animals, such as moose and deer. The management system in place was quite liberal and for the most part, bears were considered to be an afterthought by the government.

But black bears were known for their thick and lustrous hides, often ranging from a dark black to a light cinnamon brown in some locales. As a result, they had value in the fur market and were therefore subject to some management as they were considered to be furbearers. Furbearing animals are chiefly creatures that are deemed to be commercially

⁶⁴ Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, *Wildlife '87: A Chronicle of Conservation in Ontario* (Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario, 1987), 1.

⁶⁵ *Wildlife '87*, 1.

valuable because of their fur. Canada has a rich fur trade heritage, that has been well documented, and while black bears were part of this story, they failed to rank in scale of importance to other animals such as beavers, muskrats, foxes, and mink in the histories told by Harold Innis and Arthur J. Ray.⁶⁶

Combing through the annual reports for the Ontario Department of Game and Fisheries (DGF), black bears were recorded in the furbearing section but they were accorded minimal importance. After the creation of the DGF in 1907, black bears were not even mentioned in the annual reports until 1912, and even at that point, the three comments from wardens and overseers were tellingly brief. While warden J.T. Robinson, from Sault Ste. Marie, suggested that the animals receive protection because their fur was valuable, at this time, there were virtually no regulations or protections in place for the province's black bears.⁶⁷ Some of the information was also quite vague and demonstrates the indifference towards the animal. Warden Robinson commented on the status of bears in his district that they were plentiful but "no one can tell where they come from."⁶⁸ Even entries made twenty years later were equally ambivalent. One Department official reported that "conditions have shown little change, though there is some decline in the numbers reported to have been taken."⁶⁹ Part of the reason why black bears would not have been the subject of much government commentary is because, overall, they were far

⁶⁶ For these early works please see Harold Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1930) and Arthur J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Role as Trappers, Hunters, and Middlemen in the Lands Southwest of Hudson Bay, 1660-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974).

⁶⁷ Ontario, Department of Game and Fisheries, *Sixth Annual Report of the Game and Fisheries Department of Ontario, 1912* (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1913), 15.

⁶⁸ Ontario, Department of Game and Fisheries, *Eighth Annual Report of the Game and Fisheries Department of Ontario, 1914* (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1915), 20.

⁶⁹ Ontario, Department of Game and Fisheries, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the Game and Fisheries Department of Ontario, 1933*, (Toronto: Herbert H. Ball, 1934), 4.

less valuable than other furbearers, such as muskrat and mink. In fact, even before the twentieth century, biologists and trappers have estimated that the total number of bears killed for fur was no more than 33,000 per year during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and by the early twentieth century this figure, for Canada and the United States, was as low as 2,000 to 3,000 bears per year from the 1930s to the 1960s.⁷⁰ These figures are consistent within Ontario as by 1931, the number of black bears harvested as furbearers dropped by nearly half, down to 883 from 1,594 the previous year. This was likely symptomatic of the much larger socioeconomic problems brought on by the onset of the Great Depression in 1929 but nevertheless indicates that the status of the animal as a commercially valuable furbearer was somewhat dubious.

Black bears also would not have been vehemently pursued by trappers and other hunters because of logistical considerations. For most, bears were more difficult targets due to their size thereby requiring greater labour and effort in terms of killing and preparing the hide. Besides being less valuable than other smaller furbearers that would have been easier to manipulate at the trap lines and prepare afterwards, black bears provided an additional element of danger. If bears were not killed or completely incapacitated by snares and traps they were still capable of inflicting damage on trappers as they struggled for their lives. Although this type of scenario was quite rare, it could still happen. In fact, Ontario's first recorded fatal black bear attack involved a trapped bear and an eighty-year old trapper, in what is now Algonquin Provincial Park. While checking his trap lines on Happy Isle Lake, Colonel John Dennison noticed that a badly

⁷⁰ M.E. Obbard et al. "Furbearer Harvests in North America," in *Wild Furbearer Management and Conservation in North America* (Toronto: Queen's Printer, 1999), 1018-1019.

injured black bear was caught in the clutches of one of his traps. The octogenarian, armed only with an axe, tried to subdue the animal but failed and was subsequently killed.⁷¹

Although this type of encounter was atypical, it does demonstrate that beyond the financial considerations for not pursuing bears, trappers also needed to factor in additional safety and logistical concerns.

Despite not garnering much significance as a wild furbearer, black bears were at one point, experimental residents in the province's burgeoning industrial fur farm system that took root in the 1920s. These fur farms were designed to successfully raise furbearing animals in a captive or semi-captive state. By the 1930s, the Ontario government boasted that every native furbearer of the province could be found living amongst the province's licensed fur farms.⁷² Fur farming eventually became so successful that the DGF cautiously observed that it has reached a "point of values accruing from the product thereof it is beginning to threaten the production of fur from our wild life natural resources."⁷³ The most common types of furbearing animals found on these farms were those with highly valuable pelts such as fox and mink, whereas black bears were found in much less abundance. In 1930, the Department of Game and Fisheries reported that only nine black bears were living amongst the province's licensed farms, a paltry number in comparison to the 20,026 silver black fox and 7,184 mink registered that same year.⁷⁴ The number of black bears housed on these farms continued to decline, decreasing to twenty-

⁷¹ Audrey Saunders, *Algonquin Story* (Toronto: Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, 1963), 57-59.

⁷² Ontario, Department of Game and Fisheries, *Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Game and Fisheries Department of Ontario*, 1930. (Toronto: Herbert H. Ball, 1931), 5.

⁷³ Ontario, Department of Game and Fisheries, *Thirtieth Annual Report of the Game and Fisheries Department of Ontario*, 1937 (Toronto: T.E. Bowman, 1938), 9.

⁷⁴ Ontario, Department of Game and Fisheries, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the Game and Fisheries Department of Ontario*, 1932. (Toronto: Herbert H. Ball, 1933), 6.

one in 1936 and by 1941, they were not stocked on any of the province's licensed facilities (see Table 1 and Figure 1).

Logistical considerations likely prevented black bears from taking up considerable residence amongst the province's licensed fur farms. Since bears were much larger than their smaller and more valuable counterparts, caring for and processing would be much more intensive. In addition to providing adequate space and shelter for these animals, bears also presented additional financial considerations, as farmers would need to feed the animal in order to develop it to a marketable state. Given the size and appetite of mature or even subadult bears, this could be quite a costly endeavour. Due to the much lower market price for black bear furs, it was not necessarily the most enticing option. Even in a much more controlled setting, black bears only reached ambiguous furbearer status and were but a minor footnote in the development of Ontario's fur farming system.

As trapping pressure towards black bears declined, it had an impact on the animal's relationship with humans in the province. In the summer of 1931, Sudbury, Ontario English-language newspaper, the *Sudbury Star*, published an article about the area's growing problem of nuisance black bears and blamed this on a lack of trapping. Evidently, black bears had become so numerous and problematic around Sudbury that, farmers had begun "arming themselves to rid the district of them before they become so bold they will attack cattle."⁷⁵ The *Star* interviewed John Pepeguis, a local farmer, to offer his insights as to why the bears were particularly bothersome that year. He simply believed that there were too many bears because their "fur has been so low in price that

⁷⁵ "Farmers Prepare to Make War on Animals," *Sudbury Star*, 22 August 1931, 3.

no one has been hunting bear for the past three years.”⁷⁶ Annual reports for the DGF actually corroborate Pepeguis’ opinion and reveal that, by the 1930s, the number of bears killed in Ontario by trappers plummeted. More bears were killed for furbearing purposes in the six-year period from 1925 to 1931 than in the fifteen-year period that followed (see Table 2 and Figure 2). Undoubtedly, part of this precipitous drop-off in black bear trapping pressure was due to the Great Depression. While the market value of other furbearers also declined during this period, with reduced importance as furbearers, black bears began to be viewed more consistently as nuisance animals.

As black bears lost their importance as furbearers in the 1930s, they increasingly became the targets of farmers and other residents across Ontario because they were viewed as vermin. According to anthropologist Garry Marvin, pests or vermin are regarded “as transgressive animals and often, more strongly, as enemies that provoke emotional reactions ranging from annoyance or anger to repulsion and disgust.”⁷⁷ For farmers or property owners in the province’s rural areas where bears resided, the justification ranged from the protection of livestock and property to simply fearful pre-emption. Marvin has also characterized the “killing of vermin and pests is usually expressed in terms of destruction, removal, eradication, extermination, annihilation, or cleansing.”⁷⁸ In this sense, Ontario residents dutifully took up this task during the 1930s as more and more people began to regard the black bear with derision and disdain.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Garry Marvin, “Wild Killing: Contesting the Animal in Hunting,” in *Killing Animals*, ed. Animal Studies Group (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 17.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Once black bears made physical transgressions against sources of livelihood and property, people often organized hunting parties in order to kill the animal and, ultimately remove it from the area. When bears appeared in Verulam Township, near Lindsay, in June 1939, area farmers immediately organized a posse to track down two bears that had been killing sheep in the area.⁷⁹ Elsewhere in Maynooth, in Hastings County, three farmers were chased by a mother bear and two cubs, which led the *Evening Telegram* to speculate that the penalty for the offence would be “death for all.”⁸⁰ After a “sweet-toothed bear” had been raiding several beekeepers’ colonies in the Shelburne area “a party of farmers and newsmen lay in wait with high-powered rifles.”⁸¹ Apparently the marauding bruin had already consumed several hundred pounds of honey, a considerable amount, which explains why local residents were prepared to maintain nightly vigils until the bear was destroyed. Their patience paid off within two weeks and the *Evening Telegram* was able to publish that the bear’s honey stealing days were over.⁸² Even the mere sighting or presence of an animal seemed to justify farmers from discontinuing their regular activities and giving chase.⁸³

⁷⁹ Archives of Ontario (AO), RG 1-278-04, Game and Fisheries Department Newspaper Clippings, “Killing Bears Hunted by Verulam Farmers,” *Evening Telegram*, 1 June 1939. This series which ranges from RG 1-278-01 (1927-1932) to RG 1-278-08 (1946) consists of eight bound scrapbooks of newspaper clippings compiled by the Ontario Game and Fisheries Department. They pertain to all aspects of fish and wildlife management, primarily in Ontario, but also notable incidents in Canada and North America more generally.

⁸⁰ AO, RG 1-278-04, “Bear Chases 3, Death for all now Prospect: Organized Hunt Planned in Bancroft-Maynooth Area – Livestock Losses Indicate Animals Numerous,” *Evening Telegram*, 21 July 1939.

⁸¹ AO, RG 1-278-06, “Bruin Raids Honey-Yards, So Residents Mount Guard,” *Evening Telegram*, 29 September 1941.

⁸² AO, RG 1-278-06, “His ‘Honey Days’ are Over,” *Evening Telegram*, 17 October 1941.

⁸³ AO, RG 1-278-03, “Scare Prompts Brant County Hunt for Bear: Farmers Terror Doubled as Animal ‘Out of Element’ – Future Attacks Feared – None Yet,” *Evening Telegram*, 19 November 1938; “Warn Farmers to Keep Watch on Angry Bear: Big Animal is Tracked From Burford Township into Brantford District,” *Evening Telegram*, 21 November 1938.

In organizing many of these hunting parties to pursue nuisance bears, some people displayed levels of irrational behaviour that illustrate their contempt for the animal but also the amateurish nature of these outings. In his writing about bear hunts in the northeastern United States in the 18th century, historian Jon T. Coleman has argued that “spontaneous bear hunts encouraged accidents, miscalculations, and technological breakdowns. These mishaps flipped the human-animal relationship. For a brief moment, people appeared wild, violent, and irrational.”⁸⁴ The same could often be said about the hastily organized bear hunts in Ontario. Deep seeded fears about the animal often led to misidentification as men in Oakville once organized a hunting party against an animal that turned out to be not a bear but was actually a fifty-pound porcupine.⁸⁵ Mistaken identity could be even more costly as Lindsay area hunters in 1936 accidentally killed a steer valued at \$75 while searching for a rogue bear.⁸⁶ These misadventures could also pose significant danger to humans. After a group of young children spotted a large bear near an orchard in their home of Lindsay, they evidently emulated the actions of the adults in their area and organized a hunting party of their own. As the group chased after the animal with sticks, one of the children “hailed a gun from the kitchen wall and was lugging it out the doorway, when it went off” hitting a young girl in the party.⁸⁷ Luckily, she was only grazed by the shot and did not sustain a life-threatening injury. Incidents like these prompted people to suggest they would rather “meet a black bear in the woods

⁸⁴ Jon T. Coleman, *Vicious: Wolves and Men in America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 118.

⁸⁵ AO, RG 1-278-06, “Now Think ‘Bear’ Seen in Oakville to Be Porcupine,” *Evening Telegram*, 20 November 1941.

⁸⁶ AO, RG 1-278-02, “Looking for Bears, Hunters Shoot Valuable Steer,” *Globe and Mail*, 27 October 1936.

⁸⁷ AO, RG 1-278-05, “Children Stage Bear Hunt, Shot Grazes Girl,” *Globe and Mail*, 11 June 1941.

than a lot of irresponsible men with high-powered guns.”⁸⁸ These range of episodes reveal the types of problems that can occur when hastily organized hunting parties are established but also how people felt about bears. The degree to which they organized these outings, often at the expense to their own well-being, demonstrates the degree to which people viewed bears as vermin.

Of course, bear hunt stories often ended in mishaps or were told in a jocular manner because the encounters were often so dangerous. While wolves have been vilified, even more so than bears, stories about wolf encounters do not have the same tone because of the reality that, unlike wolves, bears were known to maul and, sometimes, eat people. As a result, Coleman suggests that the bear stories he uncovered in colonial New England possessed a “lighthearted tone [that] camouflaged the real emotions of bear encounters.”⁸⁹ Similarly, in Ontario, newspaper accounts often masked the gravity of the situations because fatal bear encounters were possible. While these types of incidences are extremely rare, they did occur, whereas wolf attacks on humans, even the non-fatal variety, are almost non-existent. As mentioned, Ontario’s first fatal human black bear attack occurred in 1881, in what is now Algonquin Park, but the province had a second one in 1924. A black bear killed a Finnish trapper, A. Waino, near Fort William (now Thunder Bay) in a very grisly encounter. According to the *Globe and Mail*, when the victim was discovered, “flesh had been pulled from the body and the scalp torn off, while of the face nothing was left but the eyes.”⁹⁰ Consequently, black bears were not only

⁸⁸ AO, RG 1-278-02, “Looking for Bears, Hunters Shoot Valuable Steer,” *Globe and Mail*, 27 October 1936.

⁸⁹ Coleman, *Vicious*, 121.

⁹⁰ “Bear is interrupted devouring his victim,” *Globe and Mail*, 18 November 1924, 2.

threats to crops and livestock but also posed an element of danger to humans. As a result, this shaped attitudes towards the animal and explains why some chose to write about the bear in the manner in which they did.

As more people in the province embraced the characterization of black bears as nuisances or dangerous pests, they began calling on the government to introduce measures to deal with them accordingly. Since the black bear was not yet recognized as a game animal, and therefore subject to very little regulation, individuals and groups advocated for the introduction of formal hunting seasons in order to regulate the animal through sanctioned harvests. M.U. Bates, vice-president of the Ontario Tourist Trade Association (OTTA), was one of the first individuals to go on record. Writing into the *Globe and Mail* in November 1931 Bates described the destructive nature of the black bear as he recounted how he witnessed a bull moose being killed by a black bear near his cottage in Metagama, in northern Ontario, during the summer. He speculated that the incident was probably only one of many that summer, suggesting that hundreds of moose, calves and adults, were slaughtered by bears in a similar manner. Given the supposed destruction that bears were causing against local moose populations, Bates candidly stated that “I am not ordinarily a pessimist, but I predict that if the present Ontario game laws controlling the taking of bears continue in effect, and no effective means taken to control them, in another five years our moose, like our beavers, will, for all practical purposes, be a thing of the past.”⁹¹ Instead, he recommended that the government institute a spring hunting season for bears because it would allow the province to curtail the bear

⁹¹ AO, RG 1-278-01, Game and Fisheries Newspaper Clippings, M.U. Bates, “Black Bears Slaughters Moose,” *Globe and Mail*, 13 November 1931.

population and develop “another valuable natural resources which, at the present time, we can well afford to exploit.”⁹² While others would later advocate for a bounty system as a way to provide an incentive for residents to kill bears, Bates recognized the value of the bear as a prospective game animal and reasoned “it would be a shameful waste of valuable resources to have them slaughtered off wholesale, at the expense of this Province, when they could so readily be turned into a source of profit.”⁹³

When the OTTA held its annual general meeting a few months later in North Bay, Bates was again vocal but also more desperate about the black bear situation in Ontario. While he continued to press the idea of a spring hunting season in order to generate revenue and keep the population in check, he believed his idea needed to be instituted quickly. He told the *Globe* that “they [black bears] are very destructive and are increasing so rapidly that a bounty will have to be paid on them if something is not done.”⁹⁴ Similar to his initial comments just a few months earlier, Bates continued to favour a solution that would see the black bear regulated as a game animal but also believed the situation was serious enough to warrant more stringent measures against bears if necessary.

Bates continued to share his thoughts on the destructiveness of bears in Ontario’s major newspapers, this time in the *Toronto Daily Star*. He explained that “in the past two or three seasons bears have become very destructive to moose in Northern Ontario... it is but recently that this fact has been made known to game authorities in Toronto.”⁹⁵

Despite testimony from individuals, such as Bates, that attested to witnessing bears killing

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ M.U. Bates, “Spring Bear-Hunt With \$10 License Urged for North,” *Globe and Mail*, 20 January 1932, 1.

⁹⁵ AO, RG 1-278-01, “Many Moose Killed by Bear, Says Hunter,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 9 March 1932.

moose, in the early 1930s many in the province were still unconvinced that bears regularly killed moose, besides young calves, with enough efficiency to warrant a regulated hunting season or bounty program. Bates claimed he had not only seen several moose attacked and killed but could produce numerous affidavits from trappers to verify this.⁹⁶ One such trapper, A.E. Way from northern Ontario, corroborated Bates and believed that “bears constituted an even worse menace to deer and moose than wolves.”⁹⁷

Although Bates was the vice-president of the Ontario Tourist Trade Association, his opinion on how to deal with black bears was not necessarily representative of the membership body. There were many within the organization and in the sporting community in general, who wanted to see a bounty system brought in to destroy the animals instead of a spring hunting season as a means of regulation. During the OTTA’s 1933 annual meeting in Sudbury, those that supported Bates’ perspective found themselves on the opposite end of jeers and boos.⁹⁸ At the meeting, Bates’ squared off against those that wanted to see a bounty introduced, including celebrity conservationist, Jack Miner. Despite the latter’s notoriety for his conservation efforts of migratory birds, Miner’s conflicting antipathy towards predatory animals was well documented at the time.⁹⁹ Bates did not deny that bears were menacing but argued that the Department of

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ AO, RG 1-278-02, CP, “Spring Hunting Season Urged in Northern Ontario,” *Globe and Mail*, 30 January 1933.

⁹⁹ Please see James M. Linton and Calvin W. Moore, *The Story of Wild Goose Jack: The life and Work of Jack Miner* (Toronto: CBC Enterprises, 1984), particularly 162-167. Miner’s hostility towards predatory animals, such as wolves, was also echoed by his sons Manly and Jasper. Manly, in particular, took up this mantle after his father passed away and even as Ontario veered towards cancelling the wolf bounty in the 1970s, Manly continued to advocate for their extermination, despite the fact that scientific evidence had exonerated the wolf and found bounties to be ineffective. For information on this, please see, Jack Miner, Manly F. Miner, and Jasper W. Miner, *Deer and Wolves in Ontario: As Seen by Jack Miner and His Sons*

Game and Fisheries should not be paying out thousands of dollars on an annual basis for the animal's destruction. Instead, he felt that the population of bears could still be checked and the province better served through a spring hunting season. Instead, he believed that this would bring a three-fold benefit to the province, "much-needed employment to our trappers and guides; it would create revenue for our Fish and Game Department; it would help, in a practical way, to reduce our bear population."¹⁰⁰

The growing concern about the destructiveness of black bears in the province in the 1930s became a discussion point in the *Committee on the Game Situation in Ontario*. Commissioned in 1931 by the provincial government, this group, consisting of ten MPPs and Jack Miner, was tasked with reviewing the current condition of Ontario's game animals and provide recommendations for future management strategies. While the black bear had been a minor consideration in the DGF's annual reports in years prior, the debate about its future management status warranted unprecedented consideration by the committee. When it came to black bears, the group was tasked with responding to the vocal complaints by individuals and groups, such as M.U. Bates and the OTTA, that the black bear was becoming even more destructive in recent years. In doing so, the commission was to decide whether additional measures, either a bounty or spring hunting season, should be introduced to mitigate the problem.

There was no shortage of individuals willing to testify before the Committee and indict the black bear as a predator animal worthy of a bounty. Algonquin Park's Chief

Manly F. Miner, Jasper W. Miner Between 1890-1970 (Kingsville, ON: Jack Miner Migratory Bird Foundation, 1971)

¹⁰⁰ AO, RG 1-278-02, CP, "Spring Hunting Season Urged in Northern Ontario," *Globe and Mail*, 30 January 1933.

Ranger, Mark Robinson, went on the record to attest to the bear's viciousness by stating that he had personally witnessed a male bear devour a fawn. Others such as Thomas McCormick, Chief Fire Ranger from Brulé Lake, also argued that "bears are very destructive to young deer and moose." In addition, Andrew Grant from Daventry told the Committee that they should "by all means destroy bears the same as wolves." A.E. Way, game warden from Lowbush and previously featured in the *Toronto Daily Star* with M.U. Bates, told the commission that he could provide names and addresses of "a score" of trappers that were willing to testify under oath that they have witnessed bears killing moose. He added that "one of the most experienced trappers I have known in my life of over forty years...states that bears are more destructive to moose than wolves."¹⁰¹

Despite the fact that the Committee received considerable testimony from government officials who wanted to see the black bear subject to a bounty, it also heard testimonials from others who sought to defend the animal. Dr. R.M. Anderson, Chief of the Biological Division at the National Museum of Canada, told the committee that attitudes in the United States towards black bears have changed and not only is it being "protected in many states, but is being increased in numbers by importations."¹⁰² Unlike the previous testimony from government rangers and wardens about the destructiveness of bears, James H. Burns from Senettère, Quebec argued, "the bear is one of the least destructive animals in the north country, " suggesting that "one weasel will destroy more game in a month than all the bear in fifty years."¹⁰³ G.M. Parks, a District Superintendent

¹⁰¹ Ontario, Legislative Assembly of Ontario, *Report of the Special Committee on the Game Situation*, Sessional Paper 32, 1933 (Toronto: Herbert M. Ball, 1933), 45.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 45-46.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 46.

for the DGF, doubted the claims about bears killing young moose and deer and opposed a bounty program or even an additional licensing season in the spring advocated by many “so-called sportsmen.”¹⁰⁴

In the end, while the Committee received considerable support for a bounty or a spring hunting season, it determined there was not a strong enough case to warrant a spring bear hunt or an incentive program. Despite the most significant discussion on record about Ontario’s black bears up to this point, the status quo remained. Nuisance bears could continue to be destroyed if they threatened property or livestock but a more regulated hunting system would not be introduced, nor would the animal receive additional protection.

In spite of the Special Committee’s recommendations, within four years the Department introduced a spring bear-hunting season for non-resident sportsmen. Non-resident hunters were initially unenthusiastic but the Department recognized that the large bear population throughout northern Ontario “provided a degree of hunting much appreciated by those interested in this branch of the sport.”¹⁰⁵ Part of this shift in black bear management may have been part of the longer history of recognizing wildlife as a natural resource of economic value. Deer and moose hunting regulations, tabled in nineteenth century Ontario, were designed not only to conserve the animal for long-term usage and generate revenue for the province through licensing sales and the tourist industry. In the first half of the twentieth century, the province reinforced these principles

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 137.

¹⁰⁵ Ontario, Department of Game and Fisheries, *Thirtieth Annual Report of the Game and Fisheries Department of Ontario, 1937* (Toronto: T.E. Bowman, 1938), 7.

and recognized “natural resources of any country are the basis of its national wealth and in evaluating the true worth of our wild life natural resources, it is pertinent to point out that these form a vital part of our economic structure.”¹⁰⁶ Since the black bear spring season was only opened to non-resident hunters, the government was hoping to cultivate bear hunting interest, largely amongst American hunters, as this group had already been flocking to the province for decades to fish and hunt.

The implementation of a limited spring season signalled a significant change to black bear hunting and management. While the animals did not receive big-game status akin to moose or deer they did become a quasi-game animal since they could now be hunted by non-residents in an annually regulated season. Up until the 1937, information about black bears in the Department’s annual reports was described in the section reserved for furbearing animals. Although black bears ceased to be a significant furbearing animal for the province from the 1930s onwards, largely because of market value and logistical considerations, they were still subject to many of the same regulations as their more valuable furbearing counterparts. With the institution of the non-resident spring hunt, some in the province viewed black bears more incrementally as a game animal.

Early on, non-resident interest in spring bear hunting was quite limited. In the inaugural 1937 season, only thirty licenses were sold. It is probable that the economic conditions of the Great Depression might have limited the ability of non-resident hunters to travel abroad to hunt when more pressing costs and necessities were on the line at

¹⁰⁶ Ontario, Department of Game and Fisheries, *Thirty-First Annual Report of the Game and Fisheries Department of Ontario, 1938* (Toronto: T.E. Bowman, 1939), 1.

home. Once the Second World War began, licensing sales actually increased substantially, in comparison to the numbers sold in 1937. Even after the United States joined the conflict in December 1941, the sale of non-resident spring bear licenses continued to increase (see Table 3). The Department seemed elated to report in 1940 that “unquestionably, the sportsman gets a great thrill out of bear hunting.”¹⁰⁷ In fact, with spring bear hunting license sales reaching record highs during the war, the *Globe and Mail* remarked that Ontario bears were dying to “help Canada in her all-out effort to win the war.”¹⁰⁸ Department of Game and Fisheries Minister, H.C. Nixon, told the newspaper that the bears were, indeed, contributing to the war effort as money non-resident hunters were spending on licenses and other fees was to be “collected by the Dominion Government and popped back into the United States to buy planes. Consequently, the bears will have made a contribution to the Canadian war effort.”¹⁰⁹ The black bear was beginning to be regarded as more of a game animal, especially by the Department, as it noted that since the inauguration of the spring season, “there has been an increasing interest displayed by non-resident hunters in the possibilities for recreation and relaxation thus made available.”¹¹⁰

Although non-resident hunters might have begun to view Ontario’s black bears as worthy game animals, many residents of the province continued to regard the animal as a

¹⁰⁷ Ontario, Department of Game and Fisheries, *Thirty-Third Annual Report of the Game and Fisheries Department of Ontario, 1940* (Toronto: T.E. Bowman, 1940), 6.

¹⁰⁸ AO, RG 1-278-05, “Ontario Bears to Die to Help Canada in Her All-Out Effort to Win the War,” *Globe and Mail*, 14 December 1940.

¹⁰⁹ AO, RG 1-278-05, “Ontario Bears to Die to Help Canada in Her All-Out Effort to Win the War,” *Globe and Mail*, 14 December 1940

¹¹⁰ Ontario, Department of Game and Fisheries, *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report of the Game and Fisheries Department of Ontario, 1941* (Toronto: T.E. Bowman, 1942), 7.

nuisance. The initial calls for a bounty program in the early 1930s were not taken seriously, most notably by the 1933 Special Committee on the Game Situation, and by the end of the decade, more and more people were vying for the government to do something drastic to address their problems with black bears. In the province's agricultural areas, farmers had always found ways to deal with transgressive bears, either by organizing hunting parties or "death watches" as dubbed by some newspapers.¹¹¹ Others, such as David White from Sault Ste. Marie, took it upon themselves to protect their crops and livestock. In the Fall of 1935, alone, White had already killed five bears that he felt were roaming too close to his sheep and "wished the government would do something about bears."¹¹² Elsewhere in the province, individuals and groups also lobbied the government to introduce a bounty as a way to deal with nuisance bears. In northwestern Ontario, the Thunder Bay Municipal League drafted a resolution for a bounty after one of its members, N.W. Harrison, the district's agricultural representative, reported that nine of his prime pigs had been killed in one season by a marauding bear.¹¹³ Other groups, such as the Temiskaming Lamb Fair Association, also asked the government for a bounty after it said that sheep losses in the summer of 1941 had "reached alarming proportions in Temiskaming, and, as no compensation is allowed, farmers who suffer from this cause, the bounty is asked for."¹¹⁴ Both groups' proposals fell on deaf ears and neither was given respite from the damage that bears had caused in their respective areas.

¹¹¹ AO, RG 1-278-05, "Raiding Bear Eludes Posse" *Evening Telegram*, 2 October 1940.

¹¹² "Wants Bounty on Bears," *Globe and Mail*, 6 November 1935, 9.

¹¹³ AO, RG 1-278-04, "North Wants Bear Bounty: Boy Attacked by Bruin Saved by Dog, Nine Pigs Killed, Agricultural Agent Tells Thunder Bay Gathering," *Globe and Mail*, 21 November 1938.

¹¹⁴ "Bounty on Bears Asked by Algoma Sheep Men," *Globe and Mail*, 24 July 1941, 21.

Other more sensational yet rare incidents also prompted residents to call upon the government to introduce an incentive oriented bear management program. In the summer of 1941, in addition to the reported raids on northern Ontario livestock, people also experienced negative encounters in areas where blueberry crops were failing. In Markstay, a small village south of Sudbury, a lack of natural food sources had created a situation where “hungry bears and angry bears, with their cubs, are on the prowl in the rocky fir-clad woodlands, chasing and clawing children, and frightening settlers out of their wits.”¹¹⁵ A number of incidents were reported to have occurred in that area over the summer, culminating in the fall in a more notable incident that involved a mother bear and her two cubs when they chased ten students on their way to school. Arthur Gingrich, a Mennonite minister, intervened and crushed the skull of one of the young cubs as it veered towards the school but the children were frightened so badly that classes were cancelled for the day.¹¹⁶ Unsurprisingly, Markstay and Sudbury residents campaigned for a bounty in order to avoid similar incidents in the future.

While Ontario residents and organizations continued to advocate for a bounty, the Department of Game and Fisheries skirted the issue. Part of the reason that the DGF would not have been receptive to a bounty program was, because, by the 1940s, black bears were increasingly becoming popular targets for non-resident sportsmen. For a nominal fee of \$5, non-residents could purchase a spring bear license, “the cheapest hunting license obtainable.”¹¹⁷ Given the reasonable price placed on bears it appeared as

¹¹⁵ AO, RG 1-278-06, “ ‘I Yelled in Bear’s Ear Saved Life,’ Says Boy, 8 in Bruin-Beset Area,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 6 October 1941.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ AO, RG 1-278-05, “Bear Increase Boosts Season by Two Weeks,” *Evening Telegram*, 2 April 1940.

though spring-bear hunting was only going to continue to rise in popularity and the government was enthusiastically reporting the “increasing number of non-residents hunters are becoming interested in the spring hunt... Unquestionably the sportsman gets a thrill out of bear hunting.”¹¹⁸ Deputy Minister of the Department of Game and Fisheries, D.J. Taylor, publically opposed the idea of a bounty. He told the *Globe and Mail* that he believed the advantage of a bear bounty would be questionable, especially in light of the fact that “thousands of dollars have been spent in the spring bear hunts.”¹¹⁹ While Taylor acknowledged the negative human-bear encounters that had occurred in 1941, he pointed to the lack of natural food sources that year as a reason why bears were creeping into settlements in higher numbers. Taylor’s reservations in part reflected a notion that would not gain credence for decades, namely that bears will seek out alternative food sources when natural ones are lacking, and that this human-bear conflicts. His position on the bounty was also rooted in the fact that the DGF wanted to continue to capitalize on the black bear’s status as a game animal for non-resident hunters, rather than pay residents through a bounty program. The *Toronto Star*’s outdoor writer, Jack Hambleton, echoed Taylor’s sentiments. In an article dated around the same time as Taylor’s comments, Hambleton argued that “we hold no brief for the bear, but he is worth a lot more to the tourist traffic as a trophy than the \$10 asked.”¹²⁰ For Taylor and Hambleton, the bear was viewed as a game animal and thereby a potential revenue generator. Therefore, the idea of

¹¹⁸ Ontario, Department of Game and Fisheries, *Thirty-Third Annual Report of the Game and Fisheries Department of Ontario*, 1940 (Toronto: T.E. Bowman, 1941), 6.

¹¹⁹ AO, RG 1-278-06, “Game Deputy Does Not Favor Imposition of Bounty on Bears,” *Globe and Mail*, 17 December 1941, 4. And “Big Bad Bears to Be Exempt from Bounty,” *Sudbury Star*, 17 December 1941, 2.

¹²⁰ Jack Hambleton, “Bears on Raiding Trips, Rotarians Ask Bounty,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 19 December 1941, 70.

switching management programs, from non-resident big-game to resident incentive killing was seen as mutually exclusive and illogical. Yet, the varying perspectives that people held towards bears allowed them to occupy multiple categories even if they competed with each other.

Taylor's position of maintaining the black bear as a game animal, for non-residents, instead of embracing a bounty program seemed to be the Department's official stance in December 1941. But when the snow melted in the spring of 1942, the enthusiasm for a bounty program returned. In the Ontario legislature, Liberal member from the Temiskaming riding, W.G. Nixon, warned that black bears were becoming so numerous and belligerent that "it becomes a question as to whether the bear or the sheep will survive."¹²¹ He recommended a modest experiment to the government, suggesting a \$2 bear bounty and monitoring the results. Elsewhere across the province, calls for a bounty in the springtime were ringing out. In Port Arthur (now Thunder Bay) the Conservative Association had begun framing a resolution to be sent to the government to see the establishment of a \$10 bounty on bears be given in the Lakehead district. Norman Harrison, the district's agricultural representative, who previously advocated for a bounty in 1938, again led the charge when he told the Association that bears were increasingly destroying many sheep, hogs and even cattle, so much so that he believed the district's wool crop would be seriously endangered.¹²²

Beyond the perspectives of viewing bears as game animals and vermin, a more complicated idea about black bears also existed in Ontario at the same time; many people

¹²¹ AO, RG 1-278-06, "Bears Make North Wilder, Woolier," *Globe and Mail*, circa April 1942.

¹²² AO, RG 1-278-06, "Bear Bounty Sought at Head of Lakes," *The Manitoulin Expositor*, 19 April 1942.

saw them as pets and adopted them. According to German author Bernd Brunner, “people in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries seemed to have enjoyed the company of these amusing, fur-covered, wild ‘little people,’ who could serve as droll counterparts to their own children.”¹²³ This trend was also evident in nineteenth and twentieth century North America, as black bears continued to be thought of as suitable pets. For example, a popular Montreal tavern owner in the 1870s, Charles McKiernan or “Joe Beef” is best remembered for fostering a sense of working class culture in the city but also for his exotic menagerie of animals, which included bears – the most popular of the bunch.¹²⁴ Elsewhere, before Yale adopted “Handsome Dan” the bulldog as the school’s official mascot, the university paraded a black bear cub around during its sporting events.¹²⁵ Even Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario had its own black bear, “Gee Whiz,” as the football team’s mascot.¹²⁶ Pet bears and cubs remained quite popular throughout all parts of Ontario as far into the 1940s. In 1934 the *Toronto Daily Star* recorded DGF Minister George H. Challies as stating “there is quite a demand outside the province for bear cubs, which bring from \$20 to \$50.”¹²⁷ A Department of Game and Fisheries memorandum in 1934 also confirmed the popularity of bear cubs, outlining that all game wardens are to be aware that any purchaser of a bear cub or cubs in addition to paying the seller must also

¹²³ Bernd Brunner, *Bears: A Brief History*, trans. Lori Lantz (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 103. Brunner actually speculates that this practice could be traced back thousands of years.

¹²⁴ Peter DeLottinville, “Joe Beef of Montreal: Working-Class Culture and the Tavern, 1869-1889” *Labour/Le Travail* 8/9 (1981/1982), 14.

¹²⁵ “Yale’s Black Bear Mascot,” *New York Times*, 26 November 1889, 5.

¹²⁶ “No Wonder Queen’s Bear Thought it was Winter,” *Globe and Mail*, 12 November 1921, 8.

¹²⁷ AO, RG 1-278-02, “Open Season on Bear Refused by Ontario: May Issue Special Licenses for Grizzlies-Protect Southern Moose,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 7 March 1934.

pay the Department \$1 for a purchase license and a ¢60 royalty.¹²⁸ Clearly by this time in Ontario, the trade in bear cubs had become so prominent that the Department realized that it needed to introduce more stringent regulations and ensure that the province was part of the transaction.

Examining the pet keeping aspect of the human – bear relationship in Ontario also further elucidates how we can uncover how people viewed and valued the animal. Historians have homed in on petkeeping as a way of interrogating the everyday culture of people. Kathleen Kete, in particular, studied petkeeping in nineteenth century Paris as a way to examine class relations, as it was largely a bourgeois practice.¹²⁹ Erica Fudge has also found that focusing on pets can be useful for historians because it reveals how animals hold prominent positions in human society, thus shedding light on human values, attitudes, and culture.¹³⁰ Harriet Ritvo has argued that the reason so few people kept pets for pleasure until the late eighteenth century was because this “seemed to represent the intrusion of wild and threatening nature into the family circle.”¹³¹ As technology developed, she argues that this made nature seem “less terrifying” and allowed animals to become friends.

But, keeping pet bears was a highly unusual relationship, in any location even in the twentieth century, as it often blurred the lines between pet, game animal, and livestock. Despite being a wild animal, when black bears were kept captive, either as pets

¹²⁸ AO, Neil MacNaughton fonds, F-4330. 1-1-13.3 Department Circular #10, 18 January 1934.

¹²⁹ Please see Kathleen Kete, *The Beast in the Boudoir: Petkeeping in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994)

¹³⁰ Please see Erica Fudge, *Pets*. (Stocksfield, UK: Acumen, 1998)

¹³¹ Harriet Ritvo, *Nobel Cows & Hybrid Zebras: Essays on Animals and History* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 199-200.

or show animals, they were domesticated in the sense that their lifecycle would no longer occur naturally but would become a human responsibility and decision. Social anthropologist Garry Marvin has written about the domestic killing of animals and has argued that they are “deliberately killed because they come to the end of what is perceived to be their useful lives.”¹³² When pets are euthanized it is usually done to alleviate perceived suffering or because the owner cannot afford a necessary operation to prolong the life of the animal. When domestic livestock approaches the end of its “life” it is killed and turned into meat or possibly scientific material. The case with black bears in Ontario from the 1920s to the 1940s is quite interesting because as a pet it was quite anomalous. Pet bears were usually killed when they became too much of a burden for the owner or when they became too dangerous. Unlike household dogs or cats, pet bears often ended up as throw rugs or meat for their previous owners. The dichotomous relationship between pets and owners has been touched on by Yi-Fu Tuan, discussing how animals such as dogs “cannot be eaten, not because they do not taste nice, but because they are categorized different from sheep: they are pets. Rabbits, however, can be pets and meat (although it is unlikely in most cases that an animal exists in both categories simultaneously).”¹³³ And yet with bears, this is exactly what happened in many situations as the animal was first and foremost, wild, but often reared domestically like a pet. Once the owners killed them, bears reverted back to the status of a wild game animal or as livestock, as their bodies were still valuable. In this way, bears were never truly pets

¹³² Marvin, “Wild Killing,” 16.

¹³³ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Dominance and Affection: The Making of Pets*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 18.

nor were they ever truly livestock. Instead, they were a curious mix of domestication and wildness that played out in the form of a complicated relationship between the human owners and the animals.

Even in the province's urban and metropolitan areas, bears were kept as pets, even by notable figures in Canadian politics. In August 1938, O.D. Skelton, Prime Minister Mackenzie King's undersecretary of state, made headlines in the *Toronto Daily Star* not for his acumen in international relations but because his son Alex's pet bear cub escaped from the family's home in Rockcliffe. An investigation into the matter by one of the province's game overseers found that the bear was so small you could keep it in your pocket and "was still being fed from a baby's bottle."¹³⁴ The Skeltons were temporarily allowed to keep the pet bear, but not after the Council of Rockcliffe prohibited residents from maintaining bears as pets.¹³⁵ Bear cubs were also found to be companion animals to families in affluent Toronto neighbourhoods as well. In September 1940, the Crux family from Etobicoke temporarily lost their pet bear, aptly named Teddy, which escaped.¹³⁶ Teddy returned home after he was picked up on the side of the road by Peter Wasylyck less than a week later, and the family was elated to have back their "pet, and perfectly harmless" bear.¹³⁷ Other Toronto bears made daring escapes, which prompted one Toronto fire-fighter, Mike Thorne, to ask "who'd ever expect to find a bear in Forest Hill?" following the rescue of a treed bear cub from one of the city's more affluent

¹³⁴ AO, RG 1-278-03, "Pet Cub No Threat Residents Assured," *Toronto Daily Star*, 19 August 1938.

¹³⁵ AO, RG 1-278-03, "No More Bears," *Evening Telegram*, 1 September 1938.

¹³⁶ AO, RG 1-278-05, "Pop-Loving Bear Cub Wanders Etobicoke Bush" *Evening Telegram*, 17 September 1940.

¹³⁷ AO, RG 1-278-05, "Wandering Bear Cub is Home again to Stay," *Toronto Daily Star*, 21 September 1940.

areas.¹³⁸ Following the incident, Reginald Sparkes, the bear's owner, decided that urban Toronto was no place for an adventurous bruin and brought him to his cottage to be released. Another bear, this time from North York, also escaped and took refuge in a tree before "the long hand of the law reached out and brought the cub safely to the ground" and back to its owner, Mrs. Button from Queen's Drive.¹³⁹

Bears were such sought after pets in Ontario during the early part of the twentieth century that people often risked life and limb to capture bear cubs, contending with angry mother bears that tried to repel the would-be captors. In October 1938 Robert Thompson and his brother William attempted to capture two bear cubs in a thicket at Dickey Lake, approximately fifty miles north of Belleville. In the process, the mother bear charged Robert knocking him to the ground, biting his leg and inflicting lacerations on his face. His brother killed the bear with an axe thereby preventing Robert from sustaining injury and the two successfully captured the cubs.¹⁴⁰ The stark contrast between the disposition of full-grown bears and cubs was glaring and yet people throughout the province and beyond believed that black bears were still suitable pets. Despite clearly possessing the ability to maim or even kill, Ontario residents apparently believed that bears were "tame" or at least "not wild" enough to present a serious threat to their households or person.

Even after people secured bears as pets they were still not clear of danger and not all situations unfolded cleanly or safely. While the Thompson brother's escaped from their misadventure relatively unscathed, incidents occurred elsewhere in the province

¹³⁸ "'Teddy' Ruffles Village Calm; Police, Firemen, Ladder, lasso End Sabbath Misadventure," *Globe and Mail*, 15 May 1944, 13.

¹³⁹ "Bear Cub Takes Holiday," *Globe and Mail*, 10 June 1935, 11.

¹⁴⁰ AO, RG 1-278-03, "Trapper Mauled by Mother Bear: Brothers Kill Animal and Capture Cubs," *Evening Telegram*, 21 October 1938.

between humans and bears that demonstrated the often tragic consequences of keeping bears as pets. Near Niagara Falls in September 1922, local Hartley F. Upper and his wife were badly mauled after an encounter with a pet bear. Hartley sustained a broken leg in the ordeal while Mrs. Upper's scalp was almost completely torn off by the animal.¹⁴¹ Outside of Ontario, terrible incidents also occurred which demonstrated the problems with keeping bears as pets. Following an accident in October 1936 in Ellsworth, Maine, the *Globe and Mail* reported that a bear named Pete, that had been captive for eleven years, turned vicious and killed two men before being subdued.¹⁴² Nevertheless, despite horrifying episodes such as the ones described above, people continued to adopt bears as pets and accepted great risk in the process.

People often succumbed to injuries from captive bears at roadside fuelling stations. These animals were popular along some of the province's more rural roads in the early twentieth century. Examples included two-year-old Philip Larder, who was badly mauled by a bear at Nitzi's Service Station near Larder Lake in the northern Timiskaming District.¹⁴³ The *Evening Telegram* reported that the "tame" bear nearly tore the two-year old's scalp off. After receiving a blood transfusion at a hospital in Kirkland Lake it was reported that the boy would make a full recovery but the same could not be said about Nitzi's bear. Immediately after the incident, the attacking bear was clubbed and shot to death and the display of bears at this particular service station was banned indefinitely.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ "Man and Wife Badly Mauled in Encounter with Pet Bear," *Globe and Mail*, 19 September 1922, 1.

¹⁴² "Two Men Die When Pet Bear Turns Killer," *Globe and Mail*, 16 October 1936, 1.

¹⁴³ AO, RG 1-278-03, "Boy, 2, Clawed by Bear is On Way to Recovery: Child, Scalp Almost Torn Off, Rallies After Blood Transfusion – Brothers Scratched," *Evening Telegram*, 1 November 1938.

¹⁴⁴ "Display of Bears to be Stopped After Mauling of Young 'Dynamite,'" *Globe and Mail*, 1 November 1938, 15.

Following the Larder Laker incident, a panel of provincial experts, including veterinarians and government authorities, weighed in on the issue of maintaining bears as roadside station pets and attractions. Dr. B.T. McGhie, Ontario's Deputy Minister of Health reportedly said that "he had heard no instances of bears inflicting severe injury on people in Ontario... but their nature is such that it's always a little risky to chain them up as pets." Veterinarian Dr. Alan Secord argued that any animal chained up, especially a bear, was liable to have vicious spells and advocated that as "a rule, it's not a very good idea to try to make bears pets."¹⁴⁵ Yet, despite this sound testimony, especially from the latter, no remedial legislation was proposed to prohibit the practice.

Against the advice of experts, people in Ontario continued to take in bears as pets and roadside attractions with unfortunate consequences. In July 1939, after being attacked by a roadside bear, Mae Berry wanted to sue the bear's owner, William Campbell for \$1,000 in damages.¹⁴⁶ When the case was finalized four months later, the judge sided with Berry and awarded her \$400 for her pain and suffering. Berry's lawyer, John A. Munro reportedly told the courtroom that "bears are accepted without proof to be naturally dangerous."¹⁴⁷ While Berry did not receive the full amount she sought, the precedent of being compensated for bear inflicted injuries may have given prospective bear owners pause. Yet, incidents continued to happen in the face of better judgment. In August 1940, an eleven-year-old Toronto boy, Norman McNaughton, was treated for

¹⁴⁵ AO, RG 1-278-03, "Tame Bears Apt to Turn Vicious, So Making Pets Risky, Says Experts," *Globe and Mail*, 1 November 1938.

¹⁴⁶ AO, RG 1-278-04, "Bear Mauls Woman, Victim Sues Owner" *Toronto Daily Star*, 18 July 1939.

¹⁴⁷ AO, RG 1-278-04, "Bear Victim Woman Gets \$400 Award: Hamilton Judge Rules Ferocious Animals Are Kept at Owner's Risk in Matter of Damages," *Evening Telegram*, 22 November 1939.

serious lacerations to his legs after he was attacked by a roadside bear.¹⁴⁸ While Berry and McNaughton escaped with their lives, others outside of the province who kept bears as filling stations pets were not always so lucky. On 12 November 1934, a sixty-seven year old San Angelo, Texas resident, Tom Brown, died after his three-year old pet bear mauled him to death at his station at Live Oak Creek.¹⁴⁹ Given the potential for serious injury and even death, it is likely that the popularity of bear ownership in the province, at least in publically accessible locations, declined as the century progressed. Many were undoubtedly leery of being liable for compensatory damages.

The ownership of bears as pets and roadside attractions still continued, but with far less frequency but continued disastrous results. A young boy from Northbrook, east of Peterborough, was severely mauled by his pet bear when he grabbed the bear's ear while feeding it.¹⁵⁰ The gravest case of pet ownership in Ontario's history likely occurred in July 1978 when Lynn Orser was fatally mauled by her boyfriend's pet bear, Smokey. The animal would perform in wrestling shows with its owner, David McKigney, throughout Canada and the United States.¹⁵¹ While McKigney described Smokey as "just a big baby" following the attack, Orser's story remains the province's only fatality caused by a captive black bear.

Despite the notable and negative incidents between humans and black bears as part of the ongoing owner-pet relationships, one of the more interesting aspects of this

¹⁴⁸ AO, RG 1-278-05, "Bear, Given Empty Bottle Badly Mauls Toronto Boy," *Toronto Daily Star*, 13 August 1940.

¹⁴⁹ AO, RG 1-278-02, "Pet Bear Turns Fierce, Claws Owner to Death," *Globe and Mail*, 13 November 1934.

¹⁵⁰ "Grabbed Bear by Ears, Boy, 14, Mauled by Pet," *Globe and Mail*, 23 June 1961, 2.

¹⁵¹ Jon Ferry, "Wrestling Bear Mauls to Death Man's Girl Friend," *Globe and Mail*, 3 July 1978, 1.

intermingling was the apparent disconnection and indifference that people exhibited about the animal's wildness. It was all too common that in instances where pet or captive bears were described as "gentle and playful" people were shocked and appalled when the animals displayed their wildness by attacking or injuring humans. At other times, people remarked at how a pet bear seemed to be quite normal in its captive setting but once it escaped and "enjoyed liberty, [it] turned him berserk."¹⁵² A *Globe and Mail* story discussed how the temper of a pet bear from Peterborough was "spoiled" by a visit to Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto. After being displayed as part of a festival it had *become* vicious and unruly.¹⁵³ Individuals like Major M. Price from Actinolite, north of Belleville, found no contradiction in their description of their wild pet bear as "docile enough, but might fly into a rage at a moment's notice if teased."¹⁵⁴ Mrs. George Harris told the *Toronto Daily Star* in October 1938 that two of the family's pet bears would play with anyone, "although one [could be] a *little wild* at times."¹⁵⁵ Consequently, many of the individuals that owned bears as pets did not recognize them as wild animals but genuinely saw them as suitable pets that could be prone to wild fits under certain circumstances. The disconnect between the idea of wildness and domestication and the inherent incompatibility of the two also manifested itself in how the animals were handled by their owners when they become problematic.

¹⁵² "Taste of Liberty Turns Bear's Head," *Globe and Mail*, 1 May 1931, 3.

¹⁵³ "Visit to C.N.E. Spoils Temper of Pet Bear," *Globe and Mail*, 5 October 1937, 32. Emphasis added by this author.

¹⁵⁴ AO, RG 1-278-03, "'Tame' Bear Kept in Cage," *Globe and Mail*, November 1938.

¹⁵⁵ AO, RG 1-278-03, "Bear Scares Horses on Dundas Highway: Team Bolts as Cub Appears- Thought Fugitive from Park," *Toronto Daily Star*, 18 October 1938. Emphasis added by this author.

Examining what happened to pet black bears after they were euthanized by their owners reveals how complicated the relationship was in comparison to other more traditional cases of pet ownership, such dogs or cats. Maintaining bears as pets blurred the lines between normal pet ownership because after the animal was killed, it still held value in a deceased state, either as meat or as fur. Unlike with dogs or cats, bears could still be eaten or used as living room décor after their time as a companion animal ended. This provides us with a way to interpret how people valued this relationship and how they valued and perceived the animal. There are instances where newspaper articles reported that once bears had outgrown their accommodations or living spaces, owners killed the animals but still used their bodies. After a Peterborough zookeeper stated there was no more space for one of its resident bears, the *Globe and Mail* suggested that “bear steaks may soon be the order of the day.”¹⁵⁶ It is unclear whether this particular animal became a culinary offering but other incidents demonstrate that pet bears often ended up on the chopping block. In 1934 J.C. Patterson from Brampton, Ontario captured and brought back two black bear cubs to become pets in his home. By February 1937 the two bears had reportedly passed their “pet” stage and tipped the scales at a combined weight of 750 pounds. While the pair of bears delighted Brampton residents in the summer months, when they were on display at Huttonville Park, they were becoming a source of ire for their owner. Previously Patterson had been able to play and frolic with the two but lamented that “they have passed the stage where they can take a joke, and where their

¹⁵⁶ “Visit to C.N.E. Spoils Temper of Pet Bear,” *Globe and Mail*, 5 October 1937, 32.

play is just a bit ‘too rough.’”¹⁵⁷ Patterson attempted to donate them to the local zoo for fear that they would be targeted by hunters if he released them to the wild. When the zoo refused to take the ursine pair, Patterson, in a twist of irony, decided it was best to shoot them before a crowd of local hunters. Afterwards, the *Globe and Mail* reported that “after partaking in so much of Mr. Patterson’s hospitality, [the bears] will return the favor. All day today, a butcher had been busy cutting the two animals into roasts and steaks.”¹⁵⁸ A very peculiar way to end a three-year relationship with one’s pets.

Other black bears did not necessarily end up on a butcher’s counter but were still converted into more valuable material following their death. In Simcoe County, Clarence Fraser’s pet bear escaped in the Fall of 1937 much to the chagrin of his neighbours. Once Fraser had located his missing bruin he had the undesirable task of shooting his beloved pet as he felt he could no longer keep the animal without potentially causing harm to himself or other people. While he allegedly lamented the decision, it was later reported that Fraser had taken solace in the fact that the bear would remain part of the family, adorning the living room as a new rug.¹⁵⁹

Ontario’s black bears also occupied the dual role of pet and official mascot in the Canadian military. But again, this was a complicated relationship that tested the limits of the traditional bonds of companionship due to the wildness of the animal. The Royal Canadian Engineers’ 2nd Field Company once had a pet bear and mascot, named Bingo. It

¹⁵⁷ AO, RG 1-278-02, “Bears, Far Past Cub Stage, Problem to Brampton Man,” *Globe and Mail*, 5 February 1937.

¹⁵⁸ AO, RG 1-278-02, “Two Pet Bears Shot in Brampton as Kindness to Them and Owner,” *Globe and Mail*, 19 February 1937.

¹⁵⁹ AO, RG 1-278-02, “Pet Bruin Cows Townfolk: Roaming Over, Becomes Rug,” *Evening Telegram*, 23 November 1937.

was reported that Bingo and his fellow soldiers got along handsomely because “Bingo has learned not to bite too hard or let his claws sink too far” and that “he plays like a puppy.”¹⁶⁰ But the cordial relationship was short-lived and Bingo was eventually evicted from the Exhibition Camp by the Engineers because he was getting too large. Once Bingo had outlived his perceived usefulness, the soldiers discarded him and arranged for an official within the Department of Lands and Forests to pick up the bear and release it back into the wild. Incredibly, as Bingo was being transported from the camp to the forest, he escaped from his crate and ran loose down Dufferin Street in Toronto. Two police officers arrived on scene and spared the bear’s life before a Humane Society truck approached, “whose inspector was prepared to destroy the animal.”¹⁶¹ It is unclear what became of Bingo but we could speculate that if he was not released into the wild he was either donated to a zoo or killed. Young bears that ended up in the care of Humane Societies usually only had two options, with the latter being the more common outcome.¹⁶²

Bingo might have avoided death during his brief escape in the busy streets of Toronto but other military bears did not fare as well. After a bear was shot and killed near Canadian Forces Base Borden in May 1941, some of the soldiers believed it might have been the former mascot of the Canadian Armoured Fighting Vehicles Training Centre, Judy. She joined the Base after being donated by the First Hussars of London. Like most

¹⁶⁰ AO, RG 1-278-05, “If Bear Trees Soldier Don’t Be ‘Fraid-It’s Fun: Mascot from Sudbury is Big now but has Kittenish Ideas of Fun-Sentries can Keep Warm Inside these Cold Days.” *Toronto Daily Star*, 5 February 1940.

¹⁶¹ AO, RG 1-278-05, “Bear Barely Escape Alive in Fit of Temper on Truck” *Evening Telegram*, 30 March 1940.

¹⁶² “This Black Bear is Bottle Baby,” *Globe and Mail*, 21 June 1948, 12.

pet bears at this time, Judy was a welcomed addition at the barracks until she was too difficult to handle, at which point the soldiers released her into the wild.¹⁶³ Once the story had broken that a bear had been shot near the base, the *Toronto Daily Star* joked that the bear had been *discharged* from the army.¹⁶⁴

The stories of Bingo and Judy pale in comparison to the bear that could, quite possibly, be considered the most famous Canadian military mascot, even if her tenure in this position was short-lived. On 24 August 1914 while en route to a training facility in Valcartier, Quebec, Lieutenant Harry Colebourn from Winnipeg, purchased a female black bear cub in White River, Ontario, for \$20.¹⁶⁵ He named his new cub, Winnie, after his hometown of Winnipeg and proceeded to take her to England, where she eventually served as the mascot for his regiment, the Second Canadian Infantry Brigade. Val Shushkewich writes that “Winnie quickly became a ‘pet’ to many of the soliders. Like a puppy, she would follow them around in their off-duty hours.”¹⁶⁶ When Colebourn’s regiment was deployed to fight in France in December 1914, he left Winnie at the London Zoo for safekeeping.¹⁶⁷ When he returned from the front on leave, Colebourn often visited Winnie at the zoo. While he intended to bring the bear home to Canada with him after the war, in the end, he decided to donate his beloved bear to the London Zoo, in appreciation for the great care that they had bestowed upon her. She had become a

¹⁶³ AO, RG 1-278-05, “Bear Shot on Farm May Be ‘Wild’ Pet: Once Camp Borden’s Judy Believed Caught Chasing Farmer’s Cattle,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 4 May 1941.

¹⁶⁴ AO, RG 1-278-05, “Bear Discharged from Army, Shot While Sabotaging Cows” *Toronto Daily Star*, 19 August 1940.

¹⁶⁵ Val Shushkewich, *The Real Winnie: A One-of-a-Kind Bear* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2003), 7.

¹⁶⁶ Val Shushkewich, *The Real Winnie: A One-of-a-Kind Bear* (Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 2003), 21.

¹⁶⁷ Zoological Society of London (ZSL), Animal Registrar, Registration Card for Winnie.

favourite amongst visitors, particularly A.A. Milne and his son, Christopher.¹⁶⁸ Milne's son was said to be so enchanted during visits to the Zoo, especially with Winnie, that the elder Milne created a fictional world of characters that included the bear and a young boy, Christopher Robin. These stories eventually became the beloved children's literature series *Winnie the Pooh*. Despite all the delight that these stories have brought to children around the world, the fact remains that Winnie lived out the remainder of her life in captivity at the London Zoo until her death on 12 May 1934.¹⁶⁹ While Winnie lived slightly longer than the average life span for bears, which is estimated to be around eighteen years, this came at the expense of her living naturally in the boreal forests of northwestern Ontario.¹⁷⁰ Consequently, Winnie serves as an example of the complicated relationship that humans had with black bears when they attempted to raise them as pets. Colebourn and London Zoo patrons may have genuinely loved or adored Winnie, but they also consigned her to live in an artificial habitat, thousands of miles from her home. The reality of the real life inspiration for Winnie-the-Pooh are hardly conveyed in Milne's storybook pages, but nevertheless they represent an interesting bookend in the complex relationship between humans and black bears in early twentieth century Ontario.

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By the end of 1941 the image and management of the black bear had evolved considerably. Initially regarded as a furbearer and subject to very little regulation, by the

¹⁶⁸ M.A Appleby, *Winnie the Bear* (Winnipeg: Dominion Street Publishing, 2011), 53.

According to Michael Palmer from the ZSL, "Winnie was said to have a remarkably good nature, was very tame, and could be stroked and played with. She used to give children rides and would also eat out of their hands." Zoological Society of London, Library. These details were quoted in an email between the author and Michael Palmer, 11 February 2013.

¹⁶⁹ Zoological Society of London (ZSL), Animal Registrar, Registration Card for Winnie.

¹⁷⁰ Taylor, *Black Bears*, 43.

1940s its importance as a commercially valuable furbearing animal had declined significantly. In 1925, over 2,000 bears were harvested by trappers for their pelts but by 1942 the Department of Game and Fisheries noted that “demand for the pelts of these animals as at present negligible and as a result of this condition there is no encouragement for the trapping of bear.”¹⁷¹ Yet, while black bears declined in importance as furbearers, they took a small step towards big-game status when the province introduced a spring bear hunt in 1937 for non-resident hunters. While enthusiasm towards this activity was cool in the inaugural season, by the 1940s it was attracting considerable attention from non-resident hunters who were eager to take advantage of the opportunity for sport. Despite these subtle shifts in perception towards and management of the animal, other conflicting perspectives in the province also existed. Residents of Ontario still largely saw black bears as vermin. There was minimal interest in hunting them recreationally and many in the province lobbied the government to introduce a bounty program. Although the Department was not initially receptive to this idea, it was clear that many residents, especially those in the agricultural sector, viewed bears as nuisances and vermin more than anything else. And yet, one of the more perplexing perspectives that also existed at this time came from individuals in the province that believed bears could be suitable pets. For the most part, this relationship usually ended in tragedy for the bears, and sometimes their human owners, so it should come as no surprise that as the century progressed, bear ownership undoubtedly declined. Examining the relationship that Ontarians had with their pet bears sheds some light into how people valued these animals and it also serves to

¹⁷¹ Ontario, Department of Game and Fisheries, *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of the Game and Fisheries Department of Ontario, 1942* (Toronto: T.E. Bowman, 1943), 7.

complicate our picture by demonstrating how malleable perceptions were of these animals. At any one time in this period from 1937 onwards, the black bear, depending on the perspective, could simultaneously be thought of as a furbearer, a pet, a pest, or a game animal. While some of these classifications were informal, they reveal the degree to which human attitudes towards black bears were fluid in early twentieth century Ontario.

The next chapter explores the hardening of attitudes of residents towards black bears as the province instituted a bounty system in 1942 that classified the animals as legal vermin. For the next nineteen years, Ontario's black bears were viewed primarily as pests and nuisances and were managed accordingly. Under this new management system, residents received an incentive to kill bears and the level of violence displayed towards the animal during this period demonstrates not only the enthusiasm residents had to participate in the program but also how they felt about black bears. Conversely, while many of the province's residents were more than willing to take up arms against black bears, the animal continued to increase in importance as a game animal to non-resident hunters. Unlike Ontarians, non-resident hunters, largely from the United States, were quite willing to travel to the province and pay in order to hunt bears for recreational purposes. Despite these seemingly incompatible perspectives, the idea of the black bear as both legal vermin and a big-game animal, persisted and competed simultaneously from 1942 to 1961. As the period progressed, adherents and advocates of the latter categorization won out as the province progressively realized that black bears were worth more to the government when they were marketed and managed as big-game animals. In addition, attitudes and ideas that black bears were playful clowns also complicated the

management situation during this period. Following the Second World War, the notion that bears were playful clowns of the forest, a concept that originated decades earlier, was revitalized by Disney and even employed by the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests at times. The problem with this type of thinking and depiction was that it produced an unrealistic and problematic portrayal of bears that could complicate management strategies on the ground. This next chapter will explore how these three distinct and, at times, contradictory and competing, perspectives mixed and played out in Ontario during the postwar period.

Table 1

Black Bears Stocked on Licensed Fur Farms in Ontario, 1924-1941

Year	Number of Stocked Black Bears	Total Number of Animals Stocked on Fur Farms (Including Bears)	Black Bear Percentage of Total Stocked Animals
1924	11	3,277	0.33
1925	13	13,936	0.09
1926	4	8,887 *	0.04
1927	7	13,345 †	0.05
1928	13	17,686 †	0.09
1929	13	24,255 † *	0.05
1930	9	31,854 † *	0.02
1931	25	28,862	0.08
1932	16	28,862	0.05
1933	16	25,004	0.06
1934	14	25,435	0.05
1935	11	30,014	0.03
1936	21	35,592	0.05
1937	15	40,648	0.03
1938	15	47,936	0.03
1939	15	54,326	0.02
1940	15	51,346	0.02
1941	/	51,291	0
Total	233	532,556	0.04

* Exclusive of muskrat.

† Excluding of muskrat and beaver kept in semi-captivity.

/ From 1941 onwards, black bears were no longer listed on any licensed fur farms in Ontario. During the course of this twenty-seven year period, mink and silver or black fox appeared the most on farms, usually accounting for two-thirds of the total animals.

Source: Compiled from the Ontario Department of Game and Fisheries annual reports, 1925-1942

Table 2

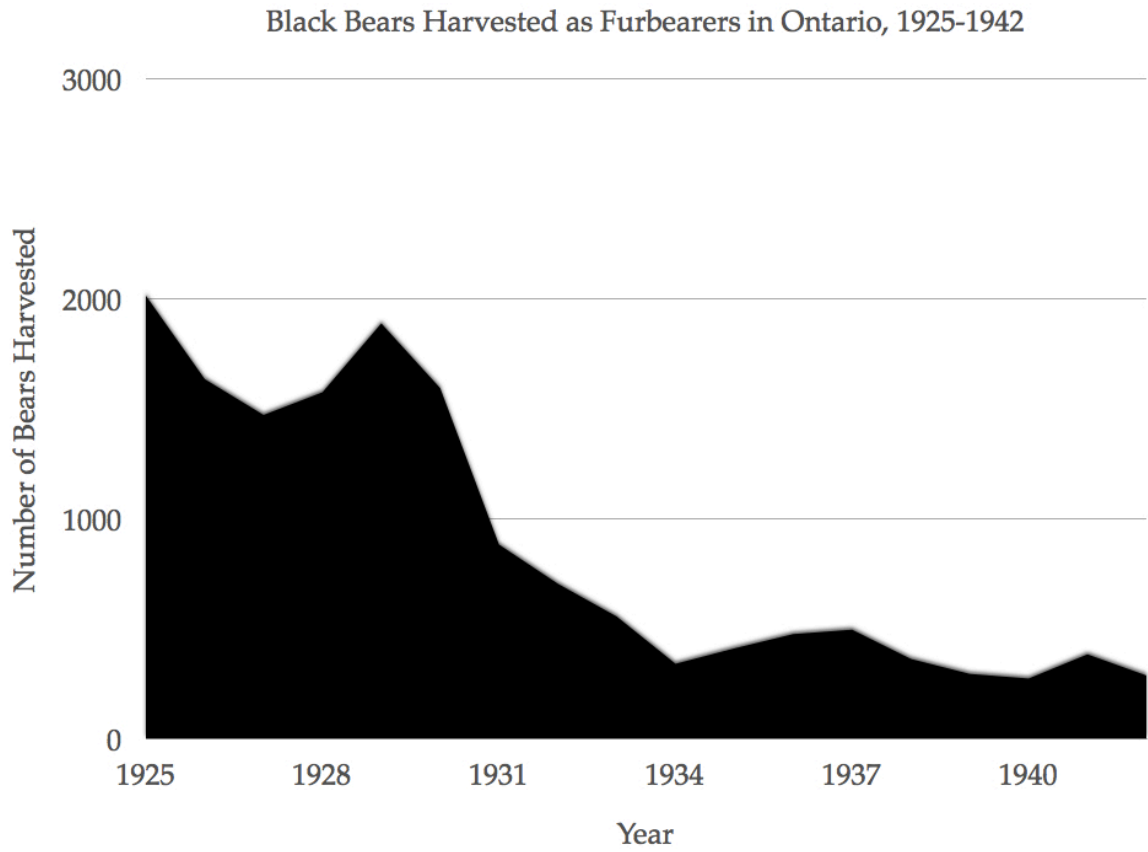
Black Bears Harvested as Furbearers in Ontario, 1925-1942

Year	Number	Total Pelts Taken in Ontario	Percentage of Total Pelts
1925	2014	814,935	0.25
1926	1635	691,372	0.24
1927	1472	723,922	0.20
1928	1575	790,886	0.20
1929	1888	999,495	0.19
1930	1594	901,226	0.18
1931	883	931,282	0.09
1932	705	930,017	0.07
1933	556	891,704	0.06
1934	341	780,679	0.04
1935	411	613,057	0.06
1936	476	635,203	0.07
1937	496	557,876	0.08
1938	363	760,710	0.04
1939	295	973,382	0.03
1940	274	960,328	0.02
1941	384	1,042,166	0.03
1942	288	892,552	0.03
Total	15,647	14,890,792	0.1

Note: These numbers reflect the number of pelts taken by licensed trappers that were officially processed and do not account for the pelts of fur-bearing animals that were raised on licensed fur farms.

Source: Compiled from the Ontario Department of Game and Fisheries annual reports, 1925-1942

Figure 1



Source: Compiled from the Ontario Department of Game and Fisheries annual reports, 1925-1942

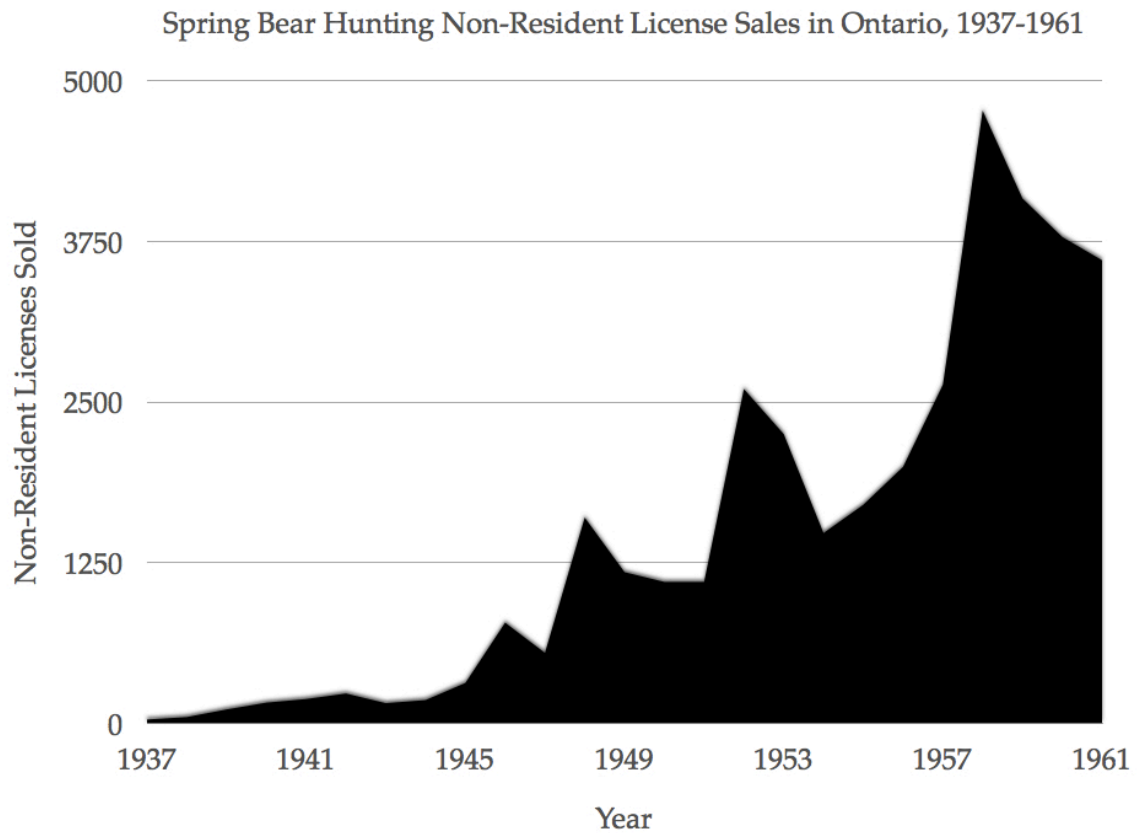
Table 3

Spring Bear Hunting Non-Resident License Sales in Ontario, 1937-1961

Year	Number
1937	30
1938	49
1939	108
1940	161
1941	189
1942	232
1943	157
1944	181
1945	314
1946	783
1947	548
1948	1600
1949	1176
1950	1100
1951	1100
1952	2600
1953	2250
1954	1480
1955	1700
1956	1995
1957	2633
1958	4765
1959	4083
1960	3783
1961	3602
TOTAL	36,619

Source: Compiled from the Ontario Department of Game and Fisheries annual reports, 1937-1946 and Department of Lands and Forests annual reports, 1946-1961.

Figure 2



Source: Compiled from the Ontario Department of Game and Fisheries annual reports, 1937-1946 and Department of Lands and Forests annual reports, 1946-1961.

Chapter 2

“The black bear is the most destructive animal”: The Bounty Years, 1942-1960¹⁷²

The previous chapter demonstrated the malleability of attitudes towards bears in Ontario during the 1920s and 1930s. The animal was classified both formally as a furbearer and as a game animal for non-resident hunters and informally as vermin and pests. This chapter continues within this vein of analysis but adds that during the 1940s and 1950s the black bear's status was even more complicated after they were legally classified as vermin by the Ontario government through the passage of a bounty program. Before the introduction of the bounty in 1942, bears were still viewed and regarded as vermin when they behaved in a transgressive manner; threatening humans, personal property, livestock, crops, and other concerns. These attitudes towards bears was a popular mentality amongst those living in areas where the animal was viewed as intrusive. Actual management of the animal changed in the summer of 1942 when a provincial Order-In-Council made bears subject to a similar management system as Ontario's wolves. This new legislation cemented and hardened the idea that the province's bruins were vermin that needed to be exterminated because it legally entrenched them as pests as part of a new management system.

Ontario residents ruthlessly pursued black bears within eligible areas at the behest of the provincial government but, this epoch is even more complex than the previous era because, in addition to being bountied, bears were incompatibly marketed as big-game to American sport hunters. This tourism economy-inspired perspective, gradually developed

¹⁷² AO, RG 1-243, Department of Lands and Forests Weekly Press Releases, Box 1, 24 February 1949.

more credence over time. Despite these conflicting classifications, another alternative view of black bears also began developing. The idea of the bear as a marauding monster that needed to be purged and the bear as a big-game animal was mixed with the perception of the bear as the “clown of the woods.” The latter current was later capitalized on and reinforced by popular media outlets such as Walt Disney. As a result, it was during this time that people also began to recognize the intrinsic value that bears possessed. While farmers, trappers, and hunters measured the value of bears in how many they were able to kill, other people believed that there was an inherent joy in simply knowing that bears existed in provincial parks and forests. The way that the animals were portrayed in Disney films and other forms of print media had a profound affect on how the animal was viewed and managed, often detrimentally. Consequently, this chapter is again an investigation of Ontario’s black bears but, again, it is also an examination about how our personal values and management of natural resources intersect, in troubling ways.

* * *

Examining Ontario’s bear bounty program from 1942-1961 also allows provides us with a lens into how state bodies expand and wield power. In this case, the state exercised its power and control against non-humans actors through the use of lethal violence. The state itself did not actually employ these techniques, rather, it enticed eligible constituents to carry out these duties on the ground in exchange for money. Unlike hunting, where the state condones the activity through its systematic organization and attempted regulation, bounty programs actively encourage killing through incentives.

Unlike hunting where the animal is killed for sporting or subsistence purposes, in bounty programs the animal is killed, largely to remove it from the spaces it occupies.¹⁷³ In the end, the goal is achieved because the animal has been killed and because it no longer inhabits the areas deemed problematic by the state.

After hearing complaints from residents about the destructiveness of black bears and their request for a bounty for a number of years, the Department of Game and Fisheries finally caved into demands in July 1942. Apparently the reported increase of livestock killings convinced it to alter its current bear management program. On 24 July 1942, Provincial Secretary and Minister of Game and Fisheries, H.C. (Harry) Nixon, announced that the government would pay a \$10 bounty on bear pelts under certain conditions in order to help mitigate the number of farm animals killed in recent years. Nixon told the *Evening Telegram* that bounties would only be paid out to residents of municipalities that fell within the bounty's jurisdiction. He believed that it was not "advisable at present to pay the bounty to residents or non-resident sportsmen hunting under license...since most certainly, without encouragement, would make every effort to secure their trophies."¹⁷⁴ According to Nixon, the impetus behind the bounty was to "assist in the wartime development of the sheep industry in Northern Ontario."¹⁷⁵ The Provincial Secretary claimed that this was justified because of the marked increase in the number of bears that were, apparently, *becoming* "particularly carnivorous."¹⁷⁶ While the reports and complaints from farmers in the province about black bear predation was well

¹⁷³ Marvin, 18.

¹⁷⁴ AO, RG 1-278-06, "Put \$10 Bounty on Bear Pelts to Save Stock," *Evening Telegram*, 24 July 1942.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

documented in newspapers, the annual Sessional Papers from the Department of Agriculture do not reveal significant marked concerns or statements about the necessity for a black bear bounty. As noted in the previous chapter, the utility of a bounty program was questioned by the Department's own Deputy Minister, D.J. Taylor.¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, when the Department announced the introduction of the bounty in the summer of 1942 it was clearly done so to address the concerns of the agricultural industry and the increased demand in the face of wartime conditions. Just months before Nixon's announcement, for example, Chris Jensen, President of the Canadian Cooperative Wool Growers' Association announced that the price of wool for 1942 was going to increase by roughly two cents a pound net to the grower, owing to wartime demand.¹⁷⁸

Nixon was quick to check any concerns from farmers that the government had dragged its feet on bringing in a bounty in order to elevate its status as a game animal. He told the *Globe* that he wished to correct "the mistaken idea of many farmers that the Department is protecting bears as a tourist attraction. On the contrary non-residents have been encouraged to come to the province on special hunts in order to assist in their control."¹⁷⁹ Ultimately, Nixon had always been a farm boy, he was born on a farm near St. George, graduated from the Ontario Agricultural in 1913, and was first elected to the provincial Legislature for Brant North in 1919 as a member of the United Farmers of Ontario.¹⁸⁰ Perhaps, sensing a future leadership role within the Liberal Party of Ontario,

¹⁷⁷ "Game Deputy Does Not Favor Imposition of Bounty on Bears," *Globe and Mail*, 17 December 1941, p. 4.

¹⁷⁸ "Wool Price Will Rise," *Globe and Mail*, 10 April 1942, 3.

¹⁷⁹ "Bear Menace Brings Bounty," *Globe and Mail*, 25 July 1942, p. 4.

¹⁸⁰ Alan L. Brown, "Ontario's Historical Plaques,"

http://www.ontarioplaques.com/Plaques_ABC/Plaque_Brant12.html (accessed 7 August 2014)

Nixon supported and implemented the bounty to maintain support from the province's agricultural sector leading up to the general election in August 1943. Nixon did eventually secure the party's reins in May the following year but by this point the Liberals were fractured and reduced to third party status at the polls.¹⁸¹

Ontario's bear bounty era officially began shortly after Nixon's announcement that the provincial government passed an Order-in-Council or the *Wolf Bounty Amendment Act, 1941* on 19 August 1942. This document authorized the Department of Game and Fisheries to pay a bounty of \$10 for the legal killing of any black bear over the age of twelve months to legal residents of the province. As part of the new executive order, several conditions had to be met by residents of the province. First and foremost, the Order-in-Council decreed that bears could only be killed "in defence or preservation of livestock or property" during the period from 1 August to 30 November during a given year. This measure aimed to prevent individuals from actively seeking out vulnerable dened bears during hibernation in the winter months. In addition to limiting the time during which residents could claim the bounty, there was also a geographical component to the management system. According to the order, bears could only be destroyed for reimbursement "within a Township in which not less than twenty-five percent of the total area is devoted to agriculture." In addition to meeting a minimum standard of agriculture, the township also had to be included in the Territorial Districts of Algoma, Cochrane,

¹⁸¹ For more indepth insights into the leadership failings of Mitchell Hepburn and his conflict with the Ontario Caucus and Mackenzie King and how this had an impact on the Liberals in 1943, please see John T. Saywell's *'Just call me Mitch': The Life of Mitchell F. Hepburn* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) Particular sections that focus on issues with Nixon appear in the twenty-first chapter. Also please see *Ontario: Image, Identity, and Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) and *Sites of Power: A Concise History of Ontario* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) by Peter A. Baskerville.

Kenora, Manitoulin, Muskoka, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Rainy River, Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Temiskaming, the Provisional County of Haliburton, and the Counties of Bruce, Frontenac, Hastings, Lennox and Addington, Peterborough, Renfrew and Victoria.¹⁸² As evidenced by the areas listed above, the bounty was largely limited to northern Ontario but some sections of what can be considered southern or central Ontario were also included largely because of their agricultural and rural composition. Consequently, urban areas, Provincial Parks, Indian Reserves, and Crown Game Preserves were explicitly excluded from collection.¹⁸³ Thus, the bounty was instituted in areas or contact sites where bears and agriculturalists were most likely to meet in order to mitigate potential damage to crops, livestock, and property. As previously noted, the basis for implementing the bounty in agricultural and semi-agricultural areas was largely because the majority of indictments against bears during the 1930s came from Ontario's farmers and that the Department reasoned it would help "the wartime development of the sheep industry in Northern Ontario."¹⁸⁴

Individuals eager to claim the bounty had to meet a number of requirements as well. They had to be residents of the province and they had to reasonably assert that the bear was killed in defence or preservation of livestock or property. Tourist outfitters and licensed guides were explicitly prohibited from claiming the bounty while they were providing their services to non-resident hunters, most likely to prevent these professionals from "double dipping." First Nations hunters were not explicitly precluded from

¹⁸² AO, RG 1-117, Fish and Wildlife Orders in Council, 1908-1945, B427562 "Bear Bounty," 19 August 1942, 1.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁸⁴ "Bear Menace Brings Bounty," *Globe and Mail*, 25 July 1942, 4.

collecting the bounty but it could not be claimed on animals located on Indian Reserves. Previously, indigenous peoples were precluded from the Upper Canada bounty on bears and wolves in 1793 but since then, “Indians became eligible to receive the bounty for wolf pelts” beginning in 1830.¹⁸⁵ Perhaps the provision was designed to prevent incursions by Euro-Canadian settlers onto reserves in order to claim the bounty.

Once an eligible bounty hunter killed a bear within the licensed areas they could collect their \$10 in a few different ways. After the bear had been exterminated the whole skin of the animal had to be produced within three weeks to one of the following individuals: a magistrate, a justice of the peace, a game and fisheries officer, or any officer appointed by the Department.¹⁸⁶ The problem with this enforcement system was that after the animal had been killed and skinned, there was no certifiable way for any of the above-mentioned officials to verify that the bear had been killed in self-defence.

Despite the Department’s offering of money for bears, the number of animals killed and collected early on did not reflect an abundance of enthusiasm on the part of the province’s would-be bounty hunters. In the first season only 386 bears were killed as part of the new system and even less were claimed during the second year, dropping to 377.¹⁸⁷ Consequently, the first two years of the bear bounty program did not generate the type of results that the Ontario government might have expected.

Part of the reason behind this may reflect residents’ hesitancy but might also indicate that these were seasons when natural food source for bears were in abundance.

¹⁸⁵ Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, *Wildlife '87*, 1.

¹⁸⁶ AO, RG 1-117, Fish and Wildlife Orders in Council, 1908-1945, B427562 “Bear Bounty,” 19 August 1942, 1.

¹⁸⁷ Ontario, *Thirty-Seventh Annual Report of the Game and Fisheries Department, 1943-1944* (Toronto: T.E. Bowman, 1945), 157.

During years when summer berries and fall mast crops are readily available, bears are far less likely to encroach upon human-occupied areas and seek out alternative food sources. During seasons of prolonged winter temperatures and spring or summer drought, food sources are often stunted which can in turn lead to a greater frequency of bear incursions. In years when nuisance bears were reported to be high, newspaper coverage of these incidents would have highlighted these issues and may have also galvanized residents to pursue the animals. Therefore it is no coincidence that as human-bear conflict unfolded in Ontario as the 1940s progressed, the number of bears killed under the bounty program also increased.

Towards the end of the 1943 season, a few notable cases of negative human-bear interactions were reported that could have driven up the enthusiasm for bear killing in the coming years. Apparently, bears had been plaguing the Lindsay area so much so that one of the local school boards, Dysart in Haliburton County, was forced to alter its school hours, pushing them later, in order to avoid school children encountering bears in the woods on their way to school in the mornings.¹⁸⁸ Bears were also reported to have been “menacing livestock” in areas near Sault Ste. Marie in the summer of 1943 and in one location, Sylvan Valley, ten bears had been killed by farmers.¹⁸⁹ Yet perhaps most damning for black bears was the publication of an observation made by Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) employees that same summer. On 7 June 1943 near Chapleau, the crew and passengers of a Toronto bound CPR train observed a rare incident that many people have laid claim to but few have seen; a black bear killing a moose calf. While hunters and

¹⁸⁸ AO, RG 1-278-06, “Bears and Wolves Force Hours Change,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 28 November 1943.

¹⁸⁹ “Unlike Sault Wolf, Bears Are Menace,” *Globe and Mail*, 22 August 1943, 4.

farmers had anecdotally cited incidents like this in the past when they advocated for the bounty, they lacked definitive proof. But now, the *Evening Telegram* argued, “the old claim that bears will not kill young moose, has been shattered.”¹⁹⁰ According to the graphic testimonials of eyewitnesses, “the moose just managed to reach the tracks when the bear jumped on it, got it by the throat and cut its jugular vein.”¹⁹¹ The coverage of the incident surely vindicated those who had previously called for the bounty on these grounds. Now that the province had proof that bears were capable of destroying healthy young moose calves it also provided hunters and other residents with another reason to increase their pursuit of black bears. The former group, especially moose hunters, would be particularly interested in maintaining the bounty system as bears could, apparently, threaten the long-term viability of moose populations by targeting calves. Two years later, Vincent Crichton, a game warden in Chapleau, told the *Globe and Mail* that “the bear is fast becoming a detriment to the North and few moose calves are being seen.”¹⁹²

By 1945 the number of bears killed as part of the bounty system nearly tripled as the province reportedly paid out for 910 bear carcasses that year.¹⁹³ Unsurprisingly, by this point, the DGF was also noting that “this species has in more recent years become somewhat of a nuisance, particularly in some of the more thickly settled sections in the north, where they have been responsible for damage” and especially those engaged in agricultural pursuits, and the damage to domestic flocks and herds has been sufficiently

¹⁹⁰ AO, RG 1-278-06, “Trainmen See Bear Kill Young Moose,” *Evening Telegram*, 10 June 1943. The story was also profiled in “Bear Kills Moose in Sight of Train,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 10 June 1943.

¹⁹¹ AO, RG 1-278-06, “Trainmen See Bear Kill Young Moose,” *Evening Telegram*, 10 June 1943.

¹⁹² Jack Hambleton, “Bears, porkies pests in Northern Ontario,” *Globe and Mail*, 20 September 1945, 8.

¹⁹³ Ontario, *Thirty-Eighth Annual Report of the Game and Fisheries Department, 1944-1945* (Toronto: T.E. Bowman, 1946), 21.

extensive.”¹⁹⁴ Farmers from northwestern Ontario, in particular, had been complaining that black bears were even bolder and hungrier than in past years. Individuals such as J.H. Irwin reported that his farm had been plagued by bruins that had already “stolen” a pig and a four-week old calf. While another Lakehead farmer, Russell McKechnie, lamented that black bears had also been “robbing” him.¹⁹⁵

Under the bounty program, black bear management was meted out through the use of violence but it also had an impact on how people talked about the animal and described its activities, often infusing criminality into their language. Yet, this should not be entirely surprising as the whole concept of a bounty system generally falls under the realm of lawlessness. For humans, bounties are collected on fugitives by pseudo law enforcement officers at the behest of local, provincial, or even federal agencies. In the animal world, bounties have been extended to wolves, coyotes, foxes, and of course, bears, to designate them as the criminals of the forest. In his book, *Predatory Bureaucracy*, Michael J. Robinson describes how wolves and coyotes in the Midwestern United States were portrayed as “killers” and “criminals” in newspapers and reports in the 1920s and 1930s. This was indicative of the larger societal concerns about the violent crime that was increasingly plaguing the nation during the time of Prohibition as bootleggers and law enforcement officials clashed but it also speaks to how the bounty was designed to wage “war on the gangsters of the animal kingdom.”¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ Ontario, *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of the Game and Fisheries Department, 1943-1944* (Toronto: T.E. Bowman, 1945), 7 and Ontario, *Thirty-Eighth Annual Report of the Game and Fisheries Department 1944-1945* (Toronto: T.E. Bowman, 1946), 7.

¹⁹⁵ “Lakehead Bears Rampaging; Pigs, Cattle Among Victims,” *Globe and Mail*, 1 August 1945, 1.

¹⁹⁶ Michael J. Robinson, *Predatory Bureaucracy: The Extermination of Wolves and the Transformation of the West* (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2005), 153 and 263. Please also see the newspaper

The emphasis on criminality in the language to describe predators in the United States was also observable in Ontario during the bounty years. Besides the usage of verbs such as “steal” or “rob,” the targets of black bear predation, pigs and cattle, were often referred to as “victims.”¹⁹⁷ When a nuisance bear was reported to have been killed after it was found to be meandering around homes in North Bay, the *Globe and Mail* used the term “looting” to describe the incident.¹⁹⁸ Looting is a charged term and applies to the theft of goods, especially private property, during wartime or other chaotic events such as rioting. And yet there appeared to be no contradistinction between using loaded verbs normally reserved for humans to refer to animals as bandits or criminals. For the people using these terms or writing about these events, they viewed the bear as depriving or disrupting the livelihood of individuals. Therefore it seemed only natural to refer to these activities as thefts or refer to cattle as victims since the livestock was valuable and were counted as a loss to bear’s illegal enterprising. Consequently, the language that Ontarians used to describe bears during the bounty years also adds an additional component to the overlapping of attitudes and perceptions that has characterized the animal’s management. While bears were managed as furbearers and game animals or treated as pets and vermin, they were also viewed and described as a criminal element when their natural activities impinged upon human interests. As mentioned, looting is often used to describe taking valuables from enemies during war so perhaps the usage of the word “loot” to describe

article, “Declaring War on the Gangsters of the Animal Kingdom: Coyotes, Bobcats, Wolves and Porcupines Are Among Those Cited by the United States Bureau of Biological Survey in Its List of Four-Footed Public Enemies,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch Sunday Magazine*, 25 March 1934. Even by mid-20th century in Canada, the idea that predators were akin to criminals or gangsters still had some credence. Please see, Cameron, J. Eric. “Is the Timber Wolf a Gangster?” *Forest and Outdoors*, August 1951, 22-25.

¹⁹⁷ AO, RG 1-278-07, “Big black bear seen near Falls,” *Evening Telegram*, 27 September 1945.

¹⁹⁸ AO, RG 1-278-07, “‘Phantom Bear’ Killed in North” *Globe and Mail*, 10 October 1945.

nuisance black bear activity is more fitting than previously outlined. Unbeknownst to the province's black bears, the Department of Game and Fisheries and its successor agency, Department of Lands and Forests, was indeed conducting a war against them.

Besides the farmers who often felt the need to kill bears to protect their property, crops, and livestock, the new bounty system provided an opportunity for other individuals to supplement their income by killing bears. While there was still considerable skill and effort required to kill bears, neophyte bounty hunters could reward themselves handsomely if they were efficient. In February 1944, the *Toronto Daily Star* reported that Elmo Mains made \$210 in one weekend after he killed a bear and four wolves near Sudbury. Mains received a \$100 cheque from the Department Game and Fisheries as each wolf was worth \$25 but he also earned \$100 from a 378 pound bear he shot after he collected the \$10 bounty and sold other parts of the animal, namely the gallbladder, to a medico in Chinatown once he returned to Toronto.¹⁹⁹ Mains might have also kept the meat and fur, which would have provided the family with some steaks and new décor for the living room in the form of a bearskin rug. Bounty hunters in the Lindsay area in 1945 also collected a considerable amount of money from bears in their area, reportedly collecting on thirty-two bears by November for that season.²⁰⁰ Even in later years, R.J. Tinnery, from the Kirkland Lake area, killed thirty-seven bears by himself during the 1953 season, earning \$360, the largest amount to a single person up to that point.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ AO, RG 1-278-07, "Bags Bear, Four Wolves; Makes \$200 on Holiday," *Toronto Daily Star*, 28 February 1944.

²⁰⁰ "42 bears shot so far Haliburton's total," *Toronto Daily Star*, 1 November 1945, 9.

²⁰¹ "Too hot to sleep, bears on prowl," *Globe and Mail*, 22 October 1953, 1.

As more of the province's farmers and hunters took up arms against bears as part of the bounty program, they entered a world where the use of violence against the animals was a source of celebration. While some made headlines for the amount of money they earned killing bears, others were also lauded for their bear-killing prowess. Under the bounty program, violence underpinned most of the interactions that individuals had with the animals during this era. Since the state classified the bear as a pest and encouraged its destruction through an incentive killing program, it is arguable that people's attitudes towards black bears hardened during this period. This is evident by the fact that some of the killing methods became more brutal and violent but were still covered in celebratory tones in the province's newspapers or government write-ups. Unlike the province's other large land mammals not subject to a bounty, such as moose or deer, there seemed to be less of an ethical concern for how black bears were being killed, so long as they were killed legally within the bounty framework. For example, the *Toronto Daily Star* wrote about an encounter between a young trapper, Tommy Agawa, from Batchawana, near Sault Ste. Marie and an angry female bear. After the sow had threatened Agawa and his father-in-law, Chief Joe-Tom Sayers, the newspaper extolled how he dispatched the bear, by sinking his axe "squarely into the centre of the bear's skull."²⁰² The Department of Lands and Forests²⁰³ (the DGF successor agency) heaped praise on the resourcefulness and unorthodox methods of two American tourists on the Chippewa River after they used

²⁰² AO, RG 1-278-07, "Bears Pop Out, Rush at Indians. Boy Kills Mama, Chief Nabs Cub," *Globe and Mail*, 24 December 1945.

²⁰³ In 1946, the Department of Game and Fisheries was amalgamated into the province's much larger and already existing conservational overseer, the Department of Lands and Forests. Thereafter, the DGF ceased to exist as a separate entity and became the Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) under the umbrella of the DLF. The amalgamation of the two Departments was seen by bureaucrats as the most logical step to bring control over all of Ontario's natural resources under one administration.

their canoe paddles to bludgeon a bear to death.²⁰⁴ The fact that this incident warranted inclusion in the DLF's weekly news releases and the celebratory tone used to recount the event reveals that this type of action was officially condoned by the government.

Ironically, one of the more brutal and violent episodes during the bounty period was reported in *The Northland*, the periodical for the Anglican Diocese of Moosonee in Ontario. In the September 1953 issue it published a story about a black bear that was raiding supplies from a diamond drilling camp of Hiskeer Gold Mines, near Kirkland Lake. Due to firearm restrictions in the camp, the drillers decided to infuse dynamite into strategically placed bait. When the marauding bear returned and sunk its teeth into the miners' offerings, the animal exploded and died instantly.²⁰⁵ The publication even featured testimony from a Lands and Forests, assuring readers that the animal's demise was not gruesome, a dubious claim at best, or that the method was likely more efficient than poisoning or shooting. Luckily, for Ontario's black bears, death by dynamite did not become a popular method of killing but this level of excessive violence and its sanction by the provincial government reveals the extent to which bears were seen as vermin and subject to extermination by any means.

The Department of Lands and Forests and the province's newspapers also reserved accolades not only for those that found innovative ways to kill bears and for those that demonstrated proficiency. Individuals such as Henry Bahr, a Pembroke native, that had killed nearly a quarter of the bears submitted for bounty in that district in 1954,

²⁰⁴ AO, RG 1-243, Department of Lands and Forests Weekly Press Releases, Box 1, 13 July 1954.

²⁰⁵ Laurentian University Archives (LUA), "Big Bear Eats Dynamite, Loses Out on Third Day" *The Northland*, vol. 10, 1 (September 1953), 8.

was dubbed the “Bear King” by the DLF.²⁰⁶ The Department also gave nods to Bahr’s neighbours, Percy Kean, Martin Rathwell, and Herbet Sell in combining for a respectful thirty-one kills. Similarly, hunters from the Fort William area were heralded in the *Globe and Mail* for bagging twenty-six bears that in August 1949.²⁰⁷ Yet, these types of celebratory accounts should not be that surprising, especially those emanating from the government, since the state had sanctioned the bounty and therefore condoned the activities and perhaps even welcomed the zeal that many bounty hunters displayed.

Until 1946, the celebratory culture of violence towards black bears through the bounty program was only directed towards adult members of the species. During this year, the *Wolf and Bear Bounty Act* was passed to supersede the 1942 Order-in-Council that had previously outlined the provisions for the system. One of the most noteworthy changes was that it introduced a \$5 bounty on bears under the age of twelve months.²⁰⁸ Previously, only yearlings and adult bears could be killed but now the law was extended to include cubs. In terms of management, this move signalled that the Ontario government was more committed to an aggressive campaign against all black bears found in the province’s agricultural and semi-agricultural areas.

As Ontario shifted towards a more comprehensive bounty program, the DLF grappled with the fact that while it was paying its residents to kill bears, there was also a growing interest from non-resident hunters who would happily pay the government for the same pursuit. Towards the end of the 1940s, support for the bounty system had taken

²⁰⁶ AO, RG 1-243, Department of Lands and Forests Press Releases, Box 2, Vol. 12, 29 (18 July 1959), 6.

²⁰⁷ “Lakehead Hunters Bag 26 Bears,” *Globe and Mail*, 30 August 1949, 9.

²⁰⁸ Algonquin Park Archives (APA), Bear Files, Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, “The Wolf and Bear Bounty Act, 1946,” (Toronto: T.E. Bowman, 1946), 4.

hold (see Table 4 and Figure 3) but the Department of Lands and Forests still wanted to promote the black bear as a trophy animal and a source of “healthy recreation” to American and other non-resident hunters during the non-resident spring hunting season (1 April-15 June) each year.²⁰⁹ Even during the Second World War, the government had begun to recognize that black bears could “provide a measure of sport in which a goodly number of hunters participate [and] has an appeal for United States hunters who visit Ontario for this purpose.”²¹⁰ With the conclusion of the Second World War in August 1945, efforts to market the province’s fish and wildlife resources to residents and tourist hunters ramped up considerably. The postwar era ushered in a period of prosperity and increased leisure time that many people eagerly spent on outdoor trips and vacations, a boom that the DLF looked to capitalize on. Consequently, the Department found itself in a balancing act while it attempted to advertise the bear to non-resident hunters, namely Americans, in order to generate revenue through licensing and outfitting sales while also paying out thousands of dollars each year to residents that were encouraged to see the animal as vermin under the bounty system.²¹¹

The few years immediately after the conclusion of the war definitely saw increased hunting and fishing pressure in the province but far beyond what the DLF had envisioned or hoped. In fact, the Department of Lands and Forests argued that the postwar picture of wildlife management in Ontario was “not entirely satisfactory...the result is an

²⁰⁹ Ontario, *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of the Game and Fisheries Department, 1941-1942* (Toronto: T.E. Bowman, 1943), 7.

²¹⁰ Ontario, *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report of the Game and Fisheries Department, 1943-1944* (Toronto: T.E. Bowman, 1945), 7.

²¹¹ Ontario, *Thirty-Eighth Annual Report of the Game and Fisheries Department, 1944-1945* (Toronto: T.E. Bowman, 1946), 7.

intensity of hunting pressure, both from residents and non-residents, such as our Province has never known before.”²¹² For 1947, resident deer and moose licenses respectively netted \$196,548 and \$9,316 for the province, while non-residents spent \$361,887 on licensing fees alone.²¹³ For the province’s bears, non-resident spring hunting had also reached unprecedented levels of popularity in the postwar period. In 1946, a record number of 783 licenses were sold that year, when just nine-years earlier when it was first introduced, only thirty-seven licenses had been sold in the inaugural season. From the late 1940s onwards, no less than 1,110 licenses were sold each year to non-residents eager to pursue the province’s black bears during the spring. The province still paid residents to kill black bears at the same time that the animals were becoming a bona fide game species for non-resident hunters. For example, in 1948, Ontario paid residents \$6,035 for the bounties on 592 adult bears and sixty-seven cubs. Meanwhile, during this same period, the DLF sold 1,600 spring bear licenses to non-resident hunters.²¹⁴

While bounty and non-resident black bear hunting was on the rise in the postwar period, trapping pressure dropped. As furbearers, animals valued commercially for their fur, black bears had begun declining in importance since the 1930s. During World War II and immediately thereafter, the black bear was a marginal furbearer at best, as evidenced by its limited to non-existent residency on industrial fur farms or ranches and its annual harvest numbers as a furbearing animal. The DFG recognized this trend in the early 1940s when it reported that “the demand for the pelts of these animals is at present negligible

²¹² Ontario, *Report of the Minister of Lands and Forests of the Province of Ontario for the Year Ending March 31, 1947*, (Toronto: Queen’s Printer, 1947), 41.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 24.

²¹⁴ Ontario, *Report of the Minister of Lands and Forests of the Province of Ontario for the Year Ending March 31, 1948*, (Toronto: Queen’s Printer, 1948), 31

and as a result of this condition there is no encouragement for the trapping of bear.”²¹⁵

(see Table 5)

To better contextualize this situation we can contrast the number and value of black bears as a furbearing animal with that of muskrats in 1947. That year, ninety black bear pelts were exported for processing and 280 were tanned in Ontario, the total value of these pelts was estimated to be \$814. Over this same period, 441,478 muskrat pelts were exported for processing and 198,391 were tanned in the province, worth an impressive \$2,271,535.²¹⁶ Muskrat fur has always been much more valuable than black bear, a condition that is exacerbated by logistical issues involved with trapping black bears or farm raising them for commercial purposes. Given the size differential between black bears and muskrats, trapping the former proved to be a much more difficult enterprise. As outlined in the first chapter, more effort was required to collect, skin, and tan the animal because of its size but there was also an element of danger associated with retrieving snared black bears. The animals were often still alive and aggressive due to injury, posing a safety hazard to prospective trappers. Similar conditions also prevented black bears from becoming viable farm raised furbearers unlike muskrat, mink, or fox due to their size, which had implications on allocating space and providing sufficient feed to raise them to maturity. By 1941, none of the province’s licensed fur farms listed black bears as tenants and after only twenty-one black bear pelts were tanned and exported in 1949, the DLF no longer provided estimates for the animal’s significance as a furbearer going into

²¹⁵ Ontario, *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of the Game and Fisheries Department* (Toronto: T.E. Bowman, 1943), 7.

²¹⁶ Ontario, *Report of the Minister of Lands and Forests of the Province of Ontario for the Year Ending March 31, 1947*, (Toronto: Queen’s Printer, 1947), 50-51.

the 1950s.²¹⁷ Consequently, while black bears could still be harvested as furbearers in the postwar period, this type of valuation clearly was significantly losing ground to the increasingly popular, yet conflicting ideas that black bears were considered legal vermin by some and as big-game animals by others.

Another perspective of black bears, that they were “clowns of the forests,” re-emerged during this period. This understanding gained popularity within the general public because of greater exposure to the animal’s at state and provincial parks but also because it was reinforced by the media and, at times, by the government. Recently in his book, *Bears: Without Fear*, former superintendent of Banff National Park in Alberta, Kevin Van Tighem has suggested that there have been three dominant tropes that have been used when describing black and brown bears in North America. These representations have included “serving as icons for human superiority over lesser creatures (the friendly clown), our fears of wild nature (the marauding monster) or our nostalgia for paradise lost (beleaguered wilderness creature).”²¹⁸ Indeed, these categorizations aptly fit within the history of Ontario’s black bears, although not necessarily in that order and these representations are also far more fluid and subject to change. Under the bounty, the “marauding monster” clearly was the most widely accepted understanding, at least amongst residents in the province’s agricultural areas, but as we will see, there was also support for the notion of the bear as the “friendly clown.”

In Canada, the first formal reference to black bears as clownish creatures by a government official appears to have occurred in 1905 as part of the Commission of

²¹⁷ Ontario, *Department of Lands and Forests Annual Reports, 1949-1951*

²¹⁸ Kevin Van Tighem, *Bears: Without Fear* (Toronto: Rocky Mountain Books, 2013), 30.

Conservation Canada held that year. While discussing the status of the nation's game birds, wildlife, and fisheries, one of the delegates, Professor E.E. Prince, then Dominion Commissioner of Fisheries declared that the black bear was the "clown of the woods."²¹⁹ And yet despite referring to the bear as a source of entertainment, he followed up his observation by stating that it was "ungracious on our part to unnecessarily destroy him, but, at the same time, we should prevent him destroying property." Even though Prince referred to the animal as clownish or jovial, he still acknowledged that the bear was capable of doing considerable damage to property and should be dealt with accordingly. The clown trope was also utilized formally in the United States in 1948 when Esse Forrester O'Brien published a book about bears in Yellowstone National Park that was entitled, *Clowns of the Forest*.²²⁰ More recently, historian Jon T. Coleman has also offered up another analysis as to why black bears were portrayed in such a manner. He suggests that black bears were not romanticized, especially in the southern United States, because amidst the hostile racist environment, black bears were viewed as "subservient beings akin to black humans, and killing them, like fighting black people, earned whites no manly honor." Within literature and writings at the time, black bears occupied a lower rung in the social order of America's woodlands. As a result, bears were viewed as inferior creatures and were often depicted as cowardly and humanized as clown-like animals.²²¹ This racialized perspective is undoubtedly grounded in a very specific time

²¹⁹ Canada, *Commission of Conservation Canada, Conservation of Fish, Birds and Game* (Toronto: The Methodist Book and Publishing House, 1916), E.E. Prince, 137.

²²⁰ Esse Forrester O'Brien, *Clowns of the Forest* (Austin: Steck Company, 1948)

²²¹ Jon T. Coleman, *Here Lies Hugh Glass: A Mountain Man, a Bear, and the Rise of the American Nation* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012), 103-115.

and place in American history but it does offer up an interesting alternative as to how and why black bears were viewed as clowns in the southern United States.

The clown trope also found its way into more mainstream forms of Canadian media. In a 1924 issue of *Saturday Night*, Dan McCowan contrasted grizzly and polar bears and with the black variety, commenting that the two former were “much larger and not nearly so jovial and harmless as their dusky nephew.” Besides highlighting the supposed good nature of black bears, the author also asserted they were prone to frolicking and mischief. Towards the end of the article, McCowan advocated for greater protection of black bears on the basis that they were “harmless animals.”²²² To a twenty-first century observer, McCowan’s idyllic attitude towards and understanding of black bears is extremely problematic but was, in fact, part of a broad and commonly shared perspective at the time.

The Ontario Department of Lands and Forests also picked up on this theme and homed in on it in one of its weekly press releases. These publications, beginning in 1948, were the DLF’s official means of communication with the public about its activities, especially in terms of significant public interest and participation, such as parks and outdoor recreation. Following an intrusion of black bears into a meat house at a lumber camp near Cochrane, the Department wrote that the incident was spurred from jealousy because of the “publicity that the cleverness of certain moose have been receiving this summer.” It suggested that the marauding occurred because the bears wanted to prove “they can do a bit of thinking for themselves” rather than providing the public with

²²² Dan McCowan, “The Black Bear in Canada,” *Saturday Night* 39, 7 (5 January 1924), 16.

educational information on how to avoid or reduce these types of unwanted encounters.

²²³ Instead, the DLF trivialized the potential for loss of property and injury by anthropomorphizing the bears and portraying them as clumsy oafs that did not quite understand their own strength.²²⁴ The human characteristics that were attributed to the bears reduced the interaction as nothing more than a playful romp in which the bears succeeded in pulling the wool over the eyes of the unsuspecting bushworkers. In reality, this was a situation that probably could have been avoided through proper storage and disposal of food, garbage or other attractants. While no serious damage or injury occurred during the encounter, it could have unfolded much differently and could have resulted in greater destruction of property, human injury, and a punitive death for the bears. The fact that this type of report emanated from the Department's official organ demonstrates the acceptability at the time of describing black bears as nothing more than playful clowns, motivated by jealousy to pillage the contents of bush camp food storage units. Since the write-up read as comical and light-hearted, the Department did not engage in any meaningful dialogue about mitigating negative human-bear encounters but, instead, furthered the popular notion of the day.

While the Department of Lands and Forests may have adopted the clown trope in that one particular publication, other larger and more prominent organizations such as Walt Disney reinforced the clown image even further through its dissemination of film and print media during the 1950s. Given the increased exposure to media and the cultural reach of Disney in North America in the postwar period, these representations of black

²²³ AO, RG 1-243, Department of Lands and Forests News Releases, Box 1, 8 September 1952.

²²⁴ Ibid.

bears had an effect on how ordinary people viewed and perceived black bears. With increased outdoor recreation, the likelihood of people encountering black bears in the wild at state or provincial parks was higher than at any time prior. As a result, the way bears were represented in film and print media could have an impact on how people approached their interactions with bears.

From 1948 until 1960, Walt Disney Studios produced a series of short documentary films about the world's wildlife called, *True Life Adventures*. Examining the series in his book, *Reel Nature*, historian Gregg Mitman referred to them as “a genre of sugar-coated educational nature films.”²²⁵ Cynthia Chris has argued that the significance of “the True Life Adventures series lies in both its formal innovations in regard to how wildlife is represented and its relevance to dominant experiences and ideologies of nature and humanity's relationship to animals.”²²⁶ The series brought Disney considerable financial success but also earned the studio critical acclaim, most notably through the winning of a number of Academy Awards for Best Live Action Film.²²⁷

Disney focused on black bears in its 1953 offering, *Bear Country*, which documented animals living in Yellowstone National Park but most notably focused on *ursus Americanus*. The film was probably the first time that an audience was given up close exposure to the black bear, accompanied by a playful score and the narrative skills of Winston Hibler. It was prefaced with credits that stated “this is one of a series of true-life adventures presenting strange facts about the world we live in. In the making of these

²²⁵ Gregg Mitman, *Reel Nature: America's Romance with Wildlife on Film* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 3. Please also see Alexander Wilson, *The Culture of Nature: North American Landscape from Disney to Exxon Valdez* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994)

²²⁶ Cynthia Chris, *Watching Wildlife* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 36.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

films, nature is the dramatist. There are no fictitious situations or characters.”²²⁸ While the film might have refrained from including any additional dramatization or special effects, Disney’s description and depiction of the black bear continued to reinforce the clown trope. The efforts were most likely unintended but the film perpetuated the idea that the animal was clown-like and unworthy of the same type of prestige accorded to other animals like moose or deer. At one part in the film, a couple of bear cubs are filmed playfully wrestling in a pool of mud, narrator Winston Hibler says that bears are “great ones for shenanigans of any sort. In fact they’re fast masters at the art of being *undignified*. But who cares about dignity? Dignity is for the lordly moose.”²²⁹ Towards the end of the film, when the hibernation sequence is depicted, Winston states that “winter poses few problems for these seemingly carefree *clowns*. It’s merely another season for fun.”²³⁰

In her analysis of the *True Life Adventure* franchise, Cynthia Chris has argued that in the intervening years following their release, “many critics have derided the True-Life Adventures on the grounds that such anthropomorphism distorts the reality of animal life.”²³¹ It is clear that in *Bear Country*, the bears were continuously characterized as being a playful clown as opposed to providing the audience with a more realistic interpretation of the animal. In addition to the problematic references to the black bear being undignified and purely as a source for entertainment, the film also anthropomorphized the animal. Disney has been well known for its anthropomorphic

²²⁸ Walt Disney, *Bear Country*, Written and directed by James Algar, narrated by Winston Hibler (1953)

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Chris, 37.

transformation of animals in its animated films this process was also quite evident in its live-action films as well. When the films such as *Bear Country* emphasized the idea that animals were distinct individuals and speculated about their emotions and motivations it may have made the documentaries more entertaining but it warped the natural world.²³² Impressionable audiences and even more mature contingents were exposed to Disney's version of black bears, which reinforced the idea that bears were nothing more than playful clowns, sharing considerable similarities with humans.

In addition to the financial and critical success that the films garnered, the *True-Life Adventures* series also inspired a daily panel comic strip that was distributed to North American newspapers from 1955 to 1971. In Canada, one of the newspapers that reproduced the strip was the *Toronto Daily Star*. On 25 May 1959, the focus was on none other than the American black bear and the title was "Clown of the Forest." Reiterating the title, one of the captions stated that "the black bear, shambling clown of the forest, has a keen sense of play."²³³ In typical Disney style, the playful bears – or more accurately, cubs – were anthropomorphized, similar to the deer in the animated film *Bambi*, and depicted as smiling while sliding down a branch and boxing with a shrub. At the bottom of the cartoon in another pane, two much larger bears were depicted in a more realistic fashion but with snarling teeth and visibly sharp claws. Much like Disney's films, the target audience for this print media was most likely children, but scholars have previously investigated how Disney's films are still quite capable of instilling powerful emotions in

²³² Chris, 37.

²³³ Walt Disney, *True Life Adventures*, "Clown of the Forest," reprinted in the *Toronto Daily Star*, 25 May 1959, 10.

older consumers as films such as *Bambi*, for example, incited considerable anti-hunting sentiment years later.²³⁴ Consequently, the messages and ideas about animals that Disney instilled in the *True Life Adventures* – film or comic strip – were equally capable of inculcating a particular view of animals in its readers or viewers. As a result, while the Ontario government was largely responsible for ambiguous attitudes towards the province's bears, the much more visible Disney imagery of the era must have also contributed to the perceptions and attitudes that people, in North America in general but in Ontario in particular, held about black bears.

The problem with characterizing black bear in these ways is that it could have had an impact on how people approached the animals when they encountered them in contact zones in state and provincial parks in the United States and Canada following the Second World War. Thinking that bears were merely playful creatures, many often risked serious injury to feed bears out of their hands or get intimate photographs with the animal. By portraying bears as jesters instead of large and powerful omnivorous mammals, the notion of the “clown of the woods” skewed the reality of what an actual black bear was or how an encounter might transpire. As recreation began increasing during the Second World War and especially afterwards, more and more residents and non-residents of Ontario flocked to the province's parks, but especially Algonquin Park. Historian Gerald Killan writes that in the “two decades following World War II, dramatic social and economic changes in Ontario generated unprecedented demand for parklands.” In concert, “a larger, more affluent, highly mobile urban population with newly acquired leisure time took to

²³⁴ Matthew Cartwright, *A View to a Kill: Hunting and Nature through History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 178-185.

the highways in search of outdoor recreational opportunities.”²³⁵ The attention that bears began generating at provincial parks in the post-war period revealed another way that the animals were valued and perceived. To recreationists and tourists, the animals possessed intrinsic qualities that could be found simply by observing the animal, often times at an unreasonably close distance, but nevertheless they found value in the animal in its living state.

In her study about the relationship between bears and tourists in Yellowstone National Park, Alice Wondrak Biel discusses how the close interaction between visitors and animals demonstrated that “wildlife had value beyond hunting.”²³⁶ In many ways, the story of Algonquin’s bears is remarkably similar to Yellowstone’s, as early on the animals often served as surrogate pets for vacationing visitors. Early on in both Parks, lax regulations about feeding bears allowed people to interact with the animal on dangerously close levels but the image of the bears would eventually need to be remade in order to avoid life threatening encounters for both the bears and visitors.²³⁷

At Yellowstone in the early twentieth century, park guests could watch bears feed and play from the safety of amphitheatres built around trash heaps at the Old Faithful and Canyon locations.²³⁸ Algonquin did not take the same approach in catering to this spirit of close interaction by building accommodations at garbage dumps but guests of the Park were still able to easily locate bears by visiting the park’s open dumpsites. During the

²³⁵ Gerald Killan, *Protected Places: A History of Ontario’s Provincial Parks System* (Toronto: Queen’s Printer, 1993), 74.

²³⁶ Alice Wondrak Biel, *Do (Not) Feed the Bears: The Fitful History of Wildlife and Tourists in Yellowstone* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 14.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

1940s, observing feeding black bears at one of the park's garbage dumps was a common activity for Algonquin visitors. During a particularly memorable summer in 1943, guests were especially elated with the pastime because it was reported that a female bear with four cubs were making regular appearances.²³⁹ Future chief of the province's Division of Fish and Wildlife, C.H.D. Clarke commented on the Algonquin bear situation in 1945 and remarked that the Park's visitors will "get a bigger thrill from seeing a bear than from any other attraction that a park may offer."²⁴⁰ Clarke also observed that problems may arise from "parasitic" bears that have been ruined by feeding on garbage sites and human food sources but notwithstanding some of these problem animals he argued that "no bear problem exists in Algonquin Park. Nobody has been injured and the grand total of property damage for a season probably does not exceed \$500.00!"²⁴¹

Perhaps because of the nonchalant observations about the relationship between guests and bears from some of the top officials in the Department of Lands and Forests, Algonquin accorded minimal attention to the issue of human-bear conflict in the Park until the early 1970s. Until 1973, bears deemed problematic and those that fed from the park's multiple open pit garbage sites were handled with lethal force until a more progressive management program – focusing on bear relocation and garbage disposal – was instituted.²⁴² Despite the fact that guests were generally intrigued by Algonquin's ursine inhabitants, negative encounters could and did occur which pushed the limits of the

²³⁹ AO, RG 1-278-06, "Bear, Four Cubs Thrill Tourists" *Globe and Mail*, 31 August 1943.

²⁴⁰ Algonquin Park Archives (APA) Bear Files, C.H.D. Clarke, "Joint Occupancy of Parks," (Unpublished? 1945), 1.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁴² Jeremy Inglis, "An Analysis of the Nuisance Black Bear Program in Algonquin Provincial Park," (Unpublished: Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 1991)

perception of the bear solely as a tourist attraction. In Yellowstone, Wondrak Biel argues that “in the absence of a formal bear management plan for the park, bears were dealt with and lethally controlled as was deemed necessary” and the same could be said about Algonquin’s bears as well.²⁴³ In the autumn of 1953, the DLF cautioned recreationists in its weekly news releases to maintain clean campsites and cottages to avoid unwanted ursine guests.²⁴⁴ The advice came after a rash of incidents in Algonquin Park in October that year wherein black bears had ransacked cabins and cottages, seeking out food. In the process, the bears had inflicted considerable damage and subsequently terrorized cottagers. Previously fine with their bruin counterparts so long as they were playful and non-destructive, the owners of the cottages insisted that the Park “take action” to protect themselves and their property. Despite the pleas from fearful cottagers, then Algonquin park superintendent George Philipps said that “in a game preserve the bears had the right of way, no matter what they did.”²⁴⁵ Philipps’ words rang hollow when the *Globe and Mail* reported a few days later that game preserve officers shot more than 100 foraging bears, at the behest of cottage owners. Taking up this task forced them to deviate from their usual duty; protecting animals.²⁴⁶ Gerald Killan argued that in the aftermath of the incident, “not surprisingly, the resulting publicity damaged the park’s reputation as the province’s leading game preserve.”²⁴⁷ Algonquin continued to have issues between bears and its guests into the mid-1950s. According to author Roy MacGregor, in 1956 park visitors would flock to the Lake of Two Rivers dump site to watch and photograph bears

²⁴³ Wondrak Biel, 60.

²⁴⁴ AO, RG 1-243, Department of Lands and Forests News Releases, 24 November 1953.

²⁴⁵ Jack Dobson, “Hungry Bears on Rampage,” *Globe and Mail*, 19 October 1953, 25.

²⁴⁶ “Algonquin Rangers Shoot 100 Bears on Rampage,” *Globe and Mail*, 21 October 1953, 1.

²⁴⁷ Killan, 77.

as they rummaged through the trash in search of food. Most of the guests that viewed the bears from the safety of the large fence that divided the parking lot and dump but others could not resist the opportunity to get closer to the feeding bears. After a young child had apparently been swatted away by a female bear for getting too close, Park rangers were forced to respond which resulted in the killing of seven bears, two of which were cubs.²⁴⁸ Both incidents serve as poignant examples of the fluidity of ideas and attitudes towards black bears at the time. If the animals were not competing with human interests or threatening property or personal self, they were often thought of as playful misfits or clowns but once a line was crossed, bears often reverted back to the “marauding monster” in the minds of some people.

The Department of Lands and Forests also vacillated between how it presented bears in its news releases. One of the above-mentioned examples demonstrates how the bears were portrayed as mischievous and motivated by the attention that moose received. When it was warranted, the DLF quickly discarded the clown trope and presented readers with some of the hard realities about the animal. In the autumn of 1953, another DLF news release reported about the “wanton destruction by hungry bears” on cabins and cottages in northern Ontario.²⁴⁹ This time it urged recreationists to maintain clean campsites and cottages in order to avoid attracting uninvited bears. Unlike the earlier write-up that light heartedly discussed how humans had been playfully outmanoeuvred by the bears, this one did not mince words and bluntly stated that the black bear is “a big

²⁴⁸ Roy MacGregor, *Escape: In Search of the Natural Soul of Canada* (Toronto: McLelland & Stewart, 2002), 94-95.

²⁴⁹ AO, RG 1-243, Department of Lands and Forests News Releases, Box 1, 24 November 1953.

animal and is quite capable of doing much damage.”²⁵⁰ This particular write-up also came in the wake of the incident in Algonquin Park where 100 bears were killed after they ransacked a number of cottages and the shift in the portrayals might have been designed to serve as precautionary warning in order to avoid a similar incident in the future. As noted by Killan, the incident left a black eye on Algonquin’s reputation as a wildlife sanctuary so it is probable that the change in message about bears was as much about public relations as it was about portraying the animals in a realistic light. If the public was able to take steps to avoid future human-bear conflict then the DLF would be able to avoid incidents like killing black bears in a game preserve and thereby save face.

In addition to the different ways that people viewed the black bear during the bounty period, the Department of Lands and Forests was also dealing with the growing realisation that the animal was gaining greater appeal as a game animal for non-resident hunters. As noted earlier, by the late 1940s, the number of annual non-resident spring bear hunting licenses had climbed to 1,600 per annum and by 1952 this number had reached a record high of 2,600 and continued to increase as more non-resident hunters came to Ontario to spring bear hunt (see Table 3 and Figure 2 in Chapter 1). By the mid-1950s more and more district game wardens and conservation officers were frequently reporting on the growing trend that spring black bear hunting was on the rise, especially with hunters from the United States.

This was also accompanied by a new prevailing attitude from resident trappers and outfitters or guides in certain parts of the province that saw the black bear as more of

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

an economic asset instead of a pest. In 1955, M.W.I. Smith from the Sault Ste. Marie District reported that in his particular area “trappers’ councils have spoken less of wanting a bear bounty in all areas and more of the value of bear as a source of revenue by guiding spring bear hunters.”²⁵¹ Smith also pointed out that black bears were still regarded by many in his locale as vermin and most would quickly kill them for nothing if given the opportunity. Another report from 1955 by H.G. Lumsden discussed how the black bear’s value as a game animal was only being recognized by a select few in the province. He noted the paradoxical way the animal was treated in certain parts of the United States, where it is often “regarded as the finest big game trophy that a hunter can obtain.”²⁵² He referenced the state of Pennsylvania where he commented that despite a small annual kill of approximately 420 bears, the state still attracts over 500,000 for the hunt. Lumsden intimated that if the same type of management policy was applied to Ontario, there could be a considerable market for black bear hunting. He also noted how an influx of non-resident black bear hunters from America could stimulate the growth of guiding in the spring months for resident trappers and guides in parts of Ontario where bears lived in abundance.²⁵³ N.D. Patrick of the Swastika District, located in far northeastern Ontario, reported that “over the past few years there has been a very great increase in the interest of hunters in bear hunting.”²⁵⁴ He anticipated that, if trends continued, the black bear would become an important game animal in Swastika, if not the

²⁵¹ Ministry of Natural Resources Library (MNRL) Vertical Files, M.W.I. Smith, “Report on Spring Bear Kill, 1955 Sault Ste. Marie District,” (unpublished, 1955), 24.

²⁵² MNRL, Vertical Files, H.G. Lumsden, “Notes on Black Bears in Ontario” (unpublished, 1955), 27.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ MNRL, Vertical Files, N.D. Patrick, “Bear Investigation Programme, Swastika District” (unpublished, 1958), 1.

entire province. Patrick believed that if black bears were elevated to game status, a more rigorous management program needed to be implemented. Given the animal's legal classification at the time, the DLF had not undertaken any significant studies about black bears because they were treated as vermin and resources were better spent investigating the province's actual game animals. Consequently, Patrick requested the Department's permission to begin undertaking an investigation of his own about black bears in his District in order to determine its tourist value and gather biological data to shed greater light on reproductive rates, age, and the sex composition of bruins in his area. Since black bears were still viewed as vermin in other provinces and states at this time, research on and understanding of black bears was still quite limited. Even once Ontario declared the bear a game animal in the 1961, information on the species as a whole was sparse and even less existed on the distribution of bears across the province.

As the 1950s came to a close, certain circles in the Department of Lands in Forests, largely in the northern Ontario branches, clearly saw the economic potential of black bears began to affect attitudes toward the animal, albeit very slowly. The province's black bears were now beginning to be viewed through a capitalistic lens by some who now saw increased value in the animal if it were marketed as a game trophy. There was still a significant number of people in the province still viewed the animal as a predatory nuisance and prescribed to the government's management model vis-à-vis the bounty system. Even those who did not actively participate in the bounty system would still be slow to change their attitudes towards the animal. The government recognized these competing perspectives in a news release about non-resident hunters having little

difficulty finding bears as “ residents will be only too happy to have someone come up and shoot a bear.”²⁵⁵

While the Department might have noted the growing interest in bear hunting amongst non-resident hunters, other resident groups in the province advocated for increased measures to even further encourage the killing of black bears. Representatives of the province’s hunting and trapping interests were the most outspoken. They continued to indict the bear as a predator and invoked the trope of the “marauding monster.” During the 1950s, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) and the Northern Ontario Trapping Association (NOTA) continuously made recommendations to the Fish and Game Committee of the Ontario Legislature to increase the bounty on bears and extend it to all areas of the province, not just agricultural and semi-agricultural land. The OFAH went on record to urge the provincial government to adopt a trial system so professional hunters could be paid maintenance rates plus incentive payments to control the province’s wolves and bears in areas where they were deemed to be destructive. They wanted the province’s bounty to become more organized and give hunters greater incentive to hunt down predators.²⁵⁶

NOTA recommended for an overall extension of the system but argued for the bounty to be extended to include parts of the province that were not classified as agricultural or semi-agricultural. The group noted that “trappers have found that this animal [black bear] is very destructive to many kinds of game, and it will create a great

²⁵⁵ AO, RG 1-243, Department of Lands and Forests Weekly Press Releases, Box 1, April 1950.

²⁵⁶ AO, Department of Lands and Forests, RG 1-436, Fish and Wildlife Resolutions, Box, Resolutions submitted to the Fish and Game Committee of the Ontario Legislature, OFAH, 1950, Recommendations 89 and 90.

deal more interest among the trappers in predator control to have a bounty on them.” It continued that “the bounty should be payable to anyone who kills a bear and they be required to send in the scalp only, in order to collect the bounty.” According to the records, the committee took the recommendation from NOTA under advisement but the bounty’s boundaries would not be revised. The Committee cautiously wrote that the “damage by bears is exaggerated, but damage to property of trappers is very real.”²⁵⁷ Undeterred by the rebuke from the Fish and game Committee, NOTA again suggested, this time in 1952, that the bounty on bears be extended. The justification behind the argument was the same but the trapping organization also stressed that it was important to open the bounty up because “bears are so plentiful [but] there is no encouragement for anyone to kill them with no market and bounty.”²⁵⁸ The committee’s response to this recommendation was another outright rejection as it reported that the province’s bounty bears and wolves was already quite more stringent and that it was beginning to try and ensure that only farmers in specific locations would be eligible to collect the bounty.²⁵⁹ Nevertheless, NOTA continued to recommend, on behalf of the trappers in its organization, that the bounty on bears be extended into non-agricultural areas so that trappers could benefit from the system. The committee again denied this request stating that “in some sections of Ontario non-resident hunters come in the spring hunt and bring

²⁵⁷ AO, Department of Lands and Forests, RG 1-436, Fish and Wildlife Resolutions, Box, Resolutions submitted to the Fish and Game Committee of the Ontario Legislature, NOTA, 1951, Recommendation 104.

²⁵⁸ AO, Department of Lands and Forests, RG 1-436, Fish and Wildlife Resolutions, Box, Resolutions submitted to the Fish and Game Committee of the Ontario Legislature, OFAH, 1952, Recommendation 130.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., Recommendation 130.

revenue.”²⁶⁰ It intimated that if trappers wanted to generate income from killing black bears they could do so by coordinating spring hunts for non-resident tourists. The Committee’s response suggests that the government was clearly not willing to consider extending the bounty’s jurisdiction.

Part of the Committee’s answer was undoubtedly shaped by the view that it was counterintuitive to pay people to kill animals that could be marketed as big-game species, and thereby generate revenue, and because of the growing realization that predators such as wolves and bears played a role within their local ecosystems. This was actually documented much earlier after the deer population in the Kaibab National Forest in Arizona collapsed during the 1920s following the removal of natural predators, namely wolves.²⁶¹ In Ontario in particular, D.N. Omand of the Fish and Wildlife Division wrote in 1950 in the *Journal of Wildlife Management* advocating for a careful reassessment of the province’s bounty system in light of the fact that “predation is not as important in determining animal populations as was formerly believed.”²⁶²

Groups such as the OFAH also wanted to see further action taken towards black bears because it believed that the animals competed with the long-term viability of their hunting interests. On one occasion, the OFAH told the Committee that it had received considerable information from trappers in the north and northwestern portions of the province that black bears were “the chief killers of moose calves and deer.” They also

²⁶⁰ AO, Department of Lands and Forests, RG 1-436, Fish and Wildlife Resolutions, Box, Resolutions submitted to the Fish and Game Committee of the Ontario Legislature, OFAH, 1953, Recommendation 46.

²⁶¹ Please see Christian C. Young, *In the Absence of Predators: Conservation and Controversy on the Kaibab Plateau* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002)

²⁶² D.N. Oman, “The Bounty System in Ontario,” *The Journal of Wildlife Management*, 14, 4 (October 1950), 433.

requested, again, to the Committee that the \$10 bounty on bears be extended to all parts of the province.²⁶³ The Committee responded that “our present bounty certainly does not affect the number of bears and does the province little credit. Perhaps use of bears for sport could be developed. Our main problem is with local nuisance bears.”²⁶⁴ Clearly the limitations of the bounty system were becoming evident to the Department, even in the face of continued complaints from hunting and trapping interest groups. Since the system was not netting the province any revenue it seemed like a logical step to begin exploring the possibility of adding black bears to the province’s game list.

The trapping and hunting organizations were not the only entities to voice their concerns about bears to the Game and Fish Committee of the Ontario Legislature during the 1950s either. In 1954, G.F. Townsend, secretary of the Ontario Beekeeper’s Association requested “to raise the bounty on bears to \$25 for adults and \$15 for cubs [and] have this bounty made applicable regardless of whether or not the applicant is a resident of the municipality where the bear is killed or destroyed.”²⁶⁵ Unfortunately for Townsend and the beekeepers, the Committee had concluded that the “bounty has no effect on the abundance of bears and other methods of looking after marauding bears is desirable.”²⁶⁶

²⁶³ AO, Department of Lands and Forests, RG 1-436, Fish and Wildlife Resolutions, Box, Resolutions submitted to the Fish and Game Committee of the Ontario Legislature, OFAH, 1954, Resolution 77, page 33.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ AO, Department of Lands and Forests, RG 1-436, Fish and Wildlife Resolutions, Box, Resolutions submitted to the Fish and Game Committee of the Ontario Legislature, OFAH, 1955, Resolution 93, page 49.

²⁶⁶ AO, Department of Lands and Forests, RG 1-436, Fish and Wildlife Resolutions, Box, Resolutions submitted to the Fish and Game Committee of the Ontario Legislature, OFAH, 1957, Resolution 92.

What we can see from the various recommendations to the Game and Fish Committee of the Ontario Legislature during the 1950s is that the groups and individuals most eager to see a more rigorous bounty were those that had competing interests with black bears, despite the fact that some of these groups would later change their stance. In the beginning the OFAH was eager to see a more comprehensive bounty because bears preyed on valuable game animals such as moose and deer. With black bear hunting not yet a viable recreational activity amongst Ontario's sport hunters, those in this group would have looked to legislation that would have limited the opportunity of bears to prey on what they perceived as more valuable wildlife. Similarly, trapping organizations such as NOTA sought a bounty in their areas of business because bears threatened their livelihood. Once an animal was snared in a trap, dead or alive, it was vulnerable to black bear predation until the trap line was inspected. As a result, many trappers' often returned to their lines to find the mangled remains of valuable furbearers that had been destroyed by black bears or other predators. Lastly, beekeepers and owners of apiaries also wanted to see greater enforcement against black bears because of the threat they constituted to their business as well. When the bounty was repealed in 1961, as will be discussed in Chapter 4, groups such as the OFAH and NOTA began changing their stance on the animal, not simply because the bounty was no longer on the table but because they started to see the economic potential in the black bear. No longer viewed strictly as a competitor, hunters and trappers slowly began to change their perceptions of black bears once they began associating the animal with an influx of American non-resident tourist dollars. As

the years went on, the OFAH became one of the greatest advocates of the black bear as a game animal, driven by the animal's revenue generation potential.

* * *

By the end of the 1950s various voices within Ontario that included the Department of Lands and Forests officials, outfitters, hunters, and recreationists, expressed a number of different opinions and perspectives about the province's black bears. At times, but not always, these perspectives conflicted but also reveal the fluidity of attitudes towards the animal. Under the bounty program, eligible residents were given incentive to kill black bears that had been designated as vermin. While many still subscribed to viewing the bear as a "marauding monster" other groups and individuals in the province began to think of the animal in different terms. Some viewed and portrayed the animal as the "clown of the forest" and while it has been revealed that this type of portrayal was also problematic, it demonstrated the changing attitudes in the postwar period. With increased exposure to the animal through media and physical interaction, many began to see value in the animal, provided that it did not compete with or interfere with human interests. In addition to the "marauding monster" and "clown" tropes, two types of thinking that dominated the attitudes towards black bears in the bounty period, another current also began to reveal itself in the years following the end of the Second World War. Some began to see the value in black bears from a financial standpoint. As non-resident spring bear hunting, particularly with American tourist hunters, began to increase in popularity in the postwar period, many recognized that people would pay to hunt the same animals that the Ontario government was doling out thousands of dollars to

have killed. Consequently, many within the Department of Lands and Forests began advocating for a shift away from the bounty program and some within the province's outfitting and guiding industry also pressed for these changes as they began to see the animal through a more capitalist lens.

The following chapter serves as a case study of how all these emerging attitudes coalesced during a memorable spring bear hunt in Timmins, Ontario that was the focus of provincial and international media focus from 1959 to 1960. While this event has largely gone undocumented it neatly encapsulates the change in attitudes towards black bears amongst people and quite possibly, initiated the most dramatic moment in its management history, leading to big-game status in 1961.

Table 4

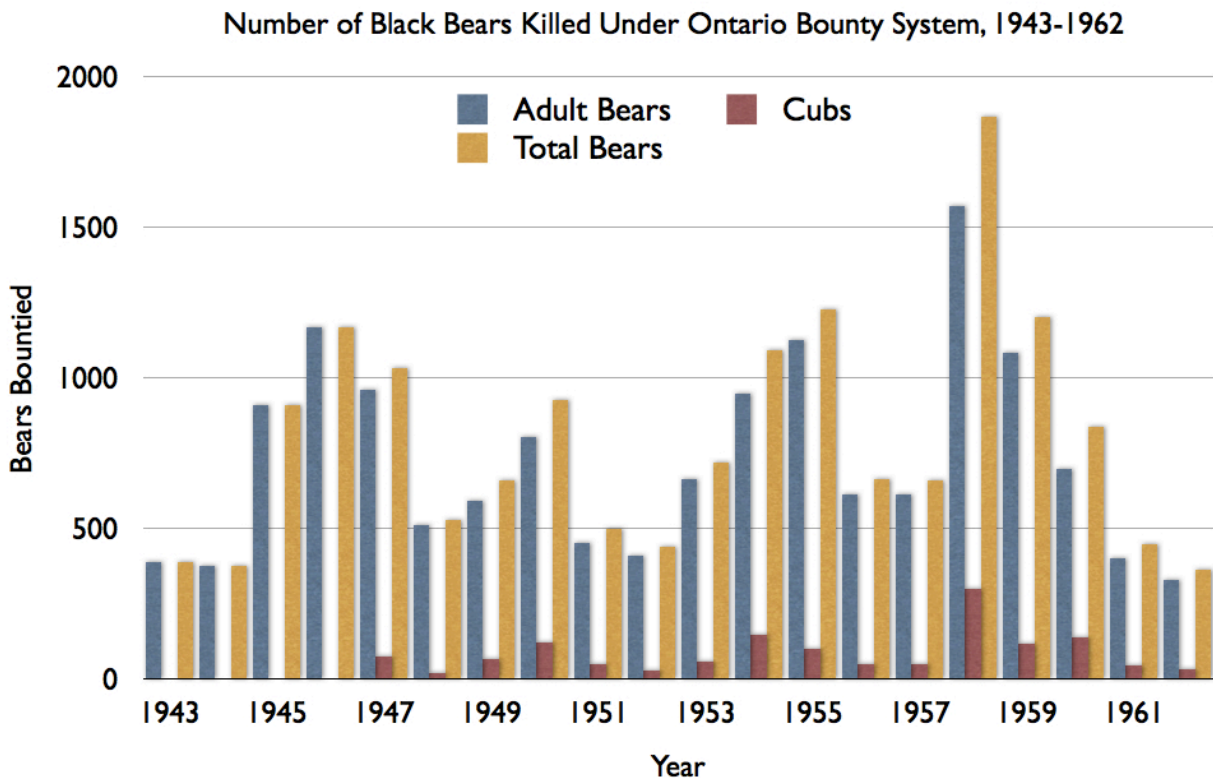
Number of Black Bears Killed Under Ontario Bounty System, 1943-1962

Year	Adult Bears Killed	Cubs Killed	Total Bears Killed	Bounty (CDN\$)
1943	386	N/A*	386	3,640
1944	377	N/A*	377	3,630
1945	910	N/A*	910	8,790
1946	1,167	N/A*	1,167	11,330
1947	959	73	1,032	9,735
1948	509	17	526	5,095
1949	592	67	659	6,035
1950	803	122	925	8,530
1951	453	47	500	4,645
1952	408	29	437	4,180
1953	662	57	719	6,805
1954	947	145	1,092	10,000
1955	1,126	99	1,225	11,590
1956	614	50	664	6,210
1957	611	50	661	6,225
1958	1,568	300	1,868	16,930
1959	1,084	116	1,200	11,145
1960	697	139	836	7,590
1961	401	46	447	4,150
1962	328	33	361	3,405
Total	14,602	1,390	15,992	\$149,660

* The bounty on cubs did not take effect until the 1947 season after the passage of the Wolf and Bear Bounty Act, 1946.

Source: Compiled from the Ontario Department of Game and Fisheries annual reports, 1943-1946 and the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests annual reports (Fish and Wildlife Division), 1946-1962.

Figure 3



Source: Compiled from the Ontario Department of Game and Fisheries annual reports, 1943-1946 and the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests annual reports (Fish and Wildlife Division), 1946-1962.

Table 5

Bear Pelts Harvested in Ontario, 1942-1951

Year	Number of Pelts
1942	384
1943	288
1944	269
1945	306
1946	391
1947	370
1948	337
1949	21
1950	N/A
1951	N/A
Total	2,366*

*** These numbers reflect the number of pelts taken by licensed trappers, and which were either exported or dressed**

Source: Compiled from the Ontario Department of Game and Fisheries annual reports, 1942-1946 and the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, Fish and Wildlife Division, 1946-1951

Chapter 3:

“Unbearable Bonnets Bad for Bears”: Spring Bear Hunting for the Queen, 1959-1960²⁶⁷

In March 1959, Leo Del Villano, mayor of the gold mining town of Timmins in northern Ontario, read that the Queen’s Guard’s bearskin caps were being criticized for, apparently, being in ragged condition. Without the consultation of his city council, Del Villano cabled the British War Office and offered to supply them with pelts from black bears hunted during the spring in his district. As outlined in the previous chapter, at this time black bears were still officially classified as vermin under the province’s bounty system. Each year residents killed hundreds of them in the province’s rural and semi-rural areas. Through Del Villano’s initiative, the region’s bruins became a commodified part of a transnational exchange that was the subject of international focus. In Ontario, people debated the ways in which bears were being hunted and questioned the reasons why the government sanctioned this type of activity. Since spring bear hunting was still largely dominated by non-resident hunters and not technically carried out by residents, Ontarians received considerable insight into how the hunt took place. Many did not like what they saw or read.

For the most part, this incident has received scant attention from wildlife and environmental historians, being considered something more akin to local folklore in Timmins. This chapter argues that this event was actually a watershed moment in the history of the human-black bear relationship in Ontario. It elevated bears to an unprecedented level in the public eye, both provincially and throughout world. The timing

²⁶⁷ “Unbearable Bonnets Bad for Bears,” *Edmonton Journal*, 13 March 1959, 28

of this episode also coincided with the increased exposure that the animals received during the postwar period because of people's greater opportunities for outdoor recreation and the media's more detailed coverage. As a result, Del Villano's spring hunt for the Queen struck a chord with many who had already begun to see and possibly appreciate the animal in a different light. Even others in the province that killed the animal as part of the bounty program and therefore saw minimal value in it would have noticed the coverage and the way in which people questioned the treatment of the province's black bears. This chapter continues to explore the theme of how we impose our values on natural resources, and how these perceptions change over time to subsequently alter management strategies. Del Villano's spring bear hunt for the Queen gave many in the province pause to reflect on the animal's value and how it was being managed. Consequently, this episode was a contributing factor in the Department of Lands and Forest's decision in 1961 to repeal the bounty system and declare the black bear as a game animal. People viewed the Ontario black bear in the winter of 1959, before Del Villano's first hunt began, differently than they did that following summer. Within two years, bear management as legal vermin was supplanted by a management model that focused on greater protection for them and an emphasis on revenue generation.

While this chapter explains what this incident tells us about attitudes towards black bears and its impact on management policies in Ontario, it can also elucidate the larger relationship between Canada and Britain in the late 1950s. Some historians contend that Canada was undergoing a crisis of Britishness during this period, shifting away from its historically close relationship with Britain in favour of a model that advocated for

uniquely Canadian symbols and greater autonomy. Yet the story of spring bear hunting for the Queen during the 1950s instead reveals a closer relationship with Britain and adoration for the Queen.

* * *

On 4 March 1959, the *Times* London featured a seemingly innocuous letter in the editorial section. Peter Page, a resident of the Dolphin Square apartments along the River Thames, wrote in to complain about the bedraggled quality of the Brigade of Guards bearskin caps at Buckingham Palace. He questioned whether additional resources could not be secured in order to improve their quality or at least provide new headpieces for the guards. Page stated that visiting tourists eager to revel in the pageantry of Britain would be greatly disappointed with the Guards' "slightly comic moth ridden appearance."²⁶⁸

Given the fame and prestige of the Guards at Buckingham Palace, it did not take long before newspapers around the world featured Page's criticism. Major dailies in the United States ran the story in the wake of Page's comments but even newspapers with much smaller and obscure circulations such as the *News Tribune* in Rome, Georgia and the *Ocala Star-Banner* from Ocala, Florida had both circulated features from the Associated Press on the story.²⁶⁹ In London, the comments sparked a conversation amongst locals as opponents of Page's comments entered the fray to defend the beloved Guards. Refuting his claims, a London staffer for the *Daily Telegraph* argued that "the Guards appeared immaculate. As far as I could see there was not a hair out of place in

²⁶⁸ Peter Page, "Bedraggled Bearskins," *The Times*, 4 March 1959, 11.

²⁶⁹ "Britain's Brigade of Guards Fighting for Bearskins Honor," *Rome-News Tribune*, 5 March 1959 and "Famed Brigades of Guards in Britain Fight for Honor of their Bearskins," *Ocala Star-Banner*, 5 March 1959, 7.

their bearskins.”²⁷⁰ Others wrote letters to the *Times* to go on record that they disagreed with Page’s missive.²⁷¹

The bearskin caps that Peter Page derided have a long and storied history that dates back to the Prussian Empire. According to military historian Hans Bleckwenn, the Prussian army began wearing bearskin caps as early as the 1760s in its Hussar Regiments.²⁷² The antecedents of the modern British bearskin caps originate from the Grenadier Guards. These infantrymen traditionally wore tricorne caps but found that these corners got in the way of their grenade tossing. Given the potential danger associated with poorly deployed explosive devices, the Grenadiers adopted a taller cap that would not encumber the process. Eventually these caps became adorned with fur made from black bears and other animals, explaining their nickname, bearskins.²⁷³ Following a significant victory at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 involving the Grenadiers, the caps became larger and heavier and more closely resembled the caps we now associate with the Guards at Buckingham Palace and the ceremonial uniforms of other regiments.²⁷⁴

Despite the long history of bearskins in British military uniforms and ceremonial dress, by the 1950s, problems arose over the maintenance of the caps. In January 1958 the Ministry of Supply (MoS), the British government department that oversaw and coordinated the supply of equipment to its armed forces, met to discuss the availability of

²⁷⁰ “Spick and Span Bearskins: Charges Denied,” *The Daily Telegraph*, 5 March 1959, 8.

²⁷¹ H.E. Cooper, “Bedragged Bearskins,” *Times*, 6 March 1959, 11. Cooper noted that he was ‘disturbed’ by Page’s allegations. Cyril Kent also wrote in exclaiming “But the fur, glory be!” *Times*, 12 March 1959, 12.

²⁷² Hans Bleckwenn, “European War of Eighteenth Century Absolutism, 1700-63,” in *Battledress: The Uniforms of the World’s Great Armies, 1700 to the Present*, eds. I.T. Schick (London: Peerage Books, 1983), 18.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 38.

²⁷⁴ Michael Barthrop, “Britain’s Colonial Wars in the Nineteenth” in *Battledress*, 140.

bearskin caps. S.H. Staff, the Director of Inspection of Stores and Clothing lamented that “the present position is that Canadian pelts are virtually unobtainable.”²⁷⁵ When a subcommittee of the MoS met again later in the year, it reported the same conditions and suggested that a synthetic material needed to be developed in order to replace the dwindling supply in the belief that black bears were becoming scarce.²⁷⁶ The War Office (WO), responsible for the administration of the British Army, instructed the MoS to investigate the suitability of alternative materials, such as synthetic fibre, for use in the production of bearskin caps.²⁷⁷

The search for a suitable substitute to replace the black fur bear used in Britain’s bearskin caps would not be an easy task. Synthetic fibres such as nylon had only recently been introduced to the United Kingdom, albeit on a small scale, during the Second World War. Other non-natural materials such as polyester and acrylic were not introduced until the 1950s.²⁷⁸ Nylon was first discovered in 1938 by the American company Du Pont, which led to the first form of the polyamide fibre, Nylon 66.²⁷⁹ Du Pont’s patents vigorously protected its innovation but the company provided the British firm, Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) with an exclusive manufacturing license for Nylon 66 in the United Kingdom in 1939. Around this same time, Nylon 6 was also developed by the German company I.G. Farben, but this variant was not introduced to the United Kingdom

²⁷⁵ The National Archives (NA) United Kingdom, WO 32/18862, [Brigade of Guards: provision of bearskins, 1955-1970] S.H. Staff to Colonel R.J. Dinsmore, 17 January 1958.

²⁷⁶ NA, WO 32/1884, [Storage and provisions of bearskin caps (1955-1964)] Extract from the Minutes of the 144th Meeting of the Clothing and General Stores Development Committee, 29 July 1958.

²⁷⁷ NA, WO 32/18841, “Caps Bearskin,” March 1959, 1.

²⁷⁸ Richard Shaw and Paul Simpson, “Synthetic Fibres,” in *The Structure of British Industry*, 2nd edition eds. Peter Johnson, 119-139 (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 119.

²⁷⁹ Arthur Elliott, *History of British Nylon Spinners* (Abertillery: Old Bakehouse Publications, 2009), 4.

until the 1950s.²⁸⁰ With the manufacturing license for Nylon 66, ICI embarked on nylon production by forming a manufacturing company with the already existing textile firm, Courtaulds.

This joint venture became known as British Nylon Spinners (BNS).

Unfortunately, the ravages of war disrupted their partnership early on. In the autumn of 1940, plans to convert an old weaving shed in Coventry into the first plant for nylon production was sidelined after being bombed in a German attack in November.²⁸¹ When the war ended and Britain reverted back to a normal economy of recovery and domestic production, nylon production began again and by 1950, BNS was producing nylon/wool blend socks. While the Second World War may have initially delayed nylon production in Britain, BNS benefitted immensely from its domination of the fibre in the post-war period. According to Richard Shaw and Paul Simpson, BNS had a virtual monopoly on Nylon 66 yarn production in the United Kingdom until the early 1960s.²⁸² Consequently, the War Office's directive to the MoS to procure a synthetic alternative to black bear fur would be coordinated with BNS.

By 1959 British Nylon Spinners produced nylon furs but told the War Office that they lacked the quality suitable for the traditional bearskins. A BNS memorandum from March of that year outlined that the company's looms were falling short in two respects. The machines were not capable of producing the correct length of fibre needed to match authentic black bear fur, nor was it a suitable substitute for the natural quality of bear fur.

²⁸⁰ Shaw and Simpson, "Synthetics," 119. I.G. Farben would later gain infamy for its collaboration with the Nazi regime, most notably for its production of Zyklon-B a cyanide-based pesticide that was utilized in extermination camps during the Second World War.

²⁸¹ Elliott, *History of British Nylon Spinners*, 5.

²⁸² Shaw and Simpson, "Synthetics," 119.

BNS lamented that in order to overcome these limitations it would need to alter its spinning plants in general and purchase new looms in particular, both of which would come at a significant expense.²⁸³

Even if BNS made these costly modifications, it could not guarantee that its final woven product would meet the British Army's standards. Correspondence between the WO and an American textile company, Military and Civilian Textiles Corporation (MCTC), suggests that synthetic alternatives to black bear fur most likely existed in the late 1950s but it was an issue of quality and ceremonialism over availability. After H.C. Frost, president of MCTC, offered the War Office a sample of its nylon bear fur, the latter replied reticently that it was interested but cautioned that "the wearing of real bearskin fur by the Brigade of Guards is a traditional treasure, and that the man-made fibre bearskin might not be acceptable to them."²⁸⁴ The WO's Quartermaster General also reported that the "Guards insist that the bearskin cap shall be only the standard accepted up to now, that is based on the long Canadian fur."²⁸⁵ The WO never accepted MCTC's offer and its continued search for a suitable synthetic on home soil was not fruitful as it continued to worry about the quality of fibre that BSN could produce.²⁸⁶ With its insistence on a high quality synthetic and the mistaken belief that black bears were in decline, the WO believed that it would soon face a shortage crisis.

By the time Peter Page penned his letter to the editor of the *Times* in March 1959 it, evidently, occurred as the British War Office entered a quagmire in managing its

²⁸³ NA, WO 32/1884, "Caps Bearskin," circa 1959 (exact date is unspecified)

²⁸⁴ NA, WO 32/1884, Director of Inspection of Clothing to H.C. Frost, 13 June 1959.

²⁸⁵ NA, WO 32/1884, "Brief for QMG: Caps Bearskin," 9 March 1959, 1.

²⁸⁶ NA, WO 32/18841, "Caps Bearskin," March 1959, 2.

bearskin supplies. With no synthetics yet meeting its standards, the WO recommended that additional resources be used to determine if it was possible to procure greater fur imports from the Soviet Union. It believed that furs might be more available from Russia because the War Office was operating under the misguided notion that “there is no likelihood of Canadian Bear skins of the required quality or indeed any quality being forthcoming in the future” and that “bears are very scarce [there].”²⁸⁷ Yet the assumption that Canada would no longer be able to supply bearskins for Great Britain was blatantly incorrect, at least in terms of the situation in Ontario. As the previous chapter demonstrated, during the 1950s, Ontario’s black bears were legally classified as vermin and bountied by residents. But they were also marketed as big-game animals in the spring to non-resident hunters. From 1950 to 1958, 8,091 bears were killed under the bounty system while 19,623 non-resident spring bear hunting licenses were sold during this same period (please see Table 3 and Figure 2 and Table 4 and Figure 3 respectively). Black bears were clearly not scarce in Ontario at this time and there is no reason to suspect that Ontario Department of Lands and Forests would not have gladly offered up its bears to Britain.

When word of Page’s letter about the Guards’ bearskins reached Canada, the story received front-page exposure from a number of major newspapers.²⁸⁸ It was the follow-up commentary from British military officials that garnered the most attention. Lieutenant-Colonel Michael O’Cock went on record and stated that Page’s comments about the

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Jack Stepler, “The Guards’ Bearskins,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 10 March 1959, 6; “Ont. Bear hunt pledge to re-hat U.K. Guards,” *Calgary Herald*, 12 March 1959, 1; “Unbearable Bonnets Bad for Bears,” *Edmonton Journal*, 13 March 1959, 28; “Tall order for bearskins” *Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph*, 16 March 1959, 3; “Mangy Bearskins, Colonel’s Wrong,” *Montreal Gazette*, 7 March 1959, 1;

condition of the caps was probably accurate and blamed the situation on Canada's stringent game laws.²⁸⁹ The *Calgary Herald* refuted O'Cock's remarks and countered that black bear skins "could be obtained any time, sold for about \$1 each and there were some bounties on bear killing in fact."²⁹⁰ As demonstrated, Ontario was, in fact, one of the provinces where a bounty program existed. O'Cock likely represented the War Office's view at the time, believing that "there was no prospect of obtaining any Bearskins from Canada, where the bear is now a protected animal."²⁹¹

It did not matter that black bears were not actually a protected animal in some jurisdictions or that bears were not remotely scarce. What mattered was the insinuation that Canada was shirking its duties in meeting Britain's demand for bears. Jack Stepler of the *Ottawa Citizen* attempted to salvage Canada's reputation when he wrote a story about the bearskin making process. Speaking with Lieutenant-Commander Percy Silbertson, the head of a bearskin manufacturing company in London, Stepler reported that the British Army had been using bearskins from Russia since 1951 not because Canadians bears were in short supply but because the furs were cheaper. While the Canadian bearskins were much more desirable in quality, Silbertson apparently said that "we haven't the necessary dollars, so the supply is limited. Instead, we have to get them from Russia and play ball with Khrushchev like everyone else."²⁹² Consequently, the War Office's insistence on looking beyond Canada for furs or synthetics was not apparently the byproduct of limited availability but rather of financial consideration. While Stepler shed

²⁸⁹ "Like Mangy Survivors of Waterloo," *Ottawa Citizen*, 5 March 1959, 1.

²⁹⁰ "Bearskin Glut Refutes by Guardsmen," *Calgary Herald*, 7 March 1959, 2.

²⁹¹ NA, WO 32/18841 "Caps Bearskin," March 1959, 1.

²⁹² Jack Stepler, "The Guards' Bearskins," *Ottawa Citizen*, 10 March 1959, 6.

some light and corrected O' Cock's earlier comments about the situation, the idea that Canada had failed to fulfil its duty for Mother Britain may have provided the impetus for Canadians like Mayor Del Villano from Timmins, Ontario to seize an opportunity to help Britain and promote the home of his constituents.

The town of Timmins, located in northeastern Ontario, was established in 1912, two years after Noah Timmins bought claims to a gold discovery in the area, which led to the establishment of Hollinger Mines Limited (HML). Initially, the town and HML thrived but both struggled following the conclusion of the Second World War with the slow transition back from mining vital war metals to gold.²⁹³ The town's condition was also exacerbated by provincial legislation dating back to 1927 which limited towns from exacting too much revenue from prosperous mining sites and prohibited any form of taxation on the mine unless it existed within the jurisdiction of the town or city. With the case of Timmins, mines located on the town's periphery helped them evade being part of the local tax base.²⁹⁴ By the 1950s the future of Timmins looked bleak. Personal income declined, municipal services were considerably reduced, and the town was heavily reliant on the support of the provincial government to keep many of its essential services running.²⁹⁵

²⁹³ Louis Clausi, " 'where the action is': The Evolution of Municipal Government in Timmins," *Laurentian University Review*, vol. 27, 2 (February 1985), 48.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 47-48. This legislation explains why towns and communities like Timmins and Sudbury began annexing nearby communities following the amendment of the Mining Act in 1927 and why they pushed for amalgamation in the 1970s when mineral production had significantly increased again.

²⁹⁵ Optimism would not return to town until 1964, after a significant discovery of an ore body laced with non-metallic minerals such as zinc, copper, and silver was discovered in the Kidd Township by Texas Gulf Sulphur Company, just north of the town. By 1973, this find, which resulted in the establishment of the Kidd Creek Mine would be employing over 1,500 local workers, see Clausi, 49.

The city received an injection of energy and personality in 1956 when it elected Leo Del Villano to his first term as mayor, a position that he would intermittingly hold for the next two decades.²⁹⁶ The son of Italian immigrants, Del Villano previously worked as a postman and liquor salesman before he made his way into political life.²⁹⁷ He was charismatic and was known to have a flare for the dramatic. The press had likened some of his city council meetings to backroom brawls.²⁹⁸ Nevertheless, many viewed him as a shrewd civic booster and the evidence of this can be illustrated by his tireless efforts to promote his town throughout his mayoralty.²⁹⁹ Not all of the publicity that Del Villano brought to his constituents was positive, as would be the case with the two spring bear hunts he orchestrated in 1959 and 1960.

When Del Villano first read about the story of the Queen's Guards bearskin caps facing scrutiny because of their supposedly ragged condition, it is unclear what initially motivated him. Did he genuinely wish to restore the prestige to these regal caps, was this the drive of a patriot or was this a sensed opportunity to bring some much needed publicity and attention to his city and possibly himself? Regardless of his true intent, Del Villano privately, and without the consultation of his city, cabled the Commanding Officer of the Brigade of Guards in the United Kingdom sometime in early March 1959. According to the telegram, Del Villano stated "have heard you badly need bear skins for new hats [stop] we feel we can easily supply enough for whole brigade free by organizing

²⁹⁶ Fran Sturino, "Italians" in *Encyclopaedia of Canada's Peoples*, ed. Paul Robert Magocsi, 787-832 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 820.

²⁹⁷ Michael Barnes, *The Scholarly Prospector* (Renfrew, ON: General Store Publishing House, 2006), 79.

²⁹⁸ Joan Stalker, "Leo Del Villano: A Mayor Who Never Worries," *Globe and Mail*, 11 December 1961, 7.

²⁹⁹ Karen Bachman, "Celebrating Leo the Lion," *The Daily Press*, 21 September 2012.
<http://www.timminspress.com/2012/09/21/celebrating-leo-the-lion> (Accessed 15 July 2013)

a wide scale black bear hunt in northern Ontario [stop] appreciate cable reply to start organizing [stop] these skins best there are.”³⁰⁰

Del Villano’s proposal was bold but not novel. The Prince George Junior Chamber of Commerce (PGJCC), also known as the Jaycees in northern British Columbia, had been organizing black bear hunts on behalf of the Brigade of Guards since 1951. The first hunt was so well received that the British War Office requested that the Jaycees annually provide them with 150 bearskins.³⁰¹ This would have been a near impossible task and in the end, the PGJCC only provided the British Army with fifty bearskins but it was determined to continue providing thirty to fifty skins annually moving forward throughout the 1950s, eventually overlapping with Del Villano’s initiative in 1959.³⁰² The Canadian Chamber of Commerce also reportedly donated thirty-five black bear pelts to the Brigade of Guards in 1954 after it organized a similar hunt of its own.³⁰³

While Del Villano was not the first Canadian to plan a bear hunt for the Brigade of Guards, his initiative was extremely ambitious. He had offered to supply enough bearskins for the *entire* Brigade. Generally, a brigade or regiment contains a few thousand soldiers, so if Del Villano literally meant he could supply enough bearskins for the “whole brigade” he was committing himself and the town to a very tall order, especially since previous hunts carried out by the PGJCC had only yielded a maximum of fifty

³⁰⁰ NA, WO 32/18841, Leo Del Villano to the Brigade of Guards, March 1959.

³⁰¹ “Guards Want 500 Bearskins,” *Prince George Citizen*, 8 February 1951, 1.

³⁰² “Grenadiers’ Hats are now Assured,” *Prince George Citizen*, 9 August 1951, 8.

³⁰³ “Gift to Guards,” *Globe and Mail*, 11 September 1954, 24.

bears.³⁰⁴ Since most northern Ontario residents were still largely killing bears only as part of the bounty program, a systematically organized spring bear hunt would have been unprecedented at the time. It actually took decades before spring bear hunting became a popular form of recreational hunting amongst the province's residents and so his initiative seemed to be ahead of its time in terms of scope and management policy.

Despite receiving what could have been viewed as an encouraging and generous offer, the War Office still doubted whether the mayor could deliver on his promise, and for good reason. In a memorandum to Major General J.N.R. Moore, Commander of the Household Brigade, Major General T.B.L. Churchill suggested that he was still very pessimistic about the possibility of replenishing the WO's stock of bearskins. Churchill reiterated the War Office's earlier and misguided notion that Canadian black bear skins would still be unavailable because "the bear is becoming scarce in Canada largely due to the spread north of civilisation and its attendant [sic] industry."³⁰⁵ He also questioned the quality of the skins Del Villano could produce; even if he could make good on his word, the British Army could use only a small percentage of the furs obtained from trading posts. Churchill added that "unless the bears in this area are far above the average, in quality and numbers, I doubt whether they will materially affect the position."³⁰⁶ Despite having a tentative offer from Del Villano, the mayor of a town located in a part of the province known of its hunting opportunities and abundance of bears, Churchill lamented

³⁰⁴ Michael Moran, "Modern Military Force Structures," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 26 October 2006. <http://www.cfr.org/world/modern-military-force-structures/p11819> (Accessed 20 August 2014)

³⁰⁵ NA, WO 32/18841, Major General T.B.L. Churchill to Major General J.N.R. Moore, 16 March 1959, 1.

³⁰⁶ NA, WO 32/18841, Major General T.B.L. Churchill to Major General J.N.R. Moore, 16 March 1959, 2.

that “the existing standard for Caps Bearskin can no longer be attained. This is most regrettable [sic] but I feel that the fact must be faced.”³⁰⁷

Despite some of the reservations that Major General Churchill expressed to Major General Moore, acting Commander of the Household Brigade, the latter decided it was best to accept Del Villano’s bid. Regardless of Churchill’s pessimistic mutterings about the proposal, Moore informed Del Villano that “the shortage of bearskins [was] becoming a serious problem.”³⁰⁸ Following Moore’s confirmation, Brigadier M. Fitzlan Howard followed up with Del Villano and thanked him for his generous offer in helping them overcome their difficulties in obtaining bearskins. Howard informed Del Villano that the annual replacement requirement was roughly 300 caps and candidly stated, “I do not know how many bears you have in Northern Ontario, but when you learn that it takes one bear to one cap, (it is a very special bear that provides two caps worth of skin) you will understand how difficult the supply of these skins is becoming.” While Brigadier Howard did not suggest that Del Villano had to meet the annual replacement numbers, he did feel it necessary to remind the mayor that generally one black bear yielded one cap. Sensing that Del Villano might be hard pressed to meet a definitive commitment of any number, Brigadier Howard concluded his letter by stating that the War Office would appreciate whatever Timmins could provide them with, regardless of their annual quota.³⁰⁹

Once the Brigade of Guards had formally accepted Del Villano’s offer, it did not take long before word of the prospective transaction reached beyond the walls in

³⁰⁷ NA, WO 32/18841, Major General T.B.L. Churchill to Major General J.N.R. Moore, 16 March 1959, 4.

³⁰⁸ NA, WO 32/18841, Major General Rodney Moore to Leo Del Villano, March 1959 (exact date is unspecified)

³⁰⁹ NA, WO 32/18841, M. Fitzlan Howard to Leo Del Villano, 17 March 1959.

Whitehall to be reprinted in newspapers around the world. Newspapers in the United Kingdom, such as the *Daily Mail*, focused their headlines on the news, exclaiming “they were checking their guns in the gold-rush town of Timmins, Ontario, last night to hunt bearskins for the Guards outside Buckingham Palace.”³¹⁰ The initial sensationalism that surrounded the story, especially amongst media outlets in England, led to a wide range of speculation about the number of bears that would need to be killed. The *Illustrated London News* estimated that the number of bears that needed to be killed was somewhere between 500 and 1,500.³¹¹ Canadian newspapers such as the *Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph* stated that “Timmins has to provide 1,500 bearskins. Mayor Del Villano will have to organize a very wide-scale bear hunt.”³¹² Other newspapers embellished the original proposal, including Del Villano’s hometown medium, the *Daily Press*, reporting that he aimed to provide 6,000 bearskins for all seven regiments of the palace guards, a number that would be nearly impossible to get during the short spring season.³¹³

Although the private correspondence between Mayor Del Villano and representatives from the Brigade of Guards reveals that they never agreed upon a definitive number of bears, the estimates in some newspapers were wildly exaggerated. This did not ease the general public’s mind.³¹⁴ As the story continued to circulate around the world, both the mayor’s office in Timmins and the War Office in London were

³¹⁰ NA, WO 32/18841, Michael Brown, “Timmins Set for Bearskin Hunt,” *The Daily Mail*, 13 March 1959, page number unknown.

³¹¹ “Making Bearskins; and a Generous Canadian Offer,” *The Illustrated London News*, Volume 234, 28 March 1959, 526.

³¹² “Tall order for bearskins,” *Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph*, 16 March 1959, 3.

³¹³ “Bear hunt may extend beyond the Porcupine: State new hats are needed for 6,000 palace guards,” *Daily Press*, 13 March 1959, 9.

³¹⁴ “Need only 300 bears, no massacre—mayor,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 23 April 1959, 2.

inundated with hundreds, if not thousands, of protest letters. They came from people who feared that the campaign would lead to widespread and unnecessary slaughter of black bears. This deluge into the War Office was so significant that it had to issue a special internal memorandum in mid-March to outline new protocols for responses in order to avoid and minimize any further negative publicity.³¹⁵ Local Londoners wrote in and shamed the Guards for accepting the offer, adding that while they were still proud of them “we’d be prouder still of them if they made do with Nylon!”³¹⁶ Organizations such as the Conference of Animal Welfare Societies sent letters. For example, W. Risdown, chairman of this group wrote in early April to protest the “wholesale slaughter of wild creatures” and asked the WO to reconsider the offer.³¹⁷ Similarly, Cecil Schwartz, the secretary-general for the World Federation for the Protection of Animals also submitted a letter, imploring the Brigade of Guards to find alternative synthetics rather than using real bear fur.³¹⁸

Early opposition was also displayed through organized protests. Before the hunt was even under way, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) staged a march in London to protest what they believed would be a slaughter. According to the *Ottawa Citizen*, the RSPCA had also instructed the Ontario Society for the Prevention and Cruelty to Animals to elicit their support and try to stop the slaughter that was about to take place in Timmins.³¹⁹ In Ontario, the Audubon Society of Canada

³¹⁵ NA, WO 32/18841, “Bearskin Memorandum,” March 1959.

³¹⁶ NA, WO 32/18841 “Re-Offer to supply Bear Skins, from Ontario, Canada,” E.R. Bridges to the War Office, 12 March 1959.

³¹⁷ NA, WO 32/18841, W. Risdown to the Secretary of State for War, 4 April 1959.

³¹⁸ NA, WO 32/18841, Cecil Schwartz to H.M. Secretary of State for War, 1 April 1959.

³¹⁹ “Protest Big Hunt for Bears,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 14 March 1959, 30.

(ASC) also protested the hunt, issuing press releases that described how Del Villano's hunt would kill mother bears and subsequently orphan their cubs. The group's executive director, John A. Livingstone argued that "many of these pitiable, puppy-sized waifs would no doubt be slaughtered together with their mothers. The remainder could only starve, alone."³²⁰

Before the hunt began and throughout its entire duration, penning letters to the editor remained the most common method of voicing disapproval. While the War Office and Del Villano continued to receive plenty of correspondence, the latter did not keep any of his for posterity, which is unfortunate, as he later said he received letters in "five different languages from four different countries" and so, the best method of gauging the public's response is by examining letters to the editor.³²¹ It should be noted that these forms of communication are not necessarily indicative of wider sentiment shared throughout the general public but serve as introspective snapshots into how private citizens in Ontario and beyond felt about Del Villano's prospective spring hunt. Since considerable effort and time is spent on writing and mailing a letter to the editor, we can deduce that those individuals that allocated effort and care on this cause vocalized an issue that held value to them. As a result, for the first time in the history of the human-black bear relationship in Ontario, we can see a management issue that was a recurring theme in the province's newspapers. In many ways, this was the first time that people in various parts of the province were exposed to black bear hunting and through the forum of their local newspapers they were able to comment on the activity and express their

³²⁰ NA, WO 32/18841, Audobon Society of Canada, Press Release, 13 May 1959.

³²¹ "Bearskins await next step in trip to U.K." *Daily Nugget*, 11 June 1959, 5.

concerns. For the Department of Lands and Forests, these short missives provided insights into how people felt about black bears and how they viewed the ways in which black bears were being managed by the government.

Ontario's largest conservation group, the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (FON), felt so strongly about the issue that instead of writing into a provincially based newspaper, it submitted to the *Times* in London. At the time, the FON represented forty-four naturalist clubs throughout the province and had 3,500 members. In early May 1959, David B. Webster, the managing director for the organization, wrote to the *Times* on behalf of the FON and its member organizations to express its concerns. Webster wrote "that whilst not opposing the elimination of animals that constitute a local hazard or nuisance, the Federation of Ontario Naturalists expresses regret a the proposal of wholesale and indiscriminate killing of bears in the Timmins area."³²² Unlike other individuals and groups that voiced their protests throughout the spring and summer of 1959, the FON's position was fairly moderate because it was and still is a conservationist organization. Unlike animal welfare or animal rights groups, conservationist societies do not oppose hunting outright unless the activity is believed to have a detrimental impact on local populations and therefore could be deemed as an unsustainable activity. Since many believed that the hunt for the Queen's Guards would lead to massive slaughter, groups such as the FON opposed it on these grounds. As evidenced in Webster's letter, the organisation did not condemn the elimination of bears in areas of Ontario where they were considered to be nuisances or dangerous but felt that this particular hunt was

³²² David B. Webster, "Bears" *The Times*, 1 May 1959, 13.

unnecessary and potentially damaging to the local population if the animals were killed in large numbers as the initial projections intimated.

The most common refrain in the letters to the editor seemed to focus on the justification behind the hunt and the government's endorsement. The majority of these opinions were not grounded in ideas of sustainable practices or hunting ethics, rather, they largely criticized that black bears were being killed and they came from all over the province. A physician from Windsor, Ontario suggested that the hunt would lead to the "extermination of the bear population."³²³ Others such as Ann Wurtele and C.M. Chapman lamented that mother bears and their cubs were potential targets and that the "wholesale killing" could be avoided if the Guards simply adopted synthetic fur.³²⁴ Other more informed writers told readers that spring black bear hunting had been going on for years but had largely gone unnoticed and suggested that now would be a great opportunity to make spring hunting illegal.³²⁵ Gladys Abbott from London, Ontario writing on behalf of herself and twenty-five others in her community, protested the hunt because she believed it was difficult to justify killing bears simply to make "hats."³²⁶

As the scheduled start date for the hunt inched closer, concerns about massive slaughter and cruelty were most evident in Toronto's major national newspapers at the time, the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Daily Star*, both of which covered the Timmins

³²³ "Doctor voices protest about bear hunt," *Windsor Daily Star*, 1 May 1959, 43.

³²⁴ Ann Wurtele and C.M. Chapman, "Questions on the Bear Hunt" *Globe and Mail*, 5 May 1959, 6.

³²⁵ C.N.A Ireson "Spring bear 'hunting' a misnomer," *Globe and Mail*, 7 May 1959, 6 and Clare Watson, "The mass slaughter of bears," *Globe and Mail*, 9 May 1959, 6.

³²⁶ Gladys Abbott, "The case against the bear slaughter," *Globe and Mail*, 11 May 1959, 6. It should also be noted that the ceremonial bearskins are classified as caps because they do not have a visor or a brim, whereas as a hat is a type of head covering that usually has a brim.

bear hunt extensively.³²⁷ In the *Globe*, Bill Mason from Winnipeg, fearing that three hundred bears were guaranteed to be killed, used rudimentary arithmetic to express his concern that “if 300 bears are taken, chances are that 150 will be females with from one to three cubs each. This will mean that 300 bear cubs will die of slow starvation.”³²⁸

Writing into the *Toronto Daily Star* Mary Flynn from Port Arthur, Ontario praised Del Villano’s concern for the guards of Buckingham Palace but condemned his concern for the welfare of the province’s black bears, believing it was “wholesale destruction of the bear population [which was both] wanton and unnecessary.”³²⁹ H.R. Cade chastized the mayor for organizing an activity that was “nauseating, unnecessary, barbaric and a disgrace to our Canadian way of life.”³³⁰

Once the hunt officially commenced in mid-May, the frequency of letters published in the *Globe* and *Star* decreased but a few still trickled in.³³¹ Interestingly, one of the last letters in the *Globe* came from Moose Factory resident, Jaunita Jamieson with a unusual objection. Jamieson was more concerned with how the hunt might affect Canada’s reputation. She was not concerned about slaughtering or animal cruelty. Instead,

³²⁷ Toronto’s other major newspaper, *Toronto Telegram*, barely published anything on the event. While it did feature some lively letters to the editor, they were merely reprints of letters that were used in the *Globe and Mail*. Of importance to note is that when the *Telegram* did publish updates or stories about the hunt it was in a far more positive tone than its municipal counterparts. For example, the last article that the newspaper published about the bearskin hunt was titled “Even bears enjoy great Timmins hunt.” Readers were informed that two Englishmen were actually taking part in the campaign to help refit the Guards. William Potter from Lincolnshire travelled all the way just to try and help the cause while Michael Carmichael was in Timmins because he was representing the British Ministry of Supply. While the two British visitors were apparently having fun, Potter had remarked that it was a “good time had by all – even the bears.” The hunt continued for nearly another month after this article appeared but the *Telegram* would not publish anything else on the event.

³²⁸ Bill Mason, “The slaughter of the bears,” *Globe and Mail*, 13 May 1959, 1.

³²⁹ Mary Flynn, “Killing the bears,” Letter to the editor, *Toronto Daily Star*, 6 May 1959, 6.

³³⁰ H.R. Cade, “Bear hunt disgrace,” Letter to the editor, *Toronto Daily Star*, 1 June 1959, 6.

³³¹ Author’s note. As the hunt unfolded, the *Star* devoted more coverage to publishing updates and photographs, whereas the *Globe* still continued to feature letters to the editor and some small updates. For the most part, photographic documentation of the activity was largely found in the *Toronto Daily Star*.

she argued that the spring was the worst time to acquire bear. As a result, she believed that donating spring pelts was a shabby gift to “the head of our Commonwealth of Nations” and this would reflect poorly on Canada.³³²

Some of the most formal and concerted opposition to Del Villano’s plans actually came from within the British House of Commons. On 22 April 1959, Labour Member of Parliament (MP) for Dundee East, George Thomson questioned the Brigade of Guards’ decision to accept the offer from the Timmins mayor.³³³ He lamented the idea that “the Army appears to be encouraging the organised massacre of these small Canadian bears when they ought to be exploring means of finding a substitute?”³³⁴ Hugh Fraser, Conservative MP for Stafford and Stone, and also a junior minister in the War Office at the time, replied that the Guards had no intention to refuse such a generous offer. He suggested that the bear hunters should be notified about the quality and type of pelt the Army sought in order to avoid any senseless slaughter. Less than a week later, another member of the Labour Party, Arthur Moyle, representing Oldbury and Halesowen, raised the issue again. He also opposed the hunt, questioning that it was a “futile transaction which leads to no better result than the killing of bears to provide bearskins for the Guards?” Following Moyle’s comments, Conservative MP, Sir Robert Cary, asked whether there were not other “sources of supply which may make it quite unnecessary to embark upon a massacre of 500 bears in Canada?” Thomson also addressed the issue of a

³³² Juanita Johnson, “A shabby gift,” *Globe and Mail*, 27 May 1959, 6.

³³³ It should be noted that at this time, the Conservative Party was in power in the House of Commons (1951-1964) and the Labour Party was the official opposition during this period. Thomas William Heyck, *The Peoples of the British Isles: From 1870 to Present* (Chicago: Lyceum Books, 2002), 251-258.

³³⁴ House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, “Commons Sitting of Wednesday, 22nd April, 1959,” House of Commons Hansard, Fifth Series, Volume 604. Parlipapers.chadwyck.com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca Accessed 7 June 2012.

substitute, alluding to the fact that “ladies now wear fur coats made of nylon? Why on earth cannot the Guards wear bearskins made of nylon?” All three were reminded by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Supply, William Taylor, that a suitable form of synthetic fur was still being investigated but a number of manufacturing issues have prevented it from becoming a viable substitute.³³⁵

Following the concerns voiced in the British House of Commons, summarized in most major newspapers, Del Villano defended his proposal. According to the *Toronto Daily Star*, Del Villano denied the possibility of a slaughter, pointing out that many of the region’s bears were killed annually as part of the bounty system and through non-resident spring bear hunting.³³⁶ In a previous statement, the mayor had also suggested that “there is no more cruelty in killin’ a bear humanely than in eating a beefsteak.”³³⁷ Although Del Villano’s public comments projected an air of confidence, he was clearly worried about the questions raised in the House of Commons as he sent a private letter to Brigadier Howard to assuage any concerns about negative publicity. The mayor noted that most of the bears that would be shot would likely be nuisance animals and therefore would have already been targeted for elimination under the bounty program.³³⁸

The biggest potential obstacle to Del Villano realizing his goal depended on whether the Department of Lands and Forests would sanction his initiative. Since this type of resident bear hunting had never occurred in such an organized fashion, coupled

³³⁵ House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, “Commons Sitting of Monday, 27nd April, 1959,” House of Commons Hansard, Fifth Series, Volume 604. Parlipapers.chadwyck.com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca Accessed 7 June 2012.

³³⁶ “Need Only 300 Bears No Massacre-Mayor,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 23 April 1959, 2.

³³⁷ Dave Cobb, “Bears a menace says the mayor,” *Daily Press*, 14 March 1959, 1.

³³⁸ NA, WO 32/18841, Leo Del Villano to M. Fitzlan Howard, 27 April 1959.

with the negative publicity that was surrounding it, the DLF had more than enough reasons not to champion his cause. Dr. C.H.D Clarke, supervisor of the Department's Fish and Wildlife Division, felt that spring hunting was the best time to hunt black bears and suggested that "the mayor will probably get enough skins to cover the heads of entire regiments."³³⁹ The Department's Minister, Joseph Spooner, a former Timmins mayor himself (1952-1955), recognized that "bear hunting is a legitimate activity and pastime, and so long as it is carried out in an orderly and acceptable manner, it is recognized as being in the same category as general hunting."³⁴⁰ Notwithstanding the criticisms that Del Villano or his proposal raised, the fact remained that it received official approval from two of the province's chief natural resource stewards.

Despite the negative publicity that it potentially brought to the DLF, the scheme made sense from a management standpoint for several reasons. First, since the bears were going to be sought out by Del Villano's volunteer hunters and the pelts donated to the British War Office, the bounty could not be collected. This would limit the Department's costs for that area while still keeping the local bear population in check and therefore mitigating any potential negative interactions between humans and bears that spring. Second, by this time, non-resident spring bear hunting was becoming quite popular. As mentioned earlier, between 1950 and 1958 19,623 licenses had been sold, but over a third of these were purchased in the last two years alone (see Table 4 and Figure 3). Recognizing the money that non-resident spring bear hunting generated, the Department understood that endorsing a large-scale resident spring bear hunt could cultivate local

³³⁹ "Expert support bear hunt idea," *Daily Press*, 11 March 1959, 9.

³⁴⁰ "Hopes mayor will conduct bear hunt in orderly way," *Daily Pres*, 5 May 1959, 9.

interest in the sport. Bounties cost the government money and limited its ability to extract full value from the animal. Perhaps the DLF saw Del Villano's initiative as a way to gauge resident interest in the spring hunt in order help guide future policy.

Excitement leading up to the hunt was most noticeably, and unsurprisingly, found in Timmins. One of the local grocers, Mike's Super Market on Third Avenue, began taking out a full-page advertisements in the *Daily Press* in March to announce a promotional "Bare Hunt Week" later that month. The store proclaimed that its "bare bargains cut right down to the skin," and it offered rewards for local hunters who participated in the hunt. Mike's donated \$100 in prize money for the three hunters who "caught" the most bears.³⁴¹ The local newspaper also drummed up enthusiasm, covering the affair almost daily. It published fictional interviews between staff writers and talking black bears. Dave Cobb got one subject, known simply as Mr. Bear, to go on record and voice his disapproval.³⁴² The townspeople also seemed to be excited by the prospect that the hunt would garner significant attention for Timmins. One particular column speculated that Del Villano's offer has "captured the imagination of the British and people there no longer wondered, 'where is Timmins?' As far as they are concerned, this great gold-mining area is very much on the map. They realize, too, that the citizens of Northern Ontario are aware of their close ties with the mother country. The fact that people here won't let the guards down is a sign that all's well with the Queen and her far-flung 'empire.'"³⁴³

³⁴¹ "Mike's Announces National Bare Hunt Week," *Daily Press*, 19 March 1959, 16.

³⁴² Dave Cobb, "Bears become busbies? Not this bear, he says," *Daily Press*, 13 March 1959, 1.

³⁴³ "District hunt for bear receives solid support," *Daily Press*, 18 March 1959, 4.

Sure enough, Timmins indeed became an international focal point when the hunt officially began on 15 May. Representatives from *CBC* television, *Life*, and *Argosy* magazines, and a number of other news outlets all descended upon the small northern Ontario town to cover the first march into the woods. This event, dubbed “Canada’s bear safari” by one regional newspaper,³⁴⁴ saw Del Villano lead seventy-five hunters into the forest armed with weapons that included German lugers and old military grade rifles.³⁴⁵ The mayor arranged for news crews to be caravanned around the town so that they might be able to capture a bear killing on camera. On the first day, the closest they got to that was footage of a local hunter, Vince Bonhomme, shooting a seagull as it glided over the dump. While this did not seem very newsworthy to some, given all the publicity and worldwide attention that the hunt had already generated before it began, most newspapers covered the seagull shooting story. Even the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, once self-styled the “World’s Greatest Newspaper,” devoted space to the feathered casualty.³⁴⁶

Despite their lacklustre start, the hunters’ spirits were not dampened and Del Villano held regal press conferences for his out of town guests at the Empire Hotel.³⁴⁷ After the opening weekend, the newspapers reported that the town had killed four bears but Del Villano was reportedly dissatisfied with the slow start.³⁴⁸ He slyly stated “No doubt the people who have been worried about the ‘slaughter of bears’ will be very happy

³⁴⁴ “8 pelts bagged in hunt,” *Daily Nugget*, 19 May 1959, 1.

³⁴⁵ “40 hunters hunting hats,” *Vancouver Sun*, 16 May 1959, 14.

³⁴⁶ “Bear hunters make 1st kill- a seagull,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 17 May 1959, 1.

³⁴⁷ “Hunters enjoy big Timmins party but bears stay away by the thousand,” *Globe and Mail*, 18 May 1959, 1.

³⁴⁸ “3 Bears to be Guards’ Hats,” *New York Times*, 18 May 1959, 2.

about the small bag during the [opening] weekend.”³⁴⁹ Del Villano implored other communities in northern Ontario to send their dead bears to Timmins and also “issued a plea Sunday for the rest of the country to get in on the project [and] asked that anyone shooting bears for any reason anywhere in the country to send along the skins and he would see they are forwarded to England.”³⁵⁰ Within a week, the pace had increased substantially and it was reported that fifteen bears had been killed.³⁵¹

Del Villano’s posse of bear hunters also included some women. While the women who volunteered only comprised a small role, the coverage of their involvement reveals the general postwar attitudes towards females in general and their participation in outdoor activities in particular. At this time, hunting was still an overwhelmingly male-centred pursuit and regarded as a masculine activity. Of course, women hunted as well but not nearly to the same extent as men. Historian Tina Loo, studying hunting masculinities in British Columbia, argues that when women hunted in the early twentieth century, either alone or alongside their male partners, “they were seen as challenging convention” and that challenge was usually by men as “disruptive or as ridiculous and reinforcing gender norms.”³⁵² Loo’s assertions about how female hunters were viewed by their male counterparts in British Columbia are also applicable to the case in Timmins. The fact that June O’Neill and Bernadette Pacquette, two local women, wanted to hunt bears for the Queen was newsworthy in and of itself. The *Toronto Daily Star* actually featured a half-

³⁴⁹ “8 pelts bagged in hunt,” *Daily Nugget*, 19 May 1959, 1.

³⁵⁰ “8 pelts bagged in hunt,” *Daily Nugget*, 19 May 1959, 1.

³⁵¹ “Timmins bears count now 15,” *Globe and Mail*, 23 May 1959, 29.

³⁵² Tina Loo, “Of Moose and Men: Hunting for Masculinities in British Columbia, 1880-1939,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 32, 3 (Autumn 2001), 301.

page picture of the two women as part of its coverage in mid-May.³⁵³ The commentary about their involvement in other newspapers reveals how many truly felt about their participation in the hunt. When hunters from BC's Prince George Junior Chamber of Commerce heard about the news, their initial reaction reportedly included "nothing but derisive remarks."³⁵⁴ The *Windsor Daily Star* featured a story that suggested that hunters from Timmins accepted the idea "as long as they [the women] shoot straight – and strictly at bears."³⁵⁵ The *Calgary Herald* noted that while most male hunters in Timmins did not explicitly object, one of them prefaced his support by stating "as long as they know what they're doing and are careful, with their firearms, there is nothing wrong with it."³⁵⁶ The implication in both statements was that women were not capable of properly operating firearms and therefore, presented an additional element of danger to their more proficient male counterparts. As a result, any skill or enthusiasm that the women might have brought to the campaign was immediately undermined by men who felt threatened by female incursion into their activity.

The participation of Aboriginal hunters also reveals how some hunters perceived the importance of the event. Since the establishment of Ontario's Game and Fish Commission in 1892, indigenous peoples were increasingly targeted by the province's new regulatory body, which deemed their hunting methods more destructive and less sporting than the province's settlers. In 1905, Ontario's Chief Game Warden Edward Tinsely likened Aboriginal hunters to predatory animals, such as wolves, believing that

³⁵³ "Big bear hunt starts in Timmins dump," *Toronto Daily Star*, 16 May 1959, 2.

³⁵⁴ "Local Jaycees declare war on Timmins 'bear' hunters," *Prince George Citizen*, 20 May 1959, 1.

³⁵⁵ "Paul protest hunt, women will join killing of bears," *Windsor Daily Star*, 5 May 1959, 16.

³⁵⁶ "Women to provide fur hats," *Calgary Herald*, 6 May 1959, 10.

they did not recognize hunting seasons nor consider the age and sex of the animals they pursued.³⁵⁷ As a result, David Caverley has argued that the Ontario Game and Fisheries Commission demonized First Nations hunters, stating “the image of the Indian as ecological menace was born.”³⁵⁸ Despite facing repressive measures against some of their traditional hunting practices well into the twentieth century at the hands of the province’s largely white, middleclass regulatory body, one indigenous hunter responded positively to Del Villano’s scheme. For Gabriel Anashinabi from the Nipissing Indian Reserve, hunting bears for the Queen took on a greater significance. After killing two bears, he declined to sell them for \$15 each, instead, he preferred to send them to Del Villano so they could be donated as a gift to the guards and “the Great White Mother.”³⁵⁹

Anashinabi’s reference actually represents a broader and unique relationship that Native peoples experienced with the British monarchy. Since many of the numbered treaties in Ontario were signed during the nineteenth century and ultimately with Queen Victoria, these agreements had additional importance with the indigenous signatories because they saw themselves as Victoria’s children and referred to her as the “Great White Queen Mother.” J.R. Miller demonstrated that despite “the state’s assault on Aboriginal society during Victoria’s reign” First Nations’ attitudes towards the Queen

³⁵⁷ Ontario, Report of the Ontario Game Commission 1905 (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1906), Edward Tinsley, 17.

³⁵⁸ David Calverley, “ ‘When the Need for It No Longer Existed’: Declining Wildlife and Native Hunting Rights in Ontario, 1791-1898,” in *The Culture of Hunting in Canada*, eds. Jean L. Manore and Dale G. Miner (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 106.

³⁵⁹ “Indian gives bearskins for guards,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 28 May 1959, 35 and “Two bearskins elderly Indian’s gift to “Great White Mother,” *Daily Nugget*, 27 May 1959, 5.

often still remained uniformly positive.³⁶⁰ When First Nations peoples referred to themselves as the children of the Queen Mother and her government in Ottawa, it “never occurred in a context that implied subordination and obedience.” Rather the idea conveyed “within a First Nations cultural context, a set of social assumptions that treated children as distinct individuals who enjoyed a great of autonomy and who could count automatically on the love and protection of their parents.”³⁶¹ For some indigenous people, like Gabriel Anashinabi, this notion persisted, associating Queen Elizabeth II with the concept of the “Great White Queen Mother.”

Non-Aboriginal participants also viewed hunting for the Queen to be a special commitment. Towards the end of the hunt, Mayor Del Villano received an intriguing telegram of his own, from a member of the Prince George Junior Chamber of Commerce who resented his involvement in something that his Jaycees had been doing for the Guards since 1951. The letter argued that the Timmins hunters should “retire gracefully leaving the job to those who...are fully qualified to do justice to this regal task.” It charged that Del Villano was “interfering with a sacred obligation” and resented his encroachment on a service they considered to be their private duty.³⁶² The Timmins’ mayor responded, insisting that his hunt was not a failure and more importantly, it was “patriotic and sincere.”³⁶³ Newspapers from both Timmins and Prince George covered

³⁶⁰ J.R. Miller, “Victoria’s ‘Red Children’: The ‘Great White Queen Mother’ and Native-Newcomer Relations in Canada,” *Native Studies Review* 17, no. 1 (2008), 14.

³⁶¹ J.R. Miller, “Petitioning the Great White Mother: First Nations’ Organizations and Lobbying in London,” in *Canada and the End of Empire*, ed. Phillip Buckner (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004), 301.

³⁶² “Local Jaycees Declare War on Timmins ‘Bear’ Hunters,” *Prince George Citizen*, 20 May 1959, 1 and “Jaycees Enlist Dog’s Aid in their Hunt for Bears,” *Prince George Citizen*, 27 May 1959, 1.

³⁶³ “Answers Jaycees: Says bear hunt not a failure,” *The Daily Press*, 20 May 1959, 3.

the competition between the two places, providing readers updates on the number of bearskins in possession by each respective faction. While the Jaycees indicted Del Villano's initiative early on, by late June it was clear that the Timmins hunters were well ahead of their northern British Columbia rivals, which led the *Prince George Citizen* to secede the competition on behalf of the PGJCC.³⁶⁴

Clearly the bear hunt was an agent of urban boosterism but the dedication exhibited by many of the bear hunters in 1959 can also help situate Canada's wider relationship with Great Britain in the late 1950s. According to historian José Igartua, Canada underwent a crisis of "Britishness" in the 1960s and disassociated itself with its traditional connection with Great Britain in favour of a more inclusive system of civic nationalism.³⁶⁵ Other historians such as Phillip Buckner and C.P. Champion have contested the notion that Canada abruptly severed itself from its British past in the 1960s.³⁶⁶ In his works, Buckner, emphasizes that even by the late 1950s, despite international issues such as the Suez Crisis in 1956, many English Canadians still firmly held the belief that Canada ought to be a British nation.³⁶⁷ Even into the 1960s, Buckner contends that "a majority of English Canadians still thought of Canada as a British country with a special relationship with the United Kingdom."³⁶⁸ Rather than Igartua's notion that Canada abruptly discarded its British past, Buckner argues that it happened

³⁶⁴ "Bear situation looks bleak for undecided Jaycee hunters," *Prince George Citizen*, 16 June 1959, 1.

³⁶⁵ Please see José Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution: National Identities in English Canada, 1945-1971* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006)

³⁶⁶ Phillip Buckner, ed. *Canada and the End of Empire* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004); C.P. Champion, *The Strange Demise of British Canada: The Liberals and Canadian Nationalism, 1964-1968* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010)

³⁶⁷ Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis, eds. *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 3.

³⁶⁸ Phillip Buckner, "Canada and the End of Empire, 1939-1982," in *Canada and the British Empire*, ed. Phillip Buckner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 122.

much more gradually and, at times, reluctantly, as the nation's population grew in the postwar period and became considerably more multicultural rather than British.³⁶⁹

In some respects, Del Villano's bear hunt and the ongoing hunts in Price George illustrate the extent to which some English-Canadians were willing to go in order to maintain their connection with Great Britain. While community organizers like Del Villano and the PGJCC were undoubtedly cognizant of the potential publicity their respective plans could generate, the notion of dutiful patriotism and serving the Queen undergirded the hunts. Although many disapproved of the hunt on the grounds that it was inhumane or wasteful, it was rare to read a critique that lamented the ends that the bears were serving. It was not mutually exclusive for some to lament the prospective slaughter but also note their concern that it would be "unthinkable that soldiers of the Brigade of Guards should look shabby."³⁷⁰ As a result, some English-Canadians displayed their commitment and connection to Britain through the hunting and commodification of Canadian wildlife. When Queen Elizabeth II visited later that summer, the city of Winnipeg presented her with beaver pelts and elk heads as gifts.³⁷¹ Canadian bear hunts for the Brigade of Guards demonstrate that, in addition to flying the Red Ensign flag and celebrating Dominion Day, some Canadians also hunted to preserve and maintain their personal connection with Britain.

As the hunt neared completion in June, London's Ministry of Supply still encountered negative responses from the general public. Communications between their

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 122-124.

³⁷⁰ "The Timmins bear hunt," *Ottawa Citizen*, 16 May 1959, 6.

³⁷¹ "Beaver pelts, elk heads Winnipeg's gift to Queen," *Toronto Daily Star*, 16 June 1959, 1.

Canadian representative, Colonel Michael Carmichael, reveal that even as late as June there were still “considerable public and parliamentary concern here at the possibility of extensive and wasteful slaughter of bears.” The MoS stressed that Carmichael should endeavour to ensure that only the best quality skins were accepted before being shipped to the United Kingdom to avoid embarrassment associated with unnecessary waste. The Ministry stated that “we shall not be disappointed if in the event the number of acceptable skins turns out to be quite small” as they would rather receive a limited number of quality bearskins than too many unusable bearskins that would have to be discarded.³⁷²

When the hunt officially concluded on 15 June, at the end of the non-resident spring hunting season, only sixty-two bears had been killed, a far cry from the initial projections that had some concerned that hundreds, and possibly thousands, of bears would be killed.³⁷³ To celebrate the end of the campaign, the mayor honoured the hunters with a bear meat banquet at the Goldfields Hotel. Walking through the hotel, a *Daily Press* reporter noted that the “pungent odor [sic] of sizzling bear meat” served to commemorate “Northern Ontario’s first memorable and highly successful bear hunt.”³⁷⁴

Although the hunt was over, Mayor Del Villano still needed to deliver on his word and get the pelts to London so that they could be manufactured into bearskin caps. With help from Labatt Brewing Company, the mayor and two other individuals who had been instrumental during the hunt, drove the skins to an undisclosed Montreal tannery for initial processing before being sent to England. Labatt agreed to pay for all the costs in

³⁷² NA, WO 32/18841, Humphrey-Davis to Colonel Michael Carmichael, 5 June 1959.

³⁷³ “Bear hunt for Guards ends, 62 skins sent to tanners,” *Globe and Mail*, 16 June 1959, 10.

³⁷⁴ “Hunters to attend bear meat banquet,” *The Daily Press*, 20 June 1959, 9.

transporting the skins to Montreal. Before the mayor and his compatriots departed for Montreal, Jules Morris, a Labatt representative proudly posed for a photograph with Del Villano and De Saverio beside the container of bearskins. On the trailer was a sign that was emblazoned with the words: “Shipment of Bearskins for Home Guards, Timmins to Montreal, Delivery Compliments of Labatt’s “50” Ale Brewery.”³⁷⁵

While Labatt may have sensed a marketing opportunity, other Canadian businesses were not as eager to attach their name to hunt. Before Del Villano’s venture began, the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) informed the Ministry of Supply that it was not willing to provide any technical advice to the bear hunters in Timmins for fear that it might embarrass their regular operations.³⁷⁶ Since the HBC still maintained its headquarters in London until 1970, it reluctantly agreed to later help arrange the shipment of the bearskins from Montreal to the United Kingdom. Still cognizant of the ramifications of being associated with a controversial activity, Humphreys-Davis, MoS secretary, recounted to Colonel Carmichael, that the HBC “will not allow their name to be associated with the bear hunt, the selection of skins on site or the shipment of skins to Montreal.”³⁷⁷ The company also agreed to “discreet [sic] sorting” of the bearskins at the tannery in Montreal because it was aware of the standards that the Ministry of Supply needed to maintain. Once the skins arrived in Quebec, HBC representatives, working under anonymity, helped with the tanning process so that they could be ready to be shipped to London by the end of the Summer.

³⁷⁵ “Bearskins head for Montreal,” *The Daily Press*, 23 June 1959, 1.

³⁷⁶ NA, WO 32/18841, Carmichael to F.S. Barton, 29 April 1959.

³⁷⁷ NA, WO 32/18841, Humphreys-Davis to Colonel Carmichael, 5 June 1959.

The bearskins arrived in England, four months after the hunt concluded.³⁷⁸ Instead of receiving sixty-two skins from Timmins, the War Office actually received sixty-three, the extra one was apparently from Seattle, Washington.³⁷⁹ Evidently, a Seattle deputy sheriff shot the bear and offered it to the Brigade of Guards as a goodwill gift.³⁸⁰ After the Ministry of Supply had the bearskins, they were sent to one of the manufacturers of bearskin caps, Comptons, where the pelts would be examined in order to determine how many caps could be created. Of the sixty-two from Timmins, fifteen of the skins were deemed unfit and so only forty-seven skins would be used, to make some fifty new caps.³⁸¹ For his part, Mayor Del Villano received a telegram from the Household Brigade which stated “we are extremely grateful for the efforts of yourself and the citizens of TIMMINS to help over the difficult problem of maintaining the supply of caps for Her Majesty’s Foot Guards.”³⁸²

Based on the publicity and exposure that Del Villano’s 1959 hunt received, it is not surprising that he organized another hunt for the Queen’s Guard the following spring. Once again, it was time for “Northern Ontario bears to head for the hills to save their skins.”³⁸³ This second hunt did not generate nearly as much coverage or attention as the first, but the *Globe and Mail* did report that Del Villano had once again met with a

³⁷⁸ NA, WO 32/18841. Records show that the bearskins were received by the Quartermaster General for the War Office on 16 December 1959.

³⁷⁹ *The Times*, “63 bearskins for the guards: success of Ontario hunt,” 7 January 1960, 10.

³⁸⁰ NA, WO 32/18841, Mr. Whitteridge to War Office, 10 June 1959.

³⁸¹ NA, WO 32/18841, W.A. Salmon, 11 December 1959 and R.B. Tibbs to Lt. Colonel A.B. Brown, 14 December 1959.

³⁸² NA, WO 32/18841, Date and author unknown. Appears to be a draft for the official telegram which would later be sent to Del Villano.

³⁸³ “Bears Beware,” *The Daily Press*, 21 May 1960, 1.

“barrage of letters and newspaper clippings from Britain.”³⁸⁴ But unlike the hunt in 1959, which was “held in the face of much opposition from animal-lovers both in Canada and Britain” Del Villano’s second hunt did not generate nearly as much publicity as the first and therefore, opposition was far less visible.³⁸⁵ The hunt ended quietly in June 1960, with the Mayor and his hunters providing an unspecified number of bearskins for the Queen’s Guards.

* * *

What was the long-term impact of Del Villano’s spring bear hunts for the British Army? In the short run it generated significant publicity for the town of Timmins. In addition, the Mayor and his wife also benefited immediately afterwards as they were invited to dine with Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto during their Royal Visit in the summer of 1959.³⁸⁶ In terms of black bear management, Del Villano’s hunt initiated changes to black bear policy, inaugurated criticism towards spring bear hunting, and may have also spurred a reassessment of the animal’s value in the minds of many Ontarians.

Not long after Del Villano’s second and final spring bear hunt for the Queen’s Guards, the provincial legislature discussed the future of bear management in Ontario. In February 1961 Member of Provincial Parliament for Sudbury, Elmer Sopha asked Joseph Spooner, Minister of the Department of Lands and Forests, whether it was wise to continue spending tens of thousands of dollars each year killing wolves and bears.

³⁸⁴ “For the Guards: Black Bears Beware, the Hunt is on Again,” *Globe and Mail*, 24 May 1960, 4.

³⁸⁵ “Bear hunt for the Guards,” *The Children’s Newspaper*, 16 July 1960, 1.

³⁸⁶ “Leo is Out for Bear Again,” *The Daily Press*, 25 May 1960, 4. Leo Del Villano’s son, Gary, also confirmed that the mayor and his wife dined with the royal family that summer. Email conversation with Gary Del Villano, 27 August 2014.

Spooner acknowledged the divided positions over the long-term viability of the bounty system and admitted that he was “almost of the opinion that we should discontinue these bounties.”³⁸⁷ Within a month, on 29 March 1961, the Ontario Legislature passed an act to amend *Ontario’s Game and Fisheries Act*, which called for the implementation of several noteworthy changes to black bear management. These included placing a moratorium on the bounty system and designating black bears as game animals.³⁸⁸ Prior to Sopha raising his concerns in February, there had been no debate in the provincial legislature about the status of black bears and very little questions about the future of the animal’s management. Thus, the question is why did the government, abruptly and significantly, change its policy towards black bears in 1961?

The Department of Lands and Forests amended its black bear management program in large part because of Del Villano’s spring hunt. During the 1940s and 1950s, residents of the province harboured conflicting attitudes towards the animals. Black bears were exterminated as part of the bounty that legally vilified them and for the most part, there was very little reconsideration of this system. Del Villano, himself, commented on this when he initially dismissed concerns about the hunt, suggesting that “most of the bears killed in Ontario have been killed because they have been annoying people.”³⁸⁹ In the postwar period people slowly began recognizing the value of black bears. The government saw the value in them as game animals that could be marketed to tourist hunters and regular citizens saw their intrinsic value as they were more exposed to them

³⁸⁷ Joseph Spooner, *Legislature of Ontario Debates, Second Session of the Twenty-Sixth Legislature*, 28 February 1961 (Toronto: Queen’s Printer, 1961), 1600.

³⁸⁸ Ontario, *An Act to Amend the Game and Fisheries Act, Statutes of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto: Queen’s Printer, 1961), 107-110.

³⁸⁹ “100 ‘Queen’s bear hunters’ bag four pelts, 292 to go!” *Toronto Daily Star*, 19 May 1959, 1.

during summer vacations and through media coverage. As a result, when Del Villano orchestrated his first spring hunt in 1959, he may have inadvertently tipped the scales in favour of those who subscribed to the latter category. Due to the significant international and provincial attention fixated on the Timmins bear hunt, many people in Ontario became acquainted with how the province's bears were being managed, largely through violent means. Del Villano brought the issue of spring bear hunting into the kitchens and living rooms of Ontarians and most were critical of what they read or saw.³⁹⁰ As countless letters were sent to the province's major newspapers and the DLF itself, the overwhelmingly negative publicity may have prompted the government to re-examine its bear management policies, specifically, by shifting away from the bounty program and giving the black bear a more befitting status.

A poignant letter in the *Toronto Telegram* alludes to this issue, asserting that the “spring black bear hunting has been going on for years, and the bearskin headdress shortage of the Guards has brought it to attention.”³⁹¹ Members of the DLF were also aware of the furor that the bear hunt created and offered up their thoughts. Government forester, F.L. Hall, told the *Daily Press* that elsewhere in the world the bear is viewed favourably as a highly prized game animal and he lamented that in northern Ontario the bear is “neglected in the deep woods by all except the odd non-resident hunter.” He believed that the bear should be registered as a game animal and placed on the same

³⁹⁰ Mike Commito, “A Bear Hunt for the Queen,” *Ontario Out of Doors*, Vol. 45, 6 (July 2013), 21.

³⁹¹ C.N.A. Ireson, “Cruel bear hunts,” *Toronto Telegram*, 11 May 1959, 6.

footing as moose or deer. Once the black bear was classified as a game species, he argued it could be managed more effectively.³⁹²

For Ontario, Del Villano's bear hunts contributed to a reconsideration of the animal's place in the province that was already underway. With the advent of increased recreation time in the postwar period, tourists more frequently entered contact zones with black bears during vacations in provincial parks. The success of Disney's film *Bear Country* exposed people to the world of black bears more on an unprecedented level and may have contributed to the softening of attitudes during the 1950s. By 1959, Del Villano's hunt coincided with these two currents and accelerated changes in attitudes and changes in policy that had been percolating. The worldwide publicity that the hunt received, much of it negative, put the DLF's management of the animal on display and the frequency and transparency of newspaper coverage led the government to alter its bear management system in 1961.

This next chapter focuses on the changing legal status of black bears and how the shift towards viewing them through an increasingly capitalistic lens as a game animal had a significant impact on their place in the provincial economy. It also investigates the ongoing resistance from residents of the province that refused to see the black bear as a game animal. Despite the new management system, longstanding attitudes persisted amongst many Ontarians that still viewed bears as varmints and they refused to embrace the province's newest game animal.

³⁹² "Forest issues bear hunt hints," *The Daily Press*, 9 April 1959, 9.

Figure 4



Northern Ontario's Hunters' Paradise in Timmins, Ontario. Source: Laurentian University Archives, P022-Gertrude Jaron Lewis Collection, I70, 2.

Figure 5



**Mayor Leo Del Villano posing with rifle and bearskin cap, circa 1960.
Source: Timmins Museum, Photograph courtesy of Karen Bachman.**

Figure 6



Members of the Prince George Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees) pose with their quarry from a bear hunt for the Queen in the 1950s (Exact date unknown). Source: *Prince George Citizen* Collection, The Exploration Place (Prince George, British Columbia).

Chapter 4

“The bear is a game animal”: Changing Attitudes and Big-Game Status, 1961-1970

The Ontario government’s official designation of the black bear as a game animal in 1961 signalled that the DLF had recognized the marketability of the animal as a big-game species and its potential for revenue generation. Although the province had offered spring bear hunting for non-resident hunters since 1937, it was only after the conclusion of the Second World War did it become cognizant of the popularity of black bears as a big-game animal. As a result, the DLF capitalized on this trend in 1961 and in the years that followed, increasingly began to view and manage bears through a capitalist lens.

While the Department began to realise the profitability of the animal, many residents across the province were very slow to adopt new attitudes. For them, the black bear was still largely perceived as a nuisance or vermin, especially amongst those operating in the agricultural sector. In fact, farmers, livestock owners, and apiarists were still able to legally destroy problematic bears but would no longer be compensated. Consequently, despite the formal change to the legislation and management system that governed the province’s bears, residents were slow to shift their view of the animals. Although the government’s legislation outwardly signalled its new commitment to managing black bears as big-game animals, the evidence demonstrates it did not wholeheartedly endorse this position either. The DLF brought in very few regulations to manage black bears as true big game animals. The government also allocated few resources to properly study black bears to aid more efficient management early on, demonstrating that, as an organizational unit, it still needed to overcome its own

longstanding prejudices toward the animal. In addition to the conflicting attitudes found between those who viewed the animal as big-game and those who viewed it as a pest, non-hunters also saw intrinsic value in the animal when they encountered it during family vacations or trips to Ontario's provincial parks, most notably Algonquin. Yet, even within these managed spaces, conflicting attitudes towards the animal also played out. Guests and visitors wanted to get close to black bears but not too close. As a result, places like Algonquin Park had to carefully manage the relationship between its guests and its bears, and at times, this involved a complex and contradictory process.

This chapter discusses the limitations that the Ontario government encountered when it made its black bears game animals. It will demonstrate how longstanding cultural attitudes are often much more powerful than modifications to wildlife management laws and legislation. Regardless of how the province wanted to change its approach and definition of its black bears, the fact remained that residents, and even the organization itself at times, still primarily saw the bear as a pest. Once again, the provincial government found itself needing to balance these attitudes and bring them in line with its envisioned system of management. This process was often contradictory. The DLF wanted to continue marketing the bear as a big-game animal, largely to non-resident hunters, while also recognizing the concerns of those in the agricultural industry about the destructiveness of bears. It sought to cultivate resident interest in bear hunting, an activity that lacked longstanding tradition in the province.

* * *

“The bear is a game animal,” exclaimed the title from one of the articles in the government’s inaugural issue of *Ontario Fish and Wildlife Review*.³⁹³ Dr. C.D.H. Clarke, manager of the Department’s Fish and Game Division, enthusiastically wrote that the black bear was clearly a “game animal in his own right, a tourist attraction, and an economic asset in spite of occasional misdeeds.”³⁹⁴ Clarke’s article commemorated the Department’s official commitment towards making the black bear Ontario’s newest game animal and shedding it of its previous identity as loathsome vermin. He continued to emphasize its importance as “an unmistakable tourist asset” or “a prime tourist attraction” and that it was finally time to “accord the bears some measure of the dignity that our people at large have always accorded them.”³⁹⁵ While the latter point touched on the general shift in attitudes towards bears in North America in the postwar period, Clarke’s description of the animal also emphasized the DLF’s interest in it because of its potential for revenue generation. Unlike the old system, wherein resident hunters could kill bears by simply purchasing a modestly priced gun license, Clarke informed readers that residents and non-resident hunters alike now only had the “privilege” to kill black bears only after they had purchased a bear hunting license. In seeking to cultivate some home-grown appreciation for the bear, Clarke downplayed the negative relationship between bears and humans in some parts of the province, suggesting that any damages to property

³⁹³ According to Minister of Lands and Forests, Joseph Spooner, in the magazine’s first editorial, the *Ontario Fish and Wildlife Review* would be published four times a year and distributed to “fish and game organizations and other agencies who are concerned with informing the public about the management programs which are designed to perpetuate the fish and wildlife resources of Ontario,” 1.

³⁹⁴ C.D.H. Clarke, “The Bear is a Game Animal,” *Ontario Fish and Wildlife Review* 1, 1 (Summer 1961), 2.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 2-3.

in the past have “usually [been] more annoying than serious.”³⁹⁶ Clearly, the manager of the Department’s Fish and Game Division memorandum signalled the beginning of a new era of black bear management in Ontario, one that would be heavily focused on tourism and big-game hunting.

Despite granting the bear big-game status on paper, the province did necessarily manage bears as carefully as its other game animals.³⁹⁷ Residents now had to purchase specific hunting licenses to kill bears, while previously they could kill them if they possessed a valid firearms license. This changed in 1961. Unlike some of the province’s more sought after quarry, deer and moose, the government did not introduce a bag limit for black bears.³⁹⁸ As a result, resident and non-residents who purchased bear licenses for a nominal fee of \$5.25 and \$10.50 respectively, could kill as many bears as they desired. The government also neglected to introduce basic measures to emphasize sportsmanship amongst bear hunters, such as preventing hunters from molesting bears while they were in their dens, or hunting them in dump sites. In fact, when members of the DLF captured three bear cubs in April 1966 for research, they did so by bulldozing the den and shooting the mother bear as the four attempted to escape. J.D. Levesque from the Hearst District noted that “these bears were not hunted in the sense as hunting is known to be, but were

³⁹⁶ Ibid, 2.

³⁹⁷ Despite the modifications to the *Game and Fisheries Act*, bounties still continued on black bears until 27 July 1961. By the time the program was scrapped in the summer of 1961, 14,602 adult bears and 1,390 cubs were destroyed from 1942 to 1961, at an approximate of \$149,660 to the province.

³⁹⁸ A bag limit in sport hunting refers to the restriction on the number of animals, within a specific species or group of species, that a hunter may kill on a daily or predetermined basis. A bag limit differs from a possession limit, which is designed to regulate the total number of animals a hunter can keep in his/her possession throughout the duration of a given hunting season. Once a hunter reaches his or her possession limit for the season they are no longer eligible to continue hunting said animal.

still in their den when it was destroyed.”³⁹⁹ The trio of cubs were eventually sent to the Zoological Park at Washago Beach, and while they may have held some research value, the animals were certainly not treated as though they were a prized game species.

The way that the government sold black bear licenses was also problematic. Unlike those for other game animals, bear licenses were sold in a series of combinations. Hunters, both resident and non-resident, could either purchase a deer-bear license or a moose-bear license or a wolf-bear license or simply, a spring bear hunt license. While this system was economically advantageous to hunters who were interested in pursuing more than black bear, it depreciated the bear’s status as a game animal. The licensing combinations show that the animal was not significant enough to be marketed alone. Even if hunters purchased a deer-bear license, for example, this did not necessarily mean they were interested in bear hunting. Often, this type of license was purchased to pursue deer with bears simply harvested incidentally. The structure of this system limited the DLF’s ability to accurately gauge interest in black bear hunting and prevented it from reasonably estimating the number of bears killed during a given season with the exception of the spring hunt, which was reserved solely for the black bear. Since the combination system did not accurately represent the number of hunters pursuing bear, outside of the spring season, the DLF could not calculate the number of bears harvested per annum.⁴⁰⁰ The fact that resident and non-resident hunters were not legally obligated to provide the Department with information about the success or failure of their bear hunts exacerbated

³⁹⁹ AO, RG 1-443-5, Bear Files, Box 2, Accession #31714, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, “Spring Bear Hunt 1966 [Hearst]” 1966, 3.

⁴⁰⁰ MNRL, Vertical Files, J.B. Dawson, “The Spring Bear Hunt in Ontario, 1962-63,” 1963, 1.

the issue. As a result, any information that the DLF received about black bear hunting in terms of interest and the number of bears harvested provided only a partial picture, a situation that complicated management strategies. Bears clearly had a limited stature as a game animal at the time.

The big-game announcement did not mean that the DLF suddenly granted the same type of protection towards bears that it extended to other big-game animals, something the Department openly acknowledged. Although the government repealed the bounty system it still acknowledged the potential destructiveness of bears. Section Thirty-Five of the *Game and Fisheries Act* still empowered individuals to take drastic action against bears if they “suffered from their actions.”⁴⁰¹ While it appeared as though bears would become a veritable game animal and no longer managed as a varmint, the Fish and Game Division’s chief steward C.D.H. Clarke, stated that the new legislation “would not result in bears getting any more immediate protection than they have now.”⁴⁰² As a result, despite its own intention to elevate the bear as a game animal and manage it in this vein, the Department still grappled with the reality that while bears had value as game animals, they were still potentially destructive and costly to some residents of the province. Moving forward, the DLF would, once again, have to maintain a balance between satisfying non-resident interest in black bear hunting and mitigating resident antagonism towards the animal. Consequently, the 1961 legislation notwithstanding, the lack of regulations that accompanied this legal change actually served to undermine the black bear’s title as a new big-game animal in Ontario.

⁴⁰¹ C.D.H. Clarke, “The Bear is a Game Animal,” *Ontario Fish and Wildlife Review* 1, 1 (Summer 1961), 3.

⁴⁰² Clarke, 1961, 3.

These oversights in the Department's new regulatory policies did little to quell the longstanding antagonism that residents harboured towards black bears. Although Del Villano's spring bear hunt in 1959 may have facilitated a reconsideration of the animal's position in the provincial ecosystem and economy, many people still viewed bears quite negatively and were slow to embrace the government's legislative changes. Numerous reports from conservation officers throughout the DLF's various districts reveal that despite the change in the bear's legal status, hardened attitudes towards the animal still persisted. For example, C.A. Haxell from the Port Arthur district suggested that the new laws did little to curb the sentiment amongst residents who shot down "bears on the slightest provocation at garbage dumps in the vicinity of farms and dwelling houses."⁴⁰³ Writing from the Sault Ste. Marie District, Fisheries Management Officer, O.D. Wohlgemuth, noted that residents did not consider the bear to be a game animal and found that "resident hunter interest is almost nil."⁴⁰⁴ In far northwestern Ontario, in Kenora, M. Linklater, senior conservation officer found that "residents are not interested in bear hunting as a sport [and as a result] bear hunting is not a big thing in the Kenora District."⁴⁰⁵

Part of the problem was that Ontario lacked a longstanding bear hunting tradition that existed in other jurisdictions, such as the United States. The province has certainly had an extensive history of killing bears but the impetus was to eliminate nuisances and was not done in the pursuit of sport or sustenance. Biologist J.B. Dawson suggested that

⁴⁰³ AO, RG 1-443-5, Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, C.A. Haxell, "Spring bear hunt report-Port Arthur District," 1.

⁴⁰⁴ MNRL, Vertical Files, O.D. Wohlgemuth, "Spring Bear Hunt, Sault Ste. Marie District, 1963," 1.

⁴⁰⁵ MNRL, Vertical Files, M. Linklater, "Spring Bear Hunt Report, Kenora District," 1962, 1-3.

the black bear held a strong position in folklore in the eastern United States and killing a bear in Boone's and Crockett's era was considered prestigious but the same could not be said in Ontario.⁴⁰⁶ In a Department memorandum in 1955, H.G. Lumsden noted how "in some of the States bear are regarded as the finest big game trophy that a hunter can obtain."⁴⁰⁷ Even if Ontario had its own well-established bear hunting customs, the government had conditioned residents to view black bears as vermin through the bounty system. As a result, nearly a generation of Ontarians was raised to see bears as pests and exterminate them through the bounty system. When the bounty was cancelled, residents who had been collecting the bounty for two decades were now instructed to change their views towards the animal and if they wanted to continue killing bears they needed to purchase a license. Conservation officers Wohlgemuth and Linklater, mentioned above, both surmised that the new licensing system hindered resident interest in bear hunting early on as many were not interested in spending money on an animal that they did not consider to be game and more importantly, were previously rewarded to kill. While some of the DLF's members, such as biologist Dawson, lamented that "Ontario residents are missing out on some excellent sport and it is to be hoped that more interest will be shown in pursuing the black bear," moving forward, the government had the difficult task of changing these attitudes towards black bears.⁴⁰⁸ Despite the early interest from non-resident hunters, the resident perspective would be slow to shift.

⁴⁰⁶ AO, RG 1-243, Department of Lands and Forests Weekly Press Releases, RG 1-243, Box 3, J.B. Dawson, "Bear Hunting," Vol. 17, 35 (1964), 4.

⁴⁰⁷ Ministry of Natural Resources Library (MNRL), Vertical Files, H.G. Lumsden, "Notes on Black Bears in Ontario, 1955" 27.

⁴⁰⁸ Dawson 1964, 9.

Even without a bear hunting tradition, residents were also simply uninterested in the animal because they still had to deal with its destructiveness. During a meeting of the Standing Committee on the Department of Game and Fish in March 1962, Member of Provincial Parliament, William Noden, Progressive Conservative representative for the Rainy River questioned the government's decision to repeal the bounty system.⁴⁰⁹ Noden argued that even some small compensation would be valuable to farmers who suffered losses from bears and in turn, this could help improve the relationship between the agricultural industry and the government. Minister of Lands and Forests, Joseph Spooner, countered that bear hunting was beginning to attract resident and non-resident hunters and that this "would increase the kill of bears and at the same time add a valuable asset to hunting camps which develop bear hunting as one of their attractions."⁴¹⁰ Noden's concerns fell on deaf ears and reflected the Department's refusal to consider reinstating the bounty program.

While the Department may have wanted to view the animal one way, bears were still largely seen as vermin by farmers and apiary owners because the animal had the potential to impinge on their livelihood. An exchange between Napoleon Dumont, proprietor of Dumont Apiaries in Warren, and the Department in the late 1960s illustrates the complexities of the evolving relationship between bears, the government, and its constituents in the 1960s.

⁴⁰⁹ In 1960, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario created the Standing Committee on the Department of Game and Fish in order to monitor estimates and spending by the Department of Game and Fish. This particular committee only lasted three years before being absorbed into the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, Wildlife and Mining.

⁴¹⁰ AO, Ontario Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on the Department of Game and Fish, 1960-1963. Game and Fish Folder, 1961-1962, 27 March 1962, 2.

After his beehives had been ransacked by bears in late summer of 1968, Dumont had petitioned the government to implement a bear bounty in his farming area or at least provide compensation for the damages. Dumont was not alone in his frustration. 1968 turned out to be an unusual year for nuisance bear complaints as poor wild berry production drove the province's bears out of the forests in search of alternative food sources. While residents in communities may have been frustrated by bear incursions into their neighbourhoods or rummaging through their garbage, farmers and apiarists had to contend with financial consequences arising from the damages made by the paws of marauding bears. Another beekeeper in the Lanark District also reported that bears had destroyed fifteen of his beehives.⁴¹¹ The same year in Parry Sound a farmer had lost two young calves to black bear predation before exacting revenge on five suspected bears.⁴¹²

Not long after he sent his formal complaint to the DLF, Dumont received a candid letter from the Chief of the Fish and Wildlife Branch, Dr. Clarke. Clarke had stated that reinstating the bounty was illogical because “the system has never demonstrated that it effectively reduces the population of any species.”⁴¹³ Clarke also reminded Dumont that the *Game and Fisheries Act* provided him with the authority to dispatch the bear in defence or preservation of his property. While Dumont was actually legally entitled to protect his beehives, he still felt that the government should compensate

⁴¹¹ AO, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, W. Vonk, “Compilation of Data on Black Bear” Lanark District 1974.

⁴¹² AO, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, Spring Bear Hunt Report-Parry Sound 1968.

⁴¹³ AO, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Nuisance and Damage Reports, 92-3J, C.H.D Clarke, September 16, 1968.

him and characterized the situation as “no bounty, no subsidy, no progress in farming, no intelligent action whatsoever.”⁴¹⁴

With no compensation forthcoming from the Department of Lands and Forests, Dumont continued to press the issue and enlisted the help of his local MPP from Sudbury East, Elie Martel. Martel also wrote Clarke and argued that the Dumonts had been “denied the right to protect their property, [so] someone is then responsible for this loss and it is certainly not them.”⁴¹⁵ In the meantime, Dumont also penned a letter to Ontario Premier John P. Robarts. He argued that the “bear is an animal and not responsible for its conduct but Mr. Brunelle [Minister of Lands and Forests] and his officers are supposed to be intelligent species known as homo sapiens capable of reason, hence responsible for their actions. Protecting the bears is the responsibility of the Government and as ‘wards’ of the government, the damage they do is also the responsibility of the Government.”⁴¹⁶ Dumont concluded his letter by dubiously suggesting that the DLF had more power in his area of the province “than Hitler had in Germany.”⁴¹⁷ The Ontario Beekeepers’ Association also rallied behind Dumont, passing a resolution at its annual meeting to request the government that compensation be paid to beekeepers for losses caused by bears.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁴ AO, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Nuisance and Damage Reports, 92-3J, Napoleon Dumont, September 21, 1968.

⁴¹⁵ AO, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Nuisance and Damage Reports, 92-3J, Elie Martel to C.H.D. Clarke, November 6, 1968.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., Napoleon Dumont, March 20, 1969.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ AO, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Nuisance and Damage Reports, 92-3J, P.W. Burke, Secretary of the Ontario Beekeepers’ Association to C.H.D. Clarke, 15 April 1969.

Dumont's issue garnered enough attention within the government that Ontario's Minister of Justice and the Attorney General, Arthur Wishart, joined the fray to inform the irate apiarist that the Department was not liable for any damages.⁴¹⁹ The issue of compensation had always been a longstanding grievance in the province. Previously, Deputy Minister of Lands and Forests, Frank MacDougall wrote the Minister, Harold Scott, in May 1947 to discuss how the United States had recognized damage by wildlife as a legitimate issue while Ontario has "tried to avoid setting up any possible policy that might cost the Province large sums from damage by wildlife [despite the fact that] a great many people feel that there is a legitimate claim [to be made]."⁴²⁰ While the province would take a more active role in bear management later in the century and institute a compensation model, at this time, apiarists and farmers had to take matters into their own hands.⁴²¹ Dumont's failed request did little to temper his feelings against bears and the government's policy. He was surely not alone in this matter. While the Department sought to avoid compensating farmers, apiarists, and livestock owners or reinstating the bounty, it also wanted to maintain the management of its black bears as game animals. The Dumont case reveals the complexity in the ongoing relationship between humans and black bears in Ontario. While hunters and other groups may have been slower to adopt the bear as a big-game animal, those members of the province that had their livelihood

⁴¹⁹ AO, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Nuisance and Damage Reports, 92-3J, Arthur Wishart, April 16, 1969.

⁴²⁰ AO, F-1014, Frank MacDougall Fonds, Series A-2 (1941-1966) Box 6, Memoranda to Minister, B272899, MacDougall to Harold Scott, 7 May 1947.

⁴²¹ In 1990 the Ministry of Natural Resources implemented the *Livestock, Poultry and Honey Bee Protection Act* in order to provide compensation to those that had sustained damages from bears, coyotes, wolves, and wild dogs.

threatened by bears, such as farmers and apiarists, were hard-pressed to see the animal as anything but a varmint.

Although resident interest in the animal may have been lacking, the DLF found considerable support from non-resident hunters who had been spring bear hunting in the province since 1937. There had always existed a greater desire amongst non-resident hunters, especially those from the United States, to pursue black bear in Ontario, simply for the fact that they appeared to be a genuine desire to hunt black bear in America. For these hunters, the change to the province's management system did little to affect their interest, as most had been viewing Ontario's black bears as game animals for decades. If anything, non-resident hunter interest had already increased significantly after the conclusion of the Second World War as renewed peacetime and prosperity afforded hunters with the opportunity and resources to return to their traditional outdoor sporting activities, which brought many to Ontario on a seasonal basis. Consequently, by the 1961 legislation, non-resident hunter interest in the province's black bears had already been renewed and reached peak levels.

By the 1960s, conservation officers throughout much of northern Ontario recorded a significant influx of non-resident bear hunters in general but in the spring season in particular. J.B. Dawson reported that during the 1963 spring season as a whole, non-resident hunters were overwhelmingly American, coming from twenty-six different states, including those as far west as Nebraska and south as Florida.⁴²² A province wide assessment of spring hunting from 1964 to 1966 by W.A. Creighton illustrates not only

⁴²² MNRL, Vertical Files, J.B. Dawson, "The Spring Bear Hunt in Ontario, 1962-63," 1963, 1.

the increasing popularity of Ontario hunting amongst non-resident hunters and the degree to which it was becoming commercially important. By 1967, the Department of Lands and Forests had reported that “the sale of spring bear hunting licenses in Ontario reached an all-time high” for resident and non-resident hunters. This indicated the “increasing importance of bears as game animals” particularly for non-resident hunters and its potential for revenue generation.⁴²³ N.D. Patrick from the Swastika District observed that over the past few years there has been “a very great increase in the interest of hunters in bear hunting. If this trend continues, there is a strong possibility of bear becoming an important game animal in the Swastika District, if not in the whole province.”⁴²⁴ While the DLF acknowledged that even though bear hunting “had not yet approached the popularity of deer and moose hunting,” it was optimistic that its popularity with resident hunters would spur Ontario guide and outfitters to “take advantage of this demand and get into the bear-hunter-outfitting business.”⁴²⁵ It was in fact becoming big business. The majority of spring hunters originated from the United States and as a result, contributed to the provincial economy through their purchasing of licenses, accommodations, and supplies.⁴²⁶ For many areas, this growing interest was a boon to the local economy in the off-peak season before summer fishing and recreation attracted residents and non-residents alike.

⁴²³ Ontario, *Annual Report of the Minister of Lands and Forests*, 1968 (Toronto: Queen’s Printer, 1968), 7.

⁴²⁴ N.D. Patrick 1958, 1.

⁴²⁵ Ontario, *Annual Report of the Minister of Lands and Forests*, 1968 (Toronto: Queen’s Printer, 1968), 8.

⁴²⁶ W.A. Creighton, “Spring Bear Hunt in Ontario, 1964-1966,” *Department of Lands and Forests* (1966). In 1964, hunters from these states accounted for 66% of the licenses sold, in 1965 they accounted for 69% and in 1966 they totalled 71%.

Examining the spring bear hunt on the local level in the North Bay District from 1968 to 1971 shows the growing financial importance of non-resident bear hunting. During the 1968 season, 370 hunters harvested 131 bears. Of the total hunters, 333 were non-residents, largely from the United States, and therefore accounted for 90% of all hunters in the North Bay District that spring. Conservation officers estimated that all the hunters spent 1,640 days pursuing bears, which means that the average hunter invested four and a half days in their spring hunt. The report also estimated that, based on information from hunting camps and guides in the area, the average cost per day for hunter accommodations and meals was \$14. Therefore, the North Bay District estimated that non-resident hunters spent \$20,979 alone on accommodations and meals.⁴²⁷ Non-resident hunters also had to purchase spring licenses for \$10.50, accounting for \$3,496.50 in direct money to the province. As a result, 1968 spring bear hunting in North Bay alone generated an estimated \$24,475.50 for the local and provincial economy.⁴²⁸

The following year, the North Bay District estimated that the daily hunter cost had increased, ranging from \$10 to \$30, providing them with an average figure of \$20 per day.⁴²⁹ The number of non-resident hunters remained stable at 325. Of this, 325 hunted with rifles or shotguns and four hunted with bows. The government believed that non-resident firearm hunters spent approximately 4.5 days each pursuing bear, while bow

⁴²⁷ Calculations are as follows. 333 non-resident hunters each spent an average of 4.5 days pursuing bears in the spring in the North Bay District. It was estimated that each spent \$14 per day on meals and accommodations.

⁴²⁸ AO, RG 1-443-5, Bear Files, Box 2, Accession #31714, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, "Spring Bear Hunt: North Bay District, 1968" 1968, 3. It should also be noted that the data collected by Department officials for that year, as has been demonstrated, was not all encompassing so it stands to reason that the net revenue could have been even higher. Regardless, the calculations by North Bay District field staff, perhaps the most comprehensive for all the Districts that year, reveals the actual dollar amount of the spring bear hunt.

⁴²⁹ It was noted that guides in the area were charging approximately \$14 per day for their services.

hunters spent slightly less, averaging 3.5 days. Using the \$20 per day average on accommodations and meals, it is estimated that firearm hunters spent \$29,250 and bow hunters spent \$5,600 for a combined \$34,850. Additional costs for licenses bring this total up to \$38,304.50, a sizeable increase from the previous season.⁴³⁰

By 1971, the spring bear hunt for North Bay revealed the increasing importance of the predominately non-resident activity and the report itself took a more nuanced approach in its analysis.⁴³¹ Prepared by R.W. Campbell, District Wildlife Management Officer, he estimated that 312 non-residents were averaging five hunting days. Based on the average fees and rates from a number of outfitters and guides in the area that catered to non-resident hunters, he believed the average daily cost was approximately \$114, working out to \$177,840.⁴³² In 1970, non-resident bear licenses increased from \$10.50 to \$15, which meant that the province received an additional \$4,680 in fees.⁴³³ The province had also begun to charge a \$10 export fee for successful non-resident hunters who wanted to bring their bear home. Campbell recorded that non-resident hunters shot sixty-six bears, which would have accounted for an additional \$660, assuming all hunters desired to return home with all or part of their quarry. As a result, rather than speculating on how much the hunters had spent, Campbell instead argued that each black bear was worth \$80 to the province in licensing and export fees alone, although his estimate is fairly

⁴³⁰ AO, RG 1-443-5, Bear Files, Box 2, Accession #31714, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, “Spring Bear Hunt: North Bay District, 1969,” 1969, 3-4.

⁴³¹ The report for the spring season in 1970 was not included in, AO, RG 1-443-5, Bear Files, Box 2, Accession #31714, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3,

⁴³² It is important to note the increased cost for non-resident hunters which suggests that tourist outfitters and guides were becoming acutely aware of their customer base and adjusted their rates to reflect the growing popularity and demand for services in the pursuit of black bear in the region.

⁴³³ AO, RG 1-443-5, Bear Files, Box 2, Accession #31714, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, R.W. Campbell, “Spring Bear Hunt Report 1971,” 24 July 1972, 2-3.

conservative.⁴³⁴ In total, the 1971 spring hunt for the North Bay District is believed to have generated \$183,180 for the local and provincial economy. Since these figures are rough estimates, they can only provide us with an approximation of the money spent by non-resident hunters in the North Bay district. These figures only account for one district in particular one season over a three-year period. The total number of non-resident spring bear hunting licenses sold throughout the province from 1968 to 1971 was 43,728, worth an estimated \$576,121 in licensing fees alone (please see Table 6 and Figure 7). As a result, the total dollars spent in all of the province's districts where spring and fall bear hunting would have occurred would have been significantly higher. What the North Bay figures reveal is how black bears were increasingly becoming important to the local and provincial economy. Just ten years earlier the government paid residents to kill these animals but by the late 1960s and early 1970s, bear hunting was becoming big business.

Although the DLF was undoubtedly satisfied with the increasing commercial importance of black bears through non-resident hunting, it also needed to address the concerns of residents that coexisted with the animals in Ontario. Despite its big-game status, black bears were still large, powerful, and potentially dangerous animals. As such, many residents were not interested in hunting them and were more concerned about the potentially negative impact the animals could have on themselves, their livelihood, and property. While the DLF may have wanted the 1961 legislation to signal a completely new era in management, the reality was that, big-game or not, bears were not seen in the same light by residents of the province. Incidents in the late 1960s did little to alter these

⁴³⁴ R.W. Campbell 1972, 2.

attitudes and once again, the Department found itself trying to balance the dichotomy of vermin and big-game.

Province-wide records from 1968 reveal that this particular year appeared to be historically bad for negative human-bear interactions in Ontario. H.G. Cumming, biologist for the DLF's Fish and Wildlife Branch wrote that "in 1968 there was an extraordinary increase in the number of bears seen everywhere in the province. Not only were they around dumps as usual but they were in people's yards and even in downtown areas of some cities."⁴³⁵ Farmers in northwestern Ontario registered numerous complaints and there were multiple reports from apiarists, such as Napoleon Dumont, that their beehives had been ransacked. Conservation officers and biologists from various districts in the northern region speculated that the unusual spike in nuisance activity was "directly attributed to the shortage of natural food."⁴³⁶ Most found that a lack of seasonal fruit such as raspberries, blueberries, and pin cherries undoubtedly pushed bears out of the forests in search of alternative sources of food, which led to unfavourably interactions with humans.⁴³⁷ For example, the Sault Ste. Marie district had reported that nuisance bear activity had reached unprecedented levels, which forced residents, conservation officers

⁴³⁵ AO, RG 1-443-5, Bear Files, Box 2, Accession #31714, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, H.G. Cumming, *Bear Hunting in Ontario, 1967-1969* (Toronto: Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, 1970), 9.

⁴³⁶ MNRL, Vertical Files, H.T. Adair, "The Black Bear, White River District, 1967 to 1968," 3.

⁴³⁷ AO, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, Kapuskasing District 1968. Issues were also reported in Gogama, Kirkland Lake, Pembroke, and Parry Sound. See AO, RG 1-443-5, Bear Files, Box 2, Accession #31714, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, "Gogama Division Spring Bear Hunt-1968" 1968, 2; W.R. Catton, "Spring Bear Hunt 1968: Kapuskasing District," 1968, 2; L.L. Trodd, "Bear Hunt Report: Pemroke District, 1967-68," 1968, 1; and MNRL, Vertical Files, "Spring Bear Hunt Report, Parry Sound District, 1968," 1.

and local police to shoot almost thirty bears from late May to early October 1968.⁴³⁸

According to wildlife management officer E.F. Mantle, “not only were these animals a problem to the cottager or the residents of outlying areas, but sightings were frequent in residential areas of the city of Sault Ste. Marie.”⁴³⁹

Some wild management officers, such as Mantle, recommended that greater efforts be taken to dispose of garbage as a way to mitigate the cause and frequency of the type of nuisance incidents that were so prevalent in 1968. He sagely recognized that greater human care could help reduce the prevalence of unwanted encounters with bears.⁴⁴⁰ Mantle’s suggestion was not taken seriously at the time, as the DLF’s response to these incidents remained largely reactionary than preventative. Despite outwardly appearing to be according greater protection to the black bear through the big-game legislation, the government still needed to assuage the concerns from residents and this was largely done through the use of lethal force. Despite the first inkling that nuisance bear activity might be linked to seasonal food variability and the availability of anthropogenic food sources such as garbage, the general public and the DLF continued to focus the problem on bears, opting to invoke management techniques from the bounty era to control the issue.

Following the Department’s issues with bear management in 1968, it appears to took steps the following year to earnestly promote bear hunting to its residents. The DLF often extolled bear hunting in its weekly press releases but it also devoted considerable

⁴³⁸ AO, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Nuisance and Damage Reports, 92-3J, Sault Ste. Marie District, 1968.

⁴³⁹ Mantle 1968, 1.

⁴⁴⁰ MNRL, Mantle 1968, 3.

coverage to it in the 1969 spring issue of the *Ontario Fish and Wildlife Review*. M.E. Buss, from the North Bay District, argued that spring black bear hunting afforded the “the active sportsmen an opportunity to engage a big game animal at a time of year when ordinarily his rifle would remain greased and his enthusiasm untapped...”⁴⁴¹ Spring bear hunting was presented as a great opportunity for hunters who had spent the winter cooped up doing activities such as reading, bowling, and playing cards. Buss seemingly juxtaposed these indoor activities as somewhat unmanly and portrayed the opportunity to spring bear hunt as a way to reclaim one’s masculinity. Evidently, spring bear hunting would provide them with a release from these domestic trappings and get out into the bush in pursuit of bear. Interestingly, and perhaps in response to the rash of complaints towards bears in 1968, Buss hinted that hunting the animals could be viewed as a form of redress for those who had fallen victim to their damages. Presenting hunters with an opportunity, Buss stated “spring bear hunting is all what you make of it...[and] it is unlikely that these liberal seasons will be altered in the near future.”⁴⁴² If the government could get residents enthusiastic about bear hunting then this could work towards its management goals and get resident attitudes more aligned with their non-resident counterparts.

Despite the Department’s best efforts, bear hunting in general and spring hunting in particular continued to be an activity dominated by American hunters. The estimated number of non-resident and resident hunters for the 1970 spring season was an

⁴⁴¹ M.E. Buss, “Spring Bear Hunting Ontario,” *Ontario Fish and Wildlife Review*, Vol. 8, 1 (Spring 1969), 21.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, 24.

overwhelmingly lopsided 10,995 to 1,517. J.N. Ashdown, conservation officer for the Blind River District reported that in 1974 that while most non-resident hunters continued to come from the adjacent and nearby states of Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana, he also noted that individuals demonstrated a willingness to travel from even further a way to pursue the province's bears. For the spring and fall seasons of that year, Ashdown noted that American hunters had come from as far away as Wyoming, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Florida. In addition, a lone West German hunter also visited the Blind River area for the fall season.⁴⁴³ R.E. Weber, conservation officer for the Kirkland Lake District, recorded similar trends from his location in 1975, citing hunters from Georgia and Louisiana.⁴⁴⁴ Biologist A.J. Stewart, from the Lindsay District, also noticed that clients were returning to his district from the United States. A group of eight hunters, along with their pack of twenty bear dogs, from Tennessee returned each spring and fall to hunt bears in Haliburton County. Stewart noted that groups such as this "could promote bear hunting to a very prominent position in the small villages in the northern part of the Lindsay District."⁴⁴⁵

Even as resident interest in bear hunting slowly increased from the late 1960s onwards, it was not necessarily because of a change of heart. Wildlife management officers noted that resident hunters often pursued the animals simply to kill them. Evidently, the aversion amongst residents to purchasing a bear license, previously satisfied with the transaction under the bounty system, was dissipating as many looked to

⁴⁴³ Ashdown 1974, 4.

⁴⁴⁴ MNRL, Vertical Files, R.E. Weber, "The 1975 Black Bear Report: Kirkland Lake District," 1975, 5.

⁴⁴⁵ AO, RG 1-443-5, Bear Files, Box 2, Accession #31714, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, A.J. Stewart, "Bear Hunting: Lindsay District, 1967-1972," 2.

reduce bear numbers under the legal guise of big-game hunting. One report from the Lindsay District Office in 1970 stated that after bears were shot they were “simply thrown away. On more than one occasion hunters have wounded bears but never bothered to track them down. This wasteful attitude is especially prevalent among local resident hunters.”⁴⁴⁶ The author of the report, A.J. Stewart, speculated that locals were only inclined to hunt the animal after they had come into conflict, namely that the bear was considered to be a nuisance around the cottage, home or farm.⁴⁴⁷ John Macfie, biologist from the Parry Sound District, reported similar information about his areas so-called “bear hunters.” He found that local residents enthusiasm for bear hunting peaked in June, “when bears have become concentrated in garbage dumps.”⁴⁴⁸ This practice engendered resentment amongst many non-resident hunters who recoiled at the lack of sportsmanship. While officers from other districts, such as Kenora and Gogama, suggested that residents might demonstrate more interest once they realized the financial significance of bear hunting or guiding, for the most part, the small number of residents hunting bears in the spring and fall in the late 1960s and early 1970s were still framing bears as nuisances while they carried out these activities.⁴⁴⁹

Part of the problem in cultivating new attitudes towards bears, especially amongst residents was that, the Department of Lands and Forests and subsequently the Ontario

⁴⁴⁶ AO, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, A.J. Stewart, “Lindsay District Bear Hunt, 1970,” 1970, 2.

⁴⁴⁷ AO, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, E.F. Mantle, “Bear Hunt Report -Sault Ste. Marie District 1971.”

⁴⁴⁸ AO, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, John Macfie, “Spring Bear Hunt Report-Parry Sound 1969.”

⁴⁴⁹ AO, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, “Gogama Division Spring Bear Hunt 1969,” 5 and B.P. Saunders, “Kenora Spring Bear Hunt 1970,” 3-4.

Ministry of Natural Resources⁴⁵⁰ (hereafter MNR), it lacked significant information about the animal to help dispel previously conceived, and often misguided, notions.⁴⁵¹ This issue was not only confined to Ontario. Before the bounty was repealed in 1961, the Department's own officers noted that information about the animals throughout North America was very sparse and that "a perusal of the literature available showed very little concrete information on the black bear."⁴⁵² Even into the 1970s, wildlife management officers and biologists continued to suggest that the government still did not possess much scientific knowledge about the species, which could have a detrimental impact on its management.⁴⁵³ District biologist for Blind River, P.R. Purych, questioned the government's spring bear hunt on the grounds that no other big game animals, such as moose or deer were hunted in the springtime. More importantly, he also noted that "we have no population estimate for bears in our district to determine whether the present population can or cannot stand a spring and fall season." He urged the MNR to take a more conservative approach "until we have biological data to back up" having two seasons.⁴⁵⁴ Echoing Purych's thoughts, J.N. Ashdown, also from the Blind River, expressed concerns in 1974 that even after being a game animal for thirteen years, "we

⁴⁵⁰ As part of the reorganization, the Wildlife and Fisheries Sections became separate branches and the Fur Section became part of the Commercial Fish and Fur Branch. The creation of the MNR also saw some reorganization in the field as well. The number of district offices increased from twenty-one to forty-nine and the number of regional offices also increased, growing from three to eight. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, *Wildlife '87: A Chronicle of Wildlife Conservation in Ontario* (Toronto: Queen's Printer, 1987), 19.

⁴⁵¹ The Ontario Department of Lands and Forests ceased to exist in 1972 and was renamed the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources until 2014. Following the Liberal victory in the June 2014 provincial general election, the organization is now known as the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

⁴⁵² MNRL, Vertical Files, N.D. Patrick, "The Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*) of Northeastern Ontario," September 1962, 2.

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁴ Purych 1973, 6-7.

still do not know what our population is and what the total allowable harvest should be.”⁴⁵⁵ He continued that the Ministry needed “an intensive bear management program...to determine the status of the population” instead “of waiting until we have biological data which may indicate that our bear population is being over-harvested.”⁴⁵⁶

The lacuna needed to be filled for several reasons. If the province’s biologists did not have the proper information and data to manage the animal in perpetuity then this would conflict with the government’s aim of marketing and managing black bears as big-game animals for the province. In order to avoid future criticism, particularly from its own biologists, that could impede the government’s vision for bear management, it would need to begin gathering data, carry out studies, and implement the analysis into its wider management strategies. Also, the acquisition of much needed knowledge about the province’s bears could help the government better educate the general public about the animal in order to help initiate a shift in attitudes, which could lead to residents seeing more value in the animal instead of perceiving it as simply a nuisance.

While the Ministry undoubtedly valued the concerns that its officials shared about the need to obtain better information to aid the province’s bear management program, the mechanisms the government brought in to do so lacked teeth. Although the Department of Lands and Forests had originally introduced a reporting system in 1963, it was not compulsory. Officials had gone on record many times to express dissatisfaction with this system, namely that it did not collect accurate information. Some districts noted that the response to the hunter report cards, as they were known, was often so poor in one year

⁴⁵⁵ Ashdown 1974, 5.

⁴⁵⁶ Ashdown 1974, 6.

that they often did not issue them on a semi-annual or even annual basis. For example, in 1969, the Kapuskasing District mailed questionnaires to thirty resident and ninety-one non-resident bear hunters but only received a twenty-five and forty percent return, respectively and as a result, discontinued the practice.⁴⁵⁷ Consequently, districts across the province were either not receiving representative data through the voluntary reporting system or none at all because the output was not worth the effort to implement it. Without a compulsory reporting system to promote a more accurate collection of data, the DLF and MNR continued to be in the dark when it came to black bear population estimates, an important set of data for structuring responsible management.

Even by the mid 1970s the Ministry evidently did not have a firm idea about the number of bears harvested or the total living number of bears in the province in general. Reports from various MNR offices speak to the nature of incomplete or limited data. C.E. Perrie, the District Manager for Sioux Lookout office reported in 1974 that “figures for the resident hunt are unavailable.”⁴⁵⁸ Similarly, W.J. Lovering from the Owen Sound office lamented that their branch “did not have any reports on black bears.”⁴⁵⁹ The Dryden office believed it had a reasonable “guestimate” about the number of bears in its district but this was by no means definitive.⁴⁶⁰ Even the MNR’s chief steward, Minister Leo Bernier, told the forty-seventh annual convention of the Ontario Federation of Anglers

⁴⁵⁷ AO, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, Kapuskasing District 1969.

⁴⁵⁸ AO, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files Population Estimates, 92-3B, C.E. Perrie, “Compilation of data on black bear” July 26, 1974.

⁴⁵⁹ AO, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files Population Estimates, 92-3B, W.J. Lovering, “Compilation of data on black bear” July 22, 1974

⁴⁶⁰ AO, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files Population Estimates, 92-3B, W.J. Lovering, Dryden District, “Compilation of data on black bear” July 15, 1974.

and Hunters, in February 1975, that despite his optimism about bear hunting, the province was still uncertain about how many it had within its borders and lamented “no reliable method of estimating black bear populations has [yet] been developed.”⁴⁶¹

There were some positive signs on the horizon that the Department and Ministry were taking its commitment to managing bears as game animals much more seriously by the late 1960s and early 1970s. As noted earlier, the DLF lacked considerable information about black bears, a comparable issue in other North American jurisdictions, but it began implementing more long-term studies, towards the end of the 1960s in order to better understand the animal and in turn, facilitate better management. One of these studies, initiated in North Bay in 1968, was designed to investigate how far bears roam on average during a year, the population density, and how best to handle nuisance animals.⁴⁶² It was a long-term study that would bear fruit for the Ministry in the mid to late 1970s. In the meantime, members of the Department, such as E.F. Mantle from Sault Ste. Marie, applauded this initiative, viewing it as a critical step forward to acquire “sufficient information upon which to base sound management policies will be essential.”⁴⁶³

On the ground, management regulations had improved. Since 1961, the government had not instituted bag or possession limits for bears; this meant that hunters could kill as many bears as they desired as long as they had purchased a valid license. In 1970, non-resident hunters were now limited to one bear per license. The introduction of

⁴⁶¹ AO, RG 1-443, Wildlife Branch, Box 34, Urban Wildlife Folder, B125947. Speeches, 44-12A, Leo Bernier to the OFAH, February 21, 1975.

⁴⁶² AO, RG 1-243 Department of Lands and Forests Weekly Press Releases, Box 3 (1963-1968) Vol. 22, 27 (1968), 3-4.

⁴⁶³ AO, RG 1-443-5, Bear Files, Box 2, Accession #31714, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, E.F. Mantle, “1968 Spring Bear Hunt: Sault Ste. Marie District,” 1968, 4.

this rule was a major step forward as outfitters and guides, along with member of the DLF had been calling for harvesting regulations since “some hunters are very greedy and would slaughter all the bears they could.”⁴⁶⁴ E.F. Mantle from the Sault Ste. Marie DLF commented that this new legislation would “do a good deal to ensure a better opportunity for all who purchase license rather than permitting the trophies to go to a greedy minority.”⁴⁶⁵

While the introduction of a bag limit for non-residents improved the situation, there were still significant gaps in the regulatory system that prevented bears from being managed as proper game animals. Although non-residents could only kill one bear per license, they had no limits to the number of licenses they could purchase. Resident hunters could still kill as many bears as they liked with only one licensing purchase. The reporting system for harvesting bears was still also woefully inadequate. While non-resident hunters were more compelled to relay this information to the government because they were more likely to use the services of a guide or outfitter, resident hunters faced no such obligations. Although resident hunters did not kill black bears for sport to a significant degree until the 1980s, the problem with them not being mandated to report their kills was that some conservation officers, such as K.J. Tolmie, noted that residents that killed nuisance bears were also not required to report them.⁴⁶⁶ Once resident hunters began taking more interest in recreational hunting towards the end of the 1970s, the lack

⁴⁶⁴ AO, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, E.F. Mantle, “1968 Spring Bear Hunt-Sault Ste. Marie District,” 4.

⁴⁶⁵ AO, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, E.F. Mantle, “Spring Bear Hunt 1970-Sault Ste. Marie District,” 5.

⁴⁶⁶ AO, RG 1-443-5, Bear Files, Box 2, Accession #31714, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, K.J. Tolmie, “Bear Hunt Report Port Arthur District 1965,” 1965, 1.

of reporting remained problematic. David R. Marks, conservation officer for the Ignace District would later write in 1978 that “an effort to collect information regarding the resident hunt should be seriously considered in the near future.”⁴⁶⁷ In addition, members of the DLF and the hunting industry had also long been advocating that the government place a moratorium on the combination licensing system and only sell bear licenses for either the spring or fall seasons. They felt the need for a single license system for bears in order to “help raise the status of bear and encourage the true bear hunter to buy a license and those not interested in bear would be prohibited from shooting bears just because they were there.”⁴⁶⁸

Even by the end of the decade, resident attitudes were much the same. B.P. Saunders, District Biologist for Kenora found that it was still took time for residents to develop the desire to hunt the bear as a trophy animal. Sampling hunters participating in the 1966 Kenora spring hunt, Saunders found that of the 155 surveyed, only one was a resident hunter.⁴⁶⁹ In the Port Arthur District, conservation officer, K.J. Tolmie categorized bear hunters as ardent sportsmen (i.e., non-resident hunters), organized cottage campers (i.e., resident) and frustrated residents (i.e., farmers, loggers etc). He noted that non-resident sportsmen hunted primarily for recreation and enjoyed the prospect of capturing a pelt or meat, whereas residents in his district only killed bears for the protection of cottages or to remove nuisance animals in order to protect and preserve

⁴⁶⁷ MNRL, Vertical Files, David R. Marks, “Black Bear Report, Ignace District 1977,” (March 1978), 7.

⁴⁶⁸ AO, RG 1-433-5, Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Final bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, Unknown Report from 1973.

⁴⁶⁹ MNRL, Vertical Files, B.P. Saunders, “Spring Bear Hunt Report, Kenora District, 1965-66” 1966, 3.

their property.⁴⁷⁰ Elsewhere in more central Ontario, the Pembroke District had also reported that from 1967 to 1968, bear hunting still did not seem to interest local hunters in any way.⁴⁷¹ A.J. Stewart, a Lindsay conservation officer, noted that despite the change in legal status to the black bear, many residents in the area still viewed the animal as vermin or a nuisance. He noted that this attitude or perception was still held even in the actions of those that hunted bears for sport. He recorded that “after these animals are shot...they are simply thrown away. This wasteful attitude is especially prevalent among local resident hunters.”⁴⁷² An anonymous report from the Kapuskasing district in 1968 suggested that “bears [are] still considered varmint and publicity [is] required to increase interest and raise the image as a big game species.”⁴⁷³ Writing for the Sault Ste. Marie District in 1966, conservation officer C.F. Cook noted that instead of viewing the black bear as a big game animal, residents in his locale still saw them “as a nuisance and predator to be dealt with accordingly.”⁴⁷⁴

By the 1960s and 1970s, Algonquin Park, the jewel in Ontario’s provincial park system, continued to be a big draw for residents and tourists in the summer months. Frequenting provincial parks in general was quite popular at this time. From 1972 to 1977 the Ministry recorded that nearly 77,000,000 people had visited the province’s parks in at least some capacity. In Ontario’s most historic and most-well known park, Algonquin,

⁴⁷⁰ AO, RG 1-443-5, Bear Files, Box 2, Accession #31714, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, K.J. Tolmie, “Bear Hunt Report: Port Arthur District, 1965,” 1965, 1.

⁴⁷¹ AO, RG 1-443-5, Bear Files, Box 2, Accession #31714, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, L.L. Trodd, “Bear Hunt Report: Pembroke District, 1967-68,” 1968, 1.

⁴⁷² AO, RG 1-443-5, Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, A.J. Stewart, “Lindsay District bear hunt 1970,” 2.

⁴⁷³ AO, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, Kapuskasing 1968.

⁴⁷⁴ MNRL, Vertical Files, C.F. Cook, “The Spring Bear Hunt, Sault Ste. Marie District, 1966,” 2.

drew 4,246,578 guests during this same time span.⁴⁷⁵ As a result, the Park acted as a significant contact point for humans and black bears during the summer months in Ontario. In many respects, Algonquin Park serves as a microcosm to examine the changes to the human-bear relationship in the province during this period.

As noted in the second chapter, Algonquin Park encountered problems between humans and black bears during the postwar period due to a spike in attendance, which in turn led to increased garbage that the Park was not properly equipped to handle.⁴⁷⁶ This issue was exacerbated by the fact that bears served as a major tourist attraction for guests. While most visitors wanted to avoid negative encounters, they still wanted to interact with the animals, often taking risks by feeding them by hand or observing them too closely in the Park's refuse sites. As noted in Alice Wondrak Biel's study of bears in Yellowstone Park, guests in Algonquin treated the bears they encountered with reckless abandon, often jeopardizing the safety of themselves and the animal in order to get a unique photographic opportunity or to return home with a story.⁴⁷⁷ Much like Yellowstone, Algonquin had few policies in place early on to govern the relationship between humans and bears in the Park and very little enforcement to discourage particularly risky behaviour. By the 1970s, this unregulated relationship had failed to educate guests on how to properly interact with black bears, a disservice not only to the visitors and bears, but the Park itself. Thus, beginning in the 1970s, Algonquin Park improved its garbage collection and storage system to mitigate negative interactions between people and black bears, and it embarked

⁴⁷⁵ Ontario, *Ontario Provincial Park Statistics* (Toronto) Annual reports from 1972 to 1977.

⁴⁷⁶ Killan, *Protected Places*, 152. Algonquin's rangers killed over 100 bears in the autumn of 1953, damaging the Park's reputation as a wilderness sanctuary.

⁴⁷⁷ Wondrak Beil, Chapter 1, "Zoos, Feeding Grounds, and Roadsides: The Wild Yet Tame Bear," 7-27.

on a program to educate campers about the realities of residing with bears in the wilderness.⁴⁷⁸

The Algonquin Park newsletter, *the Raven*, was one of the ways that Park staff sought to educate the millions of visitors who came to Algonquin each year. Its first issue dealing with humans and black bears noted that in the 1972 season, Algonquin staff had already observed “several cases of people sitting in cars eating lunch and passing sandwiches out the window to bears.” They bluntly stated that this type of behaviour was unacceptable and told readers that the rules were simple, “never under any circumstances give a bear food.”⁴⁷⁹ The author reminded guests that while it might be a big temptation to feed the bears, it should never be done because it would only cause trouble for guests and that it would help ensure that the bear will be shot before the summer is over. The article concluded by telling its readers that bears are not dangerous to human beings, as long as they are left alone.

The Park continued its public relations campaign to better educate its guests about Algonquin’s “most misunderstood animals – the black bear.” One article told guests that coming to Algonquin in the summer provides visitors with the opportunity to view wildlife, such as black bears, living in their natural setting. It told readers that, unfortunately, each year bears still had to be destroyed by park officials because they had been corrupted by humans. By the end of the summer of 1972, some forty-five bears were killed by Park staff and “it was obvious something had to be done to prevent such carnage

⁴⁷⁸ Joanne Kates, *Exploring Algonquin Park* (Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1983), 44-46.

⁴⁷⁹ Algonquin Park Museum Archives, “Bears,” *The Raven*, Vol. 13, 2 (28 June 1972), 2. Underlined emphasis added by this author.

from recurring.” According to the article, Algonquin Park held meetings on how to deal with the human-bear issue. One staff member even travelled to Yellowstone National Park to learn how an even worse bear-people problem had been largely solved. As a result, after the summer of 1972, Algonquin Park embarked on a three-tiered program to reduce negative human-bear interactions in the park and ensure the long-term viability of the animal within its boundaries, for the enjoyment of future guests.

The Park sought first to take greater care in order to make garbage inaccessible to bears. Algonquin built and implemented bear proof garbage cans around the most heavily used picnic-grounds and also installed bear-proof garbage storage sheds in certain areas of the park. Once more resources were forthcoming, plans had also been made to expand this bear-proof system throughout the entirety of the park and do away with open trash cans that had previously made garbage far too accessible for bears. Then, beginning in 1973, it also adopted a trap and release program for problem bears rather than lethally dispatching them. While the article stated that twenty bears still had to be shot during the 1973 season, it noted some success in the fact that eighteen bears were trapped and removed. The final prong of the Park’s new approach aimed to “impress upon Park visitors that the results of feeding a bear, either deliberating or by leaving food where a bear can get it, are tragic for the bear and often expensive and dangerous for the campers who will eventually be raided by the bear.”⁴⁸⁰ To do this, the Park workers stepped up their educational message through pamphlets. One, entitled *You and the Black Bear*, candidly warned that a bear should never be fed voluntarily. It suggested that “many

⁴⁸⁰ Algonquin Park Museum Archives, “Rumbling on the Bear Front,” *The Raven*, Vol. 15, 2 (26 June 1974), 1-3.

people, unfortunately, help to kill bears during their visits.”⁴⁸¹ Another, *Canoeing and Bears*, reiterated the message that bears should never be fed under any circumstances. It even emphasized that “feeding a bear is both stupid and cruel. It is stupid because it teaches the bear that you are a source of food and after that it is totally unrealistic to suppose that the bear will realize that food thrown on the ground is ‘his,’ and food in a pack is ‘yours.’” It also argued that “in other words, people who feed a bear in the first place might as well be shooting it themselves. Either way the bear ends up dead.”⁴⁸² The pamphlets were designed to emphasize the sentiment that a fed bear is a dead bear and parks staff hoped to keep visitors from condemning bears to death by maintaining proper food and garbage storage. Thus, by 1974 the Park had instituted a number of measures to ensure that both people and bears could continue to use the park without harm to either.

Yet despite the Park’s progressive mandate, 1974 turned out to be a very bad year for bears. By August, just two months after the above-mentioned article discussed the new measures Algonquin implemented, some twenty-nine bears had already been trapped and relocated. While this sounded like bad news, in previous years these bears would have been killed by park’s staff. Although the educational mandate progressed more slowly than first desired, at least Algonquin’s black bears were not being shot at the first outset of trouble with guests.⁴⁸³ Unfortunately, the bad bear year also continued into 1975. The *Raven* took a different approach to the situation and stated at the outset of an article in July 1975 that the Park was not having a bad bear year; instead “we people are

⁴⁸¹ Algonquin Provincial Park, “You and the Black Bear” 1972.

⁴⁸² Algonquin Provincial Park, “Canoeing and Bears,” 1972.

⁴⁸³ Algonquin Park Museum Archives, “Bear Update,” *The Raven*, Vol. 15, 10 (21 August 1974), 3.

not having a bad bear year; the bears are having a bad people year.”⁴⁸⁴ Throughout the course of the article, the author reminded readers of their actions; they had to do more in order to avoid negative interactions with bears, namely proper storage of food and disposal of garbage. “We don’t like being forced to destroy bears which have been corrupted by careless campers. We also recognize that we ourselves must do much more, especially in our ongoing program of constructing bear-proof garbage facilities,” the article stated.⁴⁸⁵ Thus, the other part of Algonquin’s message aimed to mitigate negative human-bear interactions in the Park but the idea that people were “corrupting” the animals or that poor human behaviour could lead to dead bears signified that Algonquin also sought to renegotiate the space that bears and people occupied by keeping it “wild.” If humans continued to feed bears or act irresponsibly in “bear country” than this also threatened to undermine Algonquin’s existence as a wilderness location where guests could observe fish and wildlife in their “natural” state. As a result, renegotiating the relationship between humans and bears in the Park was not only about education and changing behaviour, it was also about renegotiating the spaces that these two groups occupied.

While Algonquin Park may have extolled the fact that it was orienting itself more towards trap and release, this out of sight, out of mind strategy was not always cleanly executed. In one particular case, Charlie W. Foster a resident of the village, Lake St. Peter, near Algonquin Park, complained to his local MPP for Hastings, Clarke Rollins,

⁴⁸⁴ Algonquin Park Museum Archives, “Bears Having Bad People Year,” *The Raven*, Vol. 16, 6 (23 July 1975), 1.

⁴⁸⁵ Algonquin Park Museum Archives, “Bears Having Bad People Year,” *The Raven*, Vol. 16, 6 (23 July 1975), 2-3.

that Algonquin Park staff was releasing nuisance bears within 1.5 miles from the Lake St. Peter dump and cottage area and within $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of the Boulter Lake cottage area. He noted that bears already frequented the Lake St. Peter dump, and were becoming quite an attraction. Meanwhile, Superintendent of Algonquin Park, J.A. Simpson, also wrote J.A. Shannon of the Wildlife Branch to explain the situation of Lake St. Peter's dump bears from his perspective. He suggested that it would be unwise to shoot the bears because it would create a great deal of undesirable publicity and stated that "seeing bears at a dump is, to say the least, not natural, but, it may be the only chance for these people to see a bear, and as such, could be considered as a legitimate form of outdoor recreation."⁴⁸⁶ Regardless of the popularity the bears had attained, Foster firmly stated in his letter to Rollins that "under no circumstances does anyone want any nuisance bears from Algonquin park dumped in our area."⁴⁸⁷ As a result, trapping and relocating problem bears within the vicinity of the Park was often just as complicated of an issue as simply shooting them. But, even if these operations did not always go smoothly, Algonquin's guests did not have to witness the fallout from these encounters.

Despite the Park's improvements to garbage disposal and public education, negative human-bear interactions within Algonquin's boundaries were of course inevitable, and sometimes, tragic. On 13 May 1978 four teenaged boys visited Algonquin Park to take in some fishing. The group, which included Richard and Billy Rhindress and George and Mark Halfkenny arrived at the Park on the 13th at around four in the morning.

⁴⁸⁶ Archives of Ontario, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Nuisance and Damage Reports, 92-3J, Charlie Foster to Clarke Rollins, August 16, 1975.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

After a long day of fishing, Richard opted to catch up on some much needed sleep in the vehicle while his brother and their other two companions continued fishing. While Richard was sleeping the three boys were attacked and killed by a 276-pound male black bear.⁴⁸⁸ Canada's foremost bear expert Stephen Herrero has argued that the incident exemplified a black bear's natural predaceous instincts. This type of attack is referred to as a surplus-killing incident "in which the bear treated the three boys as prey. The boys were killed, rather than injured. All were dragged to a common place, and two of the bodies had been partially eaten."⁴⁸⁹ Writer and naturalist, Mike Cramond referred to the attack as "the century's most tragic wildlife incident."⁴⁹⁰ Indeed, the incident is largely referred to as one of the worst black bear attacks in Canadian history, for good reason. Given the circumstances surrounding the situation and the fact that it occurred within Algonquin, it was inevitable that *The Raven* would have to devote some space to the issue, especially to assuage any fears and concerns that guests might have during their stay that summer. What is most interesting about the *Raven's* response is how it contextualized the incident for readers. While the author discussed the tragic nature of the event and how these types of attacks are rare, Algonquin Park used the event as a teachable moment for its guests. It suggested that there is no real reason to be terrified if a bear is encountered, but it also reasoned that it would be just as dangerous to think of a bear as "some sort of bumbling clown put on earth for our entertainment." Instead, it

⁴⁸⁸ Stephen Herrero, *Bear Attacks: Their Causes and Avoidance* (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1985), 118.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 119. Nevertheless, some had tried to draw a connection between the incident and a nearby open dump as a motivation for the attack but odds are that nothing could have prevented it, especially if the bear was in predatory mode. Please see, Don Cowan, "Park has dumps and bear danger despite 1974 plan," *Globe and Mail*, 5 August 1978.

⁴⁹⁰ Mike Cramond, *Killer Bears* (New York: Times Mirror Magazines, 1981), 70.

reminded visitors and guests that bears are wild animals and that the recent event “should cause anyone who values Parks and wildlife to refrain from wilfully feeding a bear or unintentionally attracting them by improper disposal of garbage. But if anyone needs another reason to treat bears with the utmost respect, he doesn’t have to look further than the tragedy of May 13th.”⁴⁹¹

Algonquin Park’s efforts to reform its bear policies and educate, from 1972 to 1978, revealed a significant change in the relationship between guests and bears in the park for the benefit of both groups. The Park challenged the “clowns of the forest” trope and instead of indifference to the feeding and close interaction with the animals, Algonquin shifted to a more progressive management system that focused on personal accountable and the prohibition of unintentional and intentional feeding. It is clear from this shift in strategies that Park’s officials had understood the importance of the animal as a tourist attraction and therefore recognized its greatest value was when it was alive, but also a greater understanding of the bear.

Algonquin’s shift in management philosophy was also part of a broader shift that was occurring throughout in the 1970s. As George Colpitts has written, National Parks in Western Canada also sought to renegotiate the space between humans and bears through the distribution of educational material, including films such as *Bears and Man*. While bears still remained keystone tourist attraction in the parks, a new mantra was initiated that focused on respecting the animals by prohibiting artificial feeding along with proper maintenance of garbage and food supplies. Colpitts has written that the material

⁴⁹¹ Algonquin Park Museum Archives, “A Tragedy,” *The Raven*, Vol. 19, 2 (June 1978), 2.

distributed in the Western Canadian Parks helped reshape tourist behaviours and “reinforced the importance of bears in a wild space.”⁴⁹² Tina Loo also makes this point in her larger study of wildlife conservation in Canada in the 1970s, which focused on “protecting wild places [as] the key to upholding a way of life – for people as well as for animals.”⁴⁹³ Consequently, Algonquin Park serves as a microcosm for examining more general attitudes in the province towards black bears. It is no coincidence that while the Park was renegotiating the relationship and space between humans and bears in the 1970s, the Ministry itself was also shedding its previous conceptions of the animal. No longer was the animal viewed solely as nuisance that should be destroyed when a negative incident occurred with humans. Instead, education promoted the idea that these episodes could be managed with greater personal responsibility and emphasis on proper food storage and garbage disposal.

* * *

By 1961 Ontario’s bear bounty program was history. The province’s black bears were no longer legally defined as vermin but were henceforth classified as a big-game animal, a designation that still persists to this day. Despite this significant legislative change, the fact remained that in the minds of many residents of the province, bears did not deserve the big-game label, which was bestowed for Ontario’s “kings of the forests,” deer and moose. For many, black bears continued to be potential threats to their livelihood, if they cultivated crops or raised livestock. Others still viewed bears as threats

⁴⁹² George Colpitts, “Films, Tourists, and Bears in the National Parks: Managing Park Use and the Problematic ‘Highway Bum’ Bear in the 1970s,” 172 in *A Century of Parks Canada, 1911-2011*, eds. Claire Elizabeth Campbell (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2011)

⁴⁹³ Loo, *States of Nature*, 209.

to their property and the well being of themselves and their family. Even Ontario hunters were unwilling to accept the change, quite simply because bears did not measure up to other more prized and valued game animals. These attitudes were well documented at the local level by DLF biologists and conservation officers who attempted to make sense of this new chapter in the Department's history of bear management.

The issue also remained that despite designating black bears as game animals, the DLF and MNR did not enthusiastically reinforce this status change through its regulatory system. Yet it would be anachronistic to criticise the DLF/MNR for failing to have the sophisticated programs and tools that the province's biologists and conservation officers currently use today to measure and manage our bears. The reality was that in the 1960s and 1970s black bears were still ambiguously viewed by various members of the province. While the DLF initially wanted to initiate a new era of management in 1961 it was clearly not ready to accord the same level of protection to bears as it did to other big-game species. Even as the DLF slowly started devoting more attention and resources to better bear management towards the end of the late 1960s and beyond, some of the province's more level-headed biologists, such as noted critic E.F. Mantle, questioned whether the government could justify spending the same time and money on black bear data collection as that of moose or deer.⁴⁹⁴

Despite encountering resistance from local populations in the province, support for the government's new measures was found in non-resident hunters, largely from the United States. Spring bear hunting had long been marketed to American hunters since it

⁴⁹⁴ AO, RG 1-443-5, Bear Files, Box 2, Accession #31714, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, E.F. Mantle, "1968 Spring Bear Hunt: Sault Ste. Marie District," 1968, 4.

was first implemented in 1937 but for the most part this enthusiasm did not develop until after the conclusion of the Second World War. By the mid to late 1950s, spring bear hunting in Ontario was becoming a veritable cottage industry for guides and outfitters who began catering to American clients. As a result, much of the early decisions and regulations to the new system were largely shaped or influenced by these American hunters and it is arguable that they were instrumental in helping to reorient the province towards a more capitalistic driven system for bears. Since American and other non-resident hunters willingly paid to hunt black bears it gradually became more practical to market the animal as a source of revenue and tourist generation rather than pay residents in the province to kill the animal. While the black bear were still valued more dead than alive, the transaction began to change.

Changing attitudes were also observed through an examination of Algonquin Park, perhaps the province's most famous provincial park, as an important contact zone for tourists and black bears. For many, visiting Algonquin gave them a chance to visit and interact with bears, giving them an opportunity to realize their value as a *wilderness* animal. During the 1970s, Parks staff actively promoted personal accountability and education as a way to better manage the relationship with guests and bears. This corresponded with the broader wildlife conservation movement that was taking place in Canada during the 1970s that advocated the preservation of "wild" spaces. This interaction was also very complicated and Park's staff had to be mindful of how contradictory attitudes could impact the well being of Algonquin's guests and bears.

As this chapter has demonstrated, the DLF and subsequently the MNR sought to adopt an increasingly capitalist approach to managing bears in the 1960s and early 1970s, largely because of the animal's popularity amongst non-residents hunters. Due to longstanding biases in the province towards the animal, from within the government itself and the general public, this new mandate was not without complications. In the next and final chapter, we will examine how attitudes towards bears became much more uniform in the 1970s and 1980s as residents of the province really began to recognize the value of the animals, both from intrinsic and financial perspectives. During these decades, the black bear tourist industry expanded significantly but so did the participation of resident hunters in the sport. Part of this shift was a combination of tourism and capitalism but also a growing awareness of ethical considerations and burgeoning environmentalism in the 1970s. In chapter five, we will see how these concerns, especially the latter two, influenced the scope of the Department's black bear management system. As the Department and the Ministry began implementing a hunting oriented system in the 1970s and 1980s, it also had to take stock of the increasing number of people and groups within the province, and within the organisation itself, that began valuing the black bear for intrinsic reasons. For the first time we really begin to see the appreciation for the animal, stemming from its living value in its natural environment.

Table 6

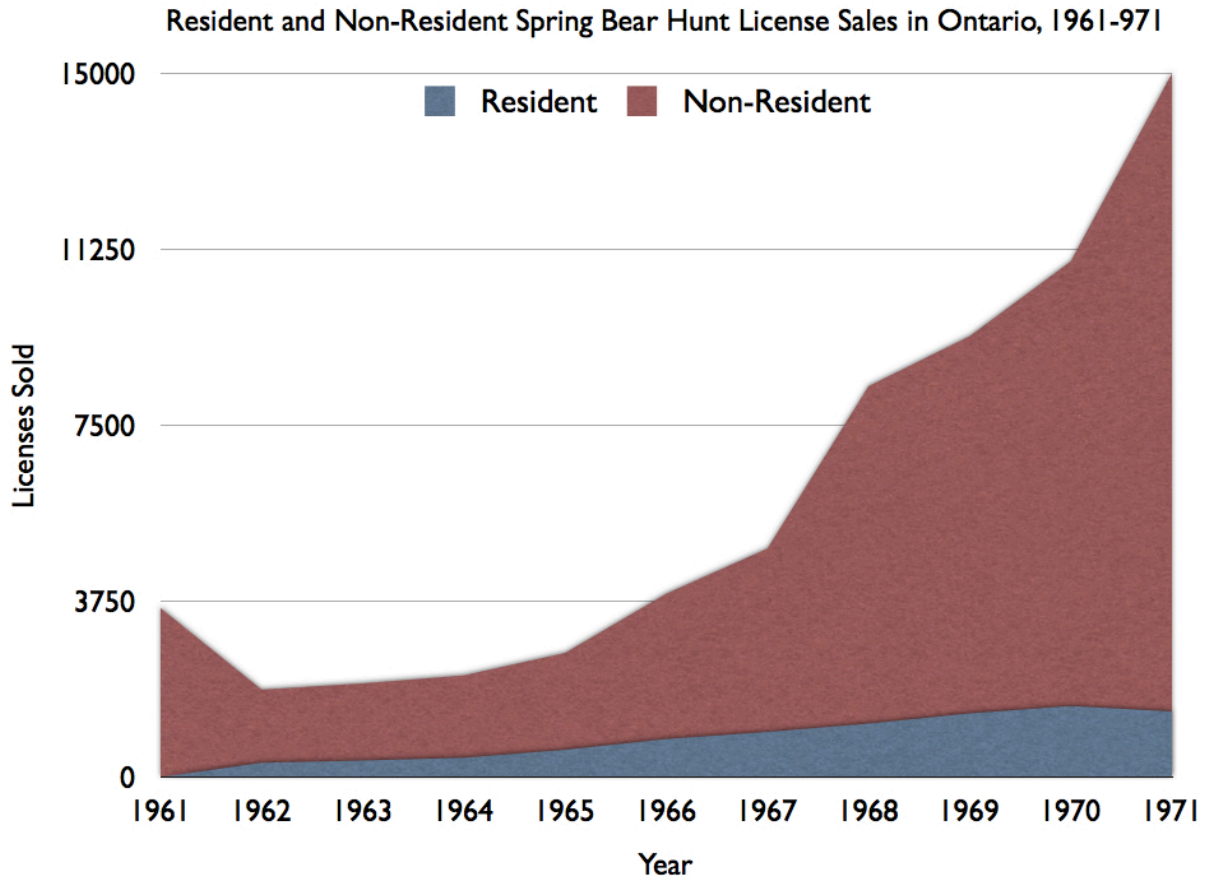
Resident and Non-Resident Spring Bear Hunt License Sales in Ontario, 1961-1971

Year	Non-Resident	Resident	Total
1961	3602	N/A*	3602
1962	1864	307	2171
1963	1999	354	2353
1964	2169	414	2583
1965	2647	583	3230
1966	3910	813	4723
1967	4872	964	5836
1968	8333	1142	9475
1969	9400	1359	10759
1970	10995	1517	12512
1971	15000	1400	16400
TOTAL	64,791	8,853	73,644

* Not available as a license was not required for resident hunters of Ontario until the 1962 season.

Source: **Compiled from the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests annual reports, Division of Fish and Game, 1961-1971.**

Figure 7



Source: Compiled from the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests annual reports, Division of Fish and Game, 1961-1971.

Chapter 5

“Ontario’s world-famous black bear deserves nothing less than the most modern management”: Ontario’s Bear Management System Progresses, 1971-1989⁴⁹⁵

From the 1970s until the late 1980s, Ontario’s black bear management program underwent a number of transformative changes. Following the shift to big-game status in 1961, we examined the conflicting attitudes that residents harboured towards the animal. While non-resident hunters prized the animal for its value as a recreational pursuit, residents, particularly those in the agricultural industry, continued to detest the animal. Members from the non-hunting community also found new importance in the animal, recognizing its intrinsic value as a part of the province’s broader collection of wildlife. For them, seeing or interacting with bears during their summer vacations at provincial parks, particularly Algonquin, allowed them to see value in the animal as well.

By the 1970s people had already begun to see the utility and value of the animal but it is arguable that the burgeoning environmental movement helped change attitudes during this period. Ontario’s environmental movement was only in its embryonic stage during the early 1970s but more and more people were becoming interested in the health and well being of the environment in general and in their immediate surroundings in particular. It is difficult to gauge the attitudes of individuals and groups towards black bears during this period without looking at the broader shift in environmental values that began in the 1970s. While it has been standard practice to interpret the origins of the environment movement with the first Earth Day celebrations in the United States on 22 April 1970, there is also evidence to suggest that people in northern Ontario were already

⁴⁹⁵ Robert M. Alison, “Bears: An Issue of Management,” *Ontario Out of Doors*, Vol. 20, 4 (May 1988), 12.

gravitating towards the rhetoric of the environmental movement in the early 1970s as well. Part of this was because of the unique nature of many northern Ontario cities and communities. Due to their proximity and reliance on natural resource exploitation, many of these places were affected by pollution and so by the early 1970s, many of these ideas would have found fertile ground with individuals and organizations in the North.⁴⁹⁶ Thus, the first part of this chapter traces a notable black bear hunting incident in Sudbury in order to reveal how ethical and even ecological considerations began to enter the discourse and reveal that bear killing was not universally accepted even within northern Ontario. These same ideas can also be seen inside the Ministry at the same time when analysing the reports from biologists and conservation officers that not only focused on science but ethical and emotional considerations as well.

Political scientist Mark S. Winfield has argued that Ontario has experienced three distinct waves of public concern for the environment since the Second World War. The first noticeable wave occurred from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s, followed by a second from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, and most recently, from 2004 to 2008. He has also found that these spikes were often followed by periods of relatively low

⁴⁹⁶ Nickel-copper ore was first discovered in Sudbury in 1883. Early on, firms such as the Canadian Copper Company encountered technological problems with smelting the ore but resolved this through a rudimentary process known as heap-roasting. The ore was smelted in the open in giant heaps of wood and from the beginning of this process, “Sudbury’s image became intrinsically associated with clouds of sulphurous acid gas and environmental degradation.” Even after heap-roasting was supplanted by blast furnaces and enclosed smelters, the pollution was still significant as smokestacks simply diffused sulphur emissions over a wider area. Sudbury area farmers were often referred to as “smoke farmers” because the impact of the emissions limited the possibility of actual agricultural growth. As a result, Sudbury’s foundational period was shaped by the natural resource extractive practices that dominated the area. Thus, by the 1970s, Sudbury and surrounding area residents were well in tuned to the realities of environmental degradation. The above quote is from Oiva W. Saarinen, *From Meteorite Impact to Constellation City: A Historical Geography of Greater Sudbury* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2013), 60.

environmental concern.⁴⁹⁷ Interestingly, the first and second waves of environmental concern correspond with some of most vocal and transformative shifts in black bear management policy. As mentioned, the first incident explored in this chapter occurred in 1971 and was followed by a discussion about how attitudes towards black bears were not only changing in more populated areas in northern Ontario but also within the Ministry itself. 1971 also marked the establishment of the Ministry of Environment and the beginning of Progressive Conservative government of William Davis that held minority and majority governments until 1985. According to Winfield, after Frank Miller succeeded Davis as Party leader and premier in 1985, he came up short at the polls in 1985 due to “a weak campaign in which environmental issues unexpectedly emerged as a significant factor,” along with internal division within the party, which in turn, enabled the Liberals under David Peterson to come to power.⁴⁹⁸ It would be under the Peterson government that many of the new initiatives on black bear management would be implemented. In many respects the Liberals presided over the most progressive era of bear management in the province’s history, a matter dealt with in the second part of this chapter. During the 1980s, guided by a greater understanding of the bear and its importance to the provincial economy as a game animal, the government enacted a number of measures to protect its longterm viability in the province. Consequently, this chapter charts some significant advancements in bear management and the change in attitudes towards bears in the 1970s and 1980s. While the impetus for many of these

⁴⁹⁷ Mark S. Winfield, *Blue-Green Province: The Environment and the Political Economy of Ontario* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2012), 5-6.

⁴⁹⁸ Winfield, 10.

shifts was undoubtedly driven by increased hunting pressure from the animal's growing popularity as a game animal, it is difficult to dissociate these changes from broader environmental concerns in the province that surely played a part, at least in providing a stage where these new ideas and regulations found receptive ears.

* * *

On 3 November 1971, Yvon Goudreau, from Chelmsford, Ontario (approximately 20 kilometres northwest of Sudbury) went moose hunting near Vermilion Lake.⁴⁹⁹ At the end of the day, he did not walk away with a moose but he still ended up having quite the memorable afternoon. During the course of his pursuit, Goudreau killed a mother bear along with its four cubs. After contacting the *Sudbury Star* to inform them about his unusual hunting adventure, Goudreau was featured in the newspaper that included a brief write up, along with a picture of him donned in plaid with a slight smile on his face as he held up two dead seven month old cubs by the scruff of their necks, with a third visible lying in the foreground.

⁴⁹⁹ According to historical geographer, Oiva W. Saarinen, in the early 20th century Chelmsford was a tiny agricultural community but this was supplanted early on by mining activity and by mid-century it was a thriving town of more than 1,000 residents. Please see Saarinen, *From Meteorite Impact to Constellation City*, 149-151.



Yvon Goudreau poses with his bears. Source: *Sudbury Star*, 3 November 1971. Permission courtesy of managing editor, Don MacDonald.

According to the *Star*, he stated that the mother bear charged him and he acted in self-defence. In subsequent reports and in conversations with the author, Goudreau stated that he also killed the four cubs because he believed they would not survive the winter alone and for him, this was the most humane alternative. While shooting five bears in one outing qualified as noteworthy, Goudreau's episode is more significant because of the response it generated in the local newspaper. Unbeknownst to Goudreau and, likely to the newspaper, was the fact that this short write-up and photograph ignited a war of words in the editorial section of the *Sudbury Star* for nearly a month. The "Goudreau controversy," as later dubbed by a Department of Lands and Forests official, serves as a snapshot of the

changing perspectives and attitudes towards black bear hunting that took place in the province in the 1970s and 1980s. Starting with this incident allows us to begin to focus on the ways that ethical and environmental concerns began to infuse the dialogue around black bear management and how this influenced policy development.

Goudreau was certainly not the first individual to have his hunting exploits touted in his local newspaper. During the first half of the twentieth century it had been fairly common to see hunters featured, along with their quarry, in newspapers across the province, including major dailies such as the *Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Daily Star*, and the *Evening Telegram*. Many of these newspapers also featured their fair share of successful bear hunting stories and photographs. As Ontario's larger metropolitan broadsheets limited their coverage of outdoor activities, newspapers in Sudbury and other northern Ontario communities continued to document these pursuits, often in great detail.

Twenty years before Goudreau's incident, the *Sudbury Star* featured a photograph of seventeen-year-old Raymond Labine and his friend Willie Castonguay on the back of a caravan, with a dead black bear between them. According to the story, Labine had to shoot the bear six times before it died and the picture provides even more detail about the grisly adventure.



Raymond Labine and Willie Castonguay pose with their black bear. Source: *Sudbury Star*, 14 September 1950. Permission courtesy of managing editor, Don MacDonald.

Beneath the black bear is a visible pool of blood, so much in fact that it appears to dripping out and over the rear of the vehicle.⁵⁰⁰ It is a visceral image that conveys the reality behind “successful” hunts. Despite this graphic representation of bear hunting, there appeared to be no condemnatory editorials in the *Star* following its publication. In part, it must be remembered that the picture was taken at the apex of the bounty period, and probably only reinforced the existing notion that bears were considered vermin. Therefore, it is not surprising that the general public may have been neutral to the story

⁵⁰⁰ “Bags big bear behind Azilda barn,” *Sudbury Daily Star*, 14 September 1950, 18.

and photograph. Interestingly, at the time of publication, Labine and Castonguay were only a year younger than Yvon Goudreau and all three were from the same area on the outskirts of Sudbury. Perhaps Goudreau read the write-up and admired his counterparts' hunting acumen, hoping for a similar story of his own. Little did he know that, twenty years later, his own bear hunting exploits would also merit publication. Prior to Goudreau's adventure, the province in general seemed to echo existing trends in bear management, most noticeably that non-residents continued to be the primary patrons of bear hunting in the province. For 1970, 14,585 non-residents purchased licenses (fall and spring seasons compared) compared to 1,517 residents, a trend that would continue throughout the rest of the decade.⁵⁰¹

The bear situation in Sudbury also did not appear to be noticeably different from previous years, with one exception. In early July 1971, eleven-year old Earl Passi was mauled by a black bear within city limits, while picking blueberries. In response, the DLF promised to carry out ground and aerial searches to locate and ultimately destroy the animal.⁵⁰² As the search continued, residents were understandably unnerved due to the victim's age and because the bear was still roaming, thereby still constituting a potential threat.⁵⁰³ The search ended when police killed the bear, three miles west of where the incident occurred.⁵⁰⁴ When the story ended, there did not appear to be any additional commentary in the newspaper from residents that might have lamented how the DLF and police handled the situation. The final outcome, the destruction of the black bear, did not

⁵⁰¹ Ontario, Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, *Annual Report of the Minister of Lands and Forests* (Toronto: Queen's Printer, 1971)

⁵⁰² "Bear mauls boy within city limits, Lands and Forests continue search," *Sudbury Star*, 6 July 1971, 3.

⁵⁰³ "Continue search for small bear north of Sudbury," *Sudbury Star*, 7 July 1971, 3.

⁵⁰⁴ "Mauling suspect, bear is shot by Sudbury police," *Sudbury Star*, 8 July 1971, 3.

seem to provoke an adverse response from the general public, perhaps because this was most likely perceived to be an acceptable outcome. This particular reaction is important because it demonstrates that people in Sudbury were not universally opposed to the destruction of *all* bears. In certain cases, residents accepted that bears needed to be killed to mitigate threats to livestock, property, and humans.

Even in other northern Ontario jurisdictions, stories and photographs of bears killed during hunting expeditions did not necessarily warrant feedback from the general public. Ann Fiashetti, a sixteen year old hunter from Chapleau, killed a 322 pound black bear with a bow and arrow, after baiting it in November 1971. Fiashetti was subsequently featured in the Sault Ste. Marie newspaper, the *Sault Daily Star*, that included a photograph and a detailed summary of her adventure.⁵⁰⁵ In the days and weeks following the coverage of Fiaschetti's hunting exploits, no condemnatory letters or editorials could be located in the any of the local or regional newspapers. Consequently, it is arguable that there was no discernible objection to Fiaschetti's hunting methods and, for all intents and purposes, appeared to be an acceptable kill.

Historians have certainly used newspapers as a way to analyse public opinion or sentiment. Scholars focusing on the postwar period greatly benefit from these sources, particularly because newspapers were still the dominant means to convey information and communicate. As part of the Report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media in 1969, Martin Goldfarb Consultants found that Canadians at the time, “newspapers are felt to be the most essential medium” and that “87% of homes [in Canada] receive a daily

⁵⁰⁵ “Teen-ager kills bear with arrow as bait attracts beast to hideout,” *Sault Daily Star*, 13 November 1971, 4.

newspaper.”⁵⁰⁶ In his analysis of changing national identities in postwar English Canada, José Igartua, relied heavily on a range of English-language newspapers as a way to investigate how these identities were negotiated in the realm of public discourse. For him, a newspaper-laden analysis was important because he has argued that as a medium they “were a major force in shaping Canadian public opinion.”⁵⁰⁷ While they are certainly not definitive or wholly representative, they can provide us with an important conduit to examine changing attitudes and opinions. At the local level, newspapers continued to be very important, often seen as more believable and trustworthy than national media.⁵⁰⁸ Delving into the *Sudbury Star*, which had an estimated circulation of 30,000-35,000 in 1971, allows us to interrogate how local residents not only responded to Goudreau’s decision to kill the five bears but also how they viewed the newspaper’s representation of this event.⁵⁰⁹

Based on the public’s reaction to the incidents in Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie, it appeared that, at first glance, Goudreau’s hunting experience near Sudbury in November 1971 would also not garner much attention. A week had passed after the initial story was published, without a reaction but on 9 November 1971, the *Star* reprinted the story and photograph in the editorial section, along with a number of comments from readers. Local residents were appalled by what they believed was a “senseless slaughter” and “vicious

⁵⁰⁶ Martin Goldfarb Consultants, *Good, Bad, or Simply Inevitable? Selected Research Studies*, vol. III of the Report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1970), 10 and 16.

⁵⁰⁷ Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution*, 7.

⁵⁰⁸ Martin Goldfarb Consultants, 6.

⁵⁰⁹ Estimate is from Dave Paquette, current Reader Sales & Service Manager for the *Sudbury Star*. As of 1 November 2014, Paquette stated that the newspaper’s print circulation number was 10,000.

and inexcusable attack on the fragile environment in which we live.”⁵¹⁰ Letters throughout the month continued to hone in on this theme. Lloyd Graham from Val Caron believed Goudreau’s actions were unjustified and Mrs. L. Buckner from Sudbury called it an act of butchery.⁵¹¹ Much of the language used by those that took the time to write a letter focused on the ecology and wastefulness of the act, possibly influenced by the growing awareness of environmental and ecological issues that was gaining momentum in the early 1970s.⁵¹²

Many more people took issue not only with Goudreau’s actions but how they believed the newspaper had portrayed the incident. Judy Cook, from Sudbury, suggested that “the press has a responsibility to the public in helping to protect our natural resources – not to encourage their destruction.”⁵¹³ Other commentators agreed with Cook and were disappointed with how the *Star* seemingly glorified Goudreau’s actions and framed it as if it were the “good deed of the day.”⁵¹⁴ Later in November, the Laurentian University Biology Society lambasted the newspaper, suggesting that it’s “lack of conscience you

⁵¹⁰ Sandy George, “Senseless slaughter of wildlife presented as report of good deed,” *Sudbury Star*, 9 November 1971, 4 and Department of Biology, Laurentian University, “See ‘vicious inexcusable attack on fragile natural environment,” *Sudbury Star*, 9 November 1971, 4.

⁵¹¹ Lloyd Graham, “I see no reason for killing cubs” and L. Bruckner, “Act of butchery was glorified,” *Sudbury Star*, 16 November 1971, 4.

⁵¹² In March 1970, plans were under way for the biennial convention of the Ontario Association of Conservation Authorities that would take place in Sudbury in September of 1970. The *Sudbury Star* reported that the association would bring together chairmen of various conservation authorities across the province and if everything went according to plan it would be the largest group of authorities on conservation to ever meet in one place in both Canada and the United States. Please see, “Sudbury to host convention on conservation,” *Sudbury Star*, 6 March 1970, 1. Sudbury also established a local chapter of the group Pollution Probe in the spring of 1970, please see “New Anti-Pollution Group,” *Sudbury Star*, 28 April 1970, 4; “Pollution group gets city help, but not financial,” *Sudbury Star*, 6 August 1970, 3.

⁵¹³ Judy Cook, “Says news picture, story ‘glorified’ hunter’s action,” *Sudbury Star*, 9 November 1971, 4.

⁵¹⁴ Sandy George, “Senseless slaughter of wildlife presented as report of good deed,” *Sudbury Star*, 9 November 1971, 4.

have shown is far worse than the actual killing of the female bear and four cubs.”⁵¹⁵

Similarly, Mrs. Diana O’Shea from Hanmer called it an “atrocious act” but believed “it was a far more damaging deed on your part to glorify this slaughter. How can we hope to teach our children to honor and respect wildlife when a newspaper with your circulation has this attitude?” While others simply felt the *Star* “overdid it” and argued that the story could have been handled without the photograph of Goudreau “holding two harmless cubs by the scruffs of their dead necks, a pitiable sight.”⁵¹⁶

Goudreau himself also felt the brunt of the public’s opposition. During his recollection of the event, he remembered receiving hundreds of angry letters and telephone calls. Some of them were so menacing and threatening that he felt compelled to notify the police because he feared for his safety.⁵¹⁷ Despite the public’s indignation, the fact of the matter was that Goudreau had not violated any laws. At the time, there was no limit on the number of black bears that residents could harvest, a restriction of one bear per non-resident hunter license had only been imposed a year earlier. There were also no regulations that prohibited residents and non-residents from killing cubs either. While Goudreau may not have broken any existing DLF game laws, it was clear that his actions had unnerved some members of the Sudbury community.

In the coming weeks, the Department of Lands and Forests was also deluged with telephone calls and letters from residents that wanted to see Goudreau penalized. The

⁵¹⁵ Biology Society of Laurentian University, “Laurentian Biology Society attacks lack of conscience in Star report,” *Sudbury Star*, 16 November 1971, 4.

⁵¹⁶ C.C. Tanner, “Letters on Bears,” *Sudbury Star*, 17 November 1971, 4.

⁵¹⁷ Telephone interview between the author and Yvon Goudreau, 24 January 2014. According to Goudreau, some of the letters were so vitriolic that as he advanced in age, he destroyed the letters out of concern that if he were to die unexpectedly he did not want his surviving family members to suffer the stress of having to review his collection of “hate mail.”

Ottawa Journal suggested that the “flood of irate letters” likely compelled the government to act.⁵¹⁸ Since the DLF could not charge Goudreau for killing the five bears, it opted to enforce an infrequently upheld subsection of the *Game and Fisheries Act* that dealt with game meat. According to this provision, “no person who has taken or killed an animal, bird or fish suitable for food shall allow the flesh to be destroyed or spoiled.”⁵¹⁹ Since Goudreau had simply left the bears to rot in the woods, it appeared that he violated this piece of legislation and now faced a fine ranging from \$25 to \$500.⁵²⁰ The announcement of the charges appeared to have satisfied some critics, including D. Ogston, president of the nearby Copper Cliff Rod and Gun Club, that believed the killing was still senseless but “if the meat is used or the hides are used, then there is at least some justification.”⁵²¹

Not everyone was displeased with Goudreau’s actions. Jerome Belanger from Azilda, a small town near Goudreau’s, proclaimed that Yvon should be praised, “the less we have of these vicious creatures [bears], the better off we will be.”⁵²² Belanger also dismissed previously voiced opinions and derisively labelled those individuals as “city folks who have seen and known bears and cubs [only] in city zoos or trained on the Walt Disney Show.”⁵²³ Marig Major, also from Azilda, challenged the critics that believed

⁵¹⁸ “Summons for bear slayer, *Ottawa Journal*, 11 November 1971, 1.

⁵¹⁹ Ontario, *Statutes of the Province of Ontario, The Game and Fish Act, 1961-62* (Toronto: Frank Fogg, Queen’s Printer, 1962), 175.

⁵²⁰ “Kills 5 bears; now faces charge of ‘wasting meat,’” *Sudbury Star*, 10 November 1971, 1.

⁵²¹ D. Ogston, “How many who are quick to condemn gave your help in winter yard program?” *Sudbury Star*, 16 November 1971, 4.

⁵²² Jerome Belanger, “They’re not Gentle Bens, fewer we have, the better,” *Sudbury Star*, 16 November 1971, 4.

⁵²³ *Ibid.*

black bears were fragile to go into the forest and try to pet one.⁵²⁴ Lucien Rodrigue, a Chelmsford farmer, sympathized with Goudreau but also dismissively referred to his detractors as “city people.”⁵²⁵ Another Chelmsford resident, Paul D’Aoust, suggested that “shooting the cubs was more humane than letting them try to fare for themselves without their mother.”⁵²⁶ One rural resident, Max Goltz, stated he was pleased with because black bears kill untold numbers of cows and moose calves, information that he believed he was more privy, due to his area of residency, than members of Laurentian University’s Department of Biology.⁵²⁷

Some of the letters found in the newspaper also speak to how people’s perceptions towards bears could be influenced by their geographic location and occupation and also how people accorded significance to the role of place in discussions about bear management. In the submissions that supported Goudreau’s actions, all of the authors derisively referred to people from Sudbury as being from the “city”. They believed that perspectives of individuals living in urban areas carried less weight than those living in areas where bears were more populous. Residents from the more rural and outlying communities around Sudbury, such as Chelmsford and Azilda, did not identify or view themselves in the same way as their urban counterparts. For many of them, living in these areas provided them with greater understanding, albeit informal, about certain ecological processes, simply because they were able to observe them with more ease at the local

⁵²⁴ Marig Major, “Letters on Bears,” *Sudbury Star*, 17 November 1971, 4.

⁵²⁵ Lucien Rodrigue, “Loss of cattle damage to crops farmer’s concern,” *Sudbury Star*, 16 November 1971.

⁵²⁶ Paul D’Aoust, “Bears in wilderness a danger,” *Sudbury Star*, 25 November 1971, 4.

⁵²⁷ Max Goltz, “Don’t go soft think of moose and beaver, too,” *Sudbury Star*, 16 November 1971, 4.

level.⁵²⁸ As a result, some were dismissive and sceptical of the opinions of professionals and ordinary citizens about bears because they felt they were voicing these concerns from an illegitimate and unqualified vantage point. Conversely, Dr. D.H.S. Richardson from the Department of Biology at Laurentian University not only disagreed with Goudreau's actions but also spoke out against his rural supporters, suggesting that "if there are too many bears, it is the department of lands and forests with the advice of other biologists who will determine this; and the best way to reduce the population. The individual hunter whose only information is hearsay and observation in a limited area, cannot make this decision wisely."⁵²⁹

All told, the *Sudbury Star* published thirty-two letters to the editor over the course of November 1971. An untold number of letters were likely received but were not published.⁵³⁰ Submissions largely came from the city of Sudbury and the outlying rural communities that included Azilda, Chelmsford, Hanmer, Levack, and Val Caron. The overwhelming majority of letter writers, twenty-four, criticized both Goudreau's actions and how the *Sudbury Star* handled its coverage of the episode. Of these, almost half originated from one of the rural areas on the outskirts of the city. The eight remaining letters, those that either supported Goudreau outright or did not have a firm position with

⁵²⁸ Chelmsford's early economy was largely agricultural and as the town grew, it served the expanding farming area. As a result, even as Chelmsford became more bluecollar in the postwar period, agriculture was still an important economic pursuit and this mentality continued in the community. Even as farming became less important, people still harboured hostile attitudes towards black bears because of the potential damage they could inflict on crops and livestock. Please see, Tina Koivu. "A History of Chelmsford, Ontario," Honours Thesis (Laurentian University, 1974), 3-10.

⁵²⁹ D.H.S. Richardson, "Supplies reasoning on bears," *Sudbury Star*, 19 November 1971, 4.

⁵³⁰ Unfortunately, the *Sudbury Star* does not maintain an extensive archive and therefore I could not determine the total number of letters that were received but not published.

how the newspaper portrayed the story, were also largely from rural communities, many of which were either from Goudreau's hometown or within close proximity.

Although a few involved in the controversy tried to frame it as an urban versus rural issue, or more precisely as those for whom the bear was an abstract idea versus those for whom the bear was very real – the battle lines do not appear to be that clear at all. What we do know is that those who supported Goudreau's actions appeared to be from rural areas and worked in occupations that were vulnerable to black bear predation. Therefore, it is not surprising that they would not have lamented the fate which befell the five bears. Almost half of the oppositional letters also came from residents living in rural locations. For many of them, the issue was not simply that Goudreau had killed the bears but also with how the *Sudbury Star* reported it. Consequently, it is less clear how many objected to the killings due to ethical and ecological considerations or because of how the newspaper represented this event. Regardless, it appears that the views and attitudes of residents across the Sudbury and outlying areas, both urban and rural, were nuanced. Rural residents vocalized both support and opposition towards Goudreau while also sometimes viewing their urban counterparts with derision. While urban residents more consistently objected to Goudreau or the *Star's* coverage of the episode, members of this camp could also be found in rural locations as well.

Goudreau's time in the public eye ended on 1 December 1971, the date of his scheduled arraignment. He never appeared and his trial was held in absentia where Judge Gerry Michel gave Goudreau a three-month suspended sentence instead of a fine. Apparently, Judge Michel decided on a more lenient penalty because he believed the

defendant “had suffered enough punishment from all the adverse publicity the case has received.”⁵³¹

Whether or not the Goudreau controversy can be seen as a proxy for environmental activism in Sudbury or resistance to the local media’s portrayal of the incident, the Department of Lands and Forests was keenly observing its impact from afar. Not only did the DLF have to field the flurry of complaints which ultimately compelled it to bring charges against Goudreau, it was also monitoring the editorials in the *Sudbury Star* in order to gauge public opinion. S.R. Hamilton, Sudbury’s District Forester, informed J.F. Gardner, Chairman of the Northeastern Regional Fish and Wildlife Committee (NRFWC), that the Department needed to take stock of the backlash. Hamilton stated that “the problem of how many bears should a resident hunter be able to kill and whether or not bear meat was edible became very evident with the recent ‘Goudreau controversy’ [and] should be considered by your committee.”⁵³² It is not clear whether the NRFWC recommended remedial changes in the wake of the editorials but it

⁵³¹ “Shot bears, has sentence suspended,” *Sudbury Star*, 2 December 1971, 1. But Goudreau’s story did not actually end there. Nearly forty years later, he again made headlines, this time nationally for his involvement in an international black bear gallbladder operation. Goudreau was formally charged in September 2001 following an eighteen month joint investigation that involved the MNR and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. According to newspaper reports, Goudreau was dubbed the “godfather of bear gall bladders.” In the end, Goudreau was fined \$55,000 for his part in the illegal sale of eighty-two black bear gallbladders in what was part of the greatest infractions in Canadian history. Others that were involved faced similar fines, some were subject to incarceration, and others were banned from hunting altogether. Since Goudreau was sixty-nine at the time of sentencing and in poor health he was not subject to jail time but received a monumental fine and was also banned from hunting for twenty years with the exception of small upland birds. Please see, Bob Vaillancourt, “Record fine imposed in bear-parts case,” *Sudbury Star*, 1 September 2001, 1; Canadian Press, “Man draws \$55,000 fine for selling bear parts,” *Globe and Mail*, 1 September 2001, A5; Lindsey Delear, “Galling: Hunters, outfitters and the public are main weapons against illegal export trade of bear parts,” *Sudbury Star*, 8 September 2001, A7.

⁵³² AO, RG 1-443-5, Bear Files, Box 2, Accession #31714, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, S.R. Hamilton to J.F. Gardner, 14 February 1972, 1.

is apparent that the DLF gave weight to public opinion and the impact it could have on policy.

The concerns that residents voiced about Goudreau's decision to kill the cubs in particular and how many bears residents hunters could kill in general could have been part of a larger shift in attitudes towards the environment in the 1970s. While the overwhelming majority of respondents were upset that the bears *were* killed, they were equally as outraged by the *number* of bears killed and the real or perceived impact that this could have on the local ecosystem. It was not simply a matter of the animals being killed. As environmental rhetoric and consciousness entered the fray in the 1970s, more people also began injecting questions of ethics and environmentalism into how they viewed bears and their responses to bear hunting. This trend was also observable within the Department of Lands and Forests and its successor agency, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) as wildlife management officers and scientists also frequently included ethical considerations into their reports and studies.

While the DLF, and later the MNR, continued to promote bear hunting, particularly the spring season to non-resident hunters, officials within the organization began to express reservations about the methods most commonly used in the activity. In bear hunting, baiting is one of the most efficient practices. Often, hunters will create bait stations that include items ranging from dog food to pastries in order to draw the animal into their location. These offerings are often placed in barrels or suspended above the ground in order to limit the bear's access to the food. After the animal has become habituated to the bait site, hunters then position themselves in either elevated locations in

tree stands or in camouflaged spots on the ground known as blinds. Although these are fairly accepted practices in the hunting community, baiting, especially with mega fauna such as black bears, has always been a contentious issue for non-hunters. Beginning in the 1970s, more scientists and wildlife management officers in the MNR expressed their concerns about baiting. L. Penney, one of the Ministry's fish and wildlife supervisors, summarized the practice as hunters hoping "that a bear will come to feed on the garbage."⁵³³ Commenting on baiting, P.R. Purych, District Biologist for Blind River, noted that "many people have strong reservations about it both aesthetically and as an ethical hunting practice," suggesting it should either be thoroughly reviewed or abolished.⁵³⁴ E.F. Mantle, wildlife management officer from Sault Ste. Marie, simply called it repulsive.⁵³⁵ Other officers, such as J.N. Ashdown, shared Purych's sentiments, calling baiting "a misuse of government land," while also calling the ethics of hunters who baited into question.⁵³⁶ Ashdown also noted that, in addition to the ethical and environmental considerations, baiting might also lead to hunting violations. He reasoned that since bears were nocturnal "coming to baits in early morning or late evening" could compel hunters to shoot animals at times when hunting is normally prohibited.⁵³⁷

The internal concerns about baiting eventually reached a point where the MNR felt the need to commission one of its supervisory officers to look into the issue in greater

⁵³³ Archives of Ontario, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Baiting, 92-4B L. Penney, "The Bear Bait Problem: Chapleau Forest District," February 8, 1972.

⁵³⁴ MNRL, Vertical Files, P.R. Purych, "The 1973 Bear Hunt, Blind River District," 1973, 1.

⁵³⁵ Mantle 1970, 4.

⁵³⁶ AO, RG 1-443-5, Bear Files, Box 2, Accession #31714, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, J.N. Ashdown, "The 1974 Bear Hunt: Blind River District," 1974, 4.

⁵³⁷ Archives of Ontario, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, J.N. Ashdown, "The 1974 Bear Hunt-Blind River District."

detail. L. Penney, the Fish & Wildlife Supervisor for the Chapleau Forest District, examined baiting for the Ministry in order to assess what type of impact it could have on local environments. Like some of his colleagues at the time, Penney argued that all of the staff in his district viewed baiting as “filthy, despicable and most unsportsmanlike. We would like to see it forbidden by law.”⁵³⁸ His reservations were later confirmed after he inspected various bait sites, across fourteen townships, during the spring bear hunt season. Some of the sites contained items that included oil-cans, dry-cell batteries, light bulbs, rotting fish, and entire animal carcasses. Penney wrote that the qualitative description of their findings was inadequate because his words could not convey what they smelled like in some locations.⁵³⁹ He advocated that the government should prohibit baiting but short of this, introduce more stringent regulations in order to avoid hunters turning bait sites into makeshift garbage dumps. Director of the Wildlife Branch, R.N. Johnston, agreed with Penney, stating that it was “undoubtedly time that some controls were placed on this practice.”⁵⁴⁰ Despite supportive recommendations to reform baiting practices, it appeared to proceed unchecked. Nevertheless, the concern for issues beyond the traditional scope of biologists and wildlife management officers continued throughout the decade.

Ministry officers and scientists also concerned themselves with other ethical questions, particularly the fate of orphaned cubs. During the spring hunting season, mother bears were often shot, either accidentally or on purpose, leaving the cubs alone

⁵³⁸ Archives of Ontario, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Baiting, 92-4B L. Penney, “The Bear Bait Problem: Chapleau Forest District,” February 8, 1972.

⁵³⁹ Penney, 1972, 4.

⁵⁴⁰ Archives of Ontario, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Hunting Seasons, 92-4A, R.N. Johnston, “Black Bear Seasons” January 17, 1973.

and unable to fend for themselves. In the majority of cases, they succumbed to starvation or predation, grim realities that apparently motivated Yvon Goudreau's actions in the earlier case study. But, during the 1970s, no legislation prohibited hunters from targeting mother bears or their cubs. Since the incidence of human-caused cub orphaning generally occurred infrequently, it did not represent a threat to the animal's viability. Despite the fact that cub orphaning may not have detrimentally affected local black bear populations in the long-term, conservation officers and biologists still questioned the spring season, when cub orphaning usually occurred. J.N. Ashdown wondered why the Ministry would sustain a season that leads to "shooting females, leaving orphan cubs to fend for themselves when they may not be able to."⁵⁴¹ W.D. Adams the District Manager for Ottawa stated that he found "it difficult to understand how a spring bear hunt can be justified at all from the moral point of view, if not from the overharvest concerns. It is our understanding that such a practice leaves cubs, which are not old enough to fend for themselves."⁵⁴²

Other members of the MNR also scrutinized the cub orphaning because of the repercussions it could have on the Ministry's image. An anonymous biologist from the Dryden District advocated that spring hunting be given a very critical look, not because of issues of sustainability but because, "orphan cubs do little to enhance the image of hunting."⁵⁴³ Honing in on this point, R.E. Weber, conservation officer from the Kirkland

⁵⁴¹ AO, RG 1-443-5, Bear Files, Box 2, Accession #31714, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, J.N. Ashdown, "The 1974 Bear Hunt: Blind River District," 1974, 4.

⁵⁴² Archives of Ontario, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files Population Estimates, 92-3B W.D. Adam, "Black Bear Memo" July 3, 1974.

⁵⁴³ Archives of Ontario, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files Population Estimates, 92-3B "Compilation of data on black bear in Ontario" July 15, 1974.

Lake District cautioned the MNR about the possible “controversy” that the orphaned cub issue could generate if it went unchecked.⁵⁴⁴

The Ministry was not alone with its concerns about the spring season. Even hunters and guides who reaped the benefits from the liberal black bear hunting system wrote letters to address the issue. Earl Treptow, a guide for Split Rock Lodge in Nestor Falls, located near Kenora, argued that the “spring bear season should be abolished. You shoot one sow in the spring and you are killing two or three bears.”⁵⁴⁵ Others, such as H. Wiemer, from the Ontario Game & Fish Protective Association, believed that the government should cancel the season because it largely catered to a non-resident clientele. He alleged that Americans “from south of the border hunt bear, only to leave the meat behind, and in many cases not even the pelt is taken. This we would not call conservation.”⁵⁴⁶ Spring bear hunting would eventually become a critical issue for animal rights and animal welfare groups in the province by the 1990s. Many of these organizations and individuals would later cite many of the same issues and concerns that the Ministry’s own staff began identifying during the 1970s. By 1999 they would successfully compel the government to place a moratorium on spring bear hunting.

While a number of conservation officers and biologists in the province expressed some doubts about some of the Ministry’s hunting seasons and methods that it encouraged, the fact of the matter was that black bear hunting continued to be big

⁵⁴⁴ AO, RG 1-443-5, Bear Files, Box 2, Accession #31714, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, R.E. Weber, “The 1975 Black Bear Report: Kirkland Lake District,” 1975, 8.

⁵⁴⁵ Archives of Ontario, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Hunting Seasons, 92-4A, Earl G. Treptow, July 28, 1973.

⁵⁴⁶ Archives of Ontario, RG 1-443-5 Wildlife Branch-Bear Files, Hunting Seasons, 92-4A, H. Weimer, November 25, 1973.

business during the 1970s and into the 1980s. This reality was bolstered by the fact that by the mid to late 1970s, the province's resident hunters began embracing the black bear as a genuine big-game animal. Prior to this time, negative, longstanding attitudes held by residents, that still viewed bears as vermin, were difficult to overcome. Despite the black bear's new legal designation in 1961, non-resident hunters from the United States almost exclusively carried out recreational hunting of the animal, with many Ontarians still seeing them as nuisances. Towards the end of the 1970s this began to change and the province experienced an increase in black bear hunting popularity amongst residents (see Table 1). Speaking at the annual convention of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) in 1975, Minister of Natural Resources, Leo Bernier, commented that animal has now assumed "its rightful place as a prime big-game species."⁵⁴⁷ The theme of the black bear's growing popularity was also honed in on later in the decade by Minister James Auld, at another OFAH banquet, when he suggested that the animal had "graduated from lowly varmint in 1962 to that of big game."⁵⁴⁸ As a result, concerns about the province's black bear management system did not always translate into policy changes because the government was reaping the rewards of unprecedented popularity and in turn, cash money, from resident and non-resident hunters.

The Ministry's indifference to issues about bear hunting stemmed from the fact that the loose system was advantageous to the province and because the MNR was really

⁵⁴⁷ AO, RG 1-443, Urban Wildlife, Box 34, B125947, "Remarks by the Honourable Leo Bernier, Minister of Natural Resources, to the 47th Annual Convention of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters," 21 February 1975, 9.

⁵⁴⁸ AO, RG 1-443, Urban Wildlife, Box 34, B125947, "Remarks by the Honourable Leo Bernier, Minister of Natural Resources, "Remarks by the Honourable James A. C. Auld, Minister of Natural Resources, to the 51st Annual Meeting and Convention of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters," 23 February 1979, page number unavailable.

only beginning to understand the animal enough to begin implementing a more comprehensive management strategy. Annual reports from the early 1970s reveal that the organization did not necessarily have a firm grasp on the estimated number of bears in the province. While it made definitive statements about the number of hunters increasing, the Ministry felt that the number of black bears was “difficult to assess, but believed to be holding constant.”⁵⁴⁹ This was actually the most detailed analysis about black bears in the Ministry’s entire report. The phrasing is nearly identical to subsequent summary reports from 1975 to 1977.⁵⁵⁰ While the Ministry’s use of boilerplate is not surprising, the level of detail and analysis accorded to black bears is far below what it allocated to deer or moose. This was probably due to the fact that these big-game ungulates were still thought to be more valuable than bears and as a result, the allocation of resources reflected these sentiments. But, by the midway point of the 1970s, the level of detail in the Ministry’s analysis of the annual black bear situation progressed. In 1975, the MNR began to provide estimates for the number of bears harvested per annum.⁵⁵¹ While this does not lend itself towards constructing an estimate of the total number of living bears in the province, it does reveal, to some extent, the MNR’s commitment to towards future management. What we do not see in the 1970s reports is that the Ministry launched a long-term study about the status of black bears in the province. While there would be no

⁵⁴⁹ Ontario, *Annual Report of the Minister of Natural Resources of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto, 1973), 9.

⁵⁵⁰ Ontario, *Annual Report of the Minister of Natural Resources of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto, 1975), 15; Ontario, *Annual Report of the Minister of Natural Resources of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto, 1976), 13; Ontario, *Annual Report of the Minister of Natural Resources of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto, 1977), 15.

⁵⁵¹ Ontario, *Annual Report of the Minister of Natural Resources of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto, 1975), 15.

immediate return on this investment in the 1970s, this study would bare significant fruit for the MNR the following decade. Consequently, by the end of the decade, we can see that while the government still did not have an accurate handle on the number of bears present in the province, it was taking greater interest and care towards monitoring the annual harvest, which undoubtedly was important to assessing the animal's long-term viability as a game species in Ontario.⁵⁵²

By the early 1980s black bear hunting in Ontario attained unprecedented popularity and it was apparent that the existing management system would not be able to keep up with the demand. During this time resident hunting interest really erupted and almost matched the non-resident enthusiasm that had existed in the province for decades. From 1980 to 1984, the number of resident black bear licenses (spring and fall) sold was 52,081, just below the non-resident total of 55,771. This was a significant departure from the previous four-year period, 1976 to 1979, where non-resident sales were over four times as many, 40,026 to 9,079 (see Table 7). By 1986, the estimated number of bears harvested during the fall and spring hunting seasons had reached its highest mark in provincial history. Non-resident hunters almost killed 7,000 black bears compared to 1,750 from their resident counterparts (see Table 8). The financial spinoff was considerable as well, in 1985, black bear hunting contributed \$14 million to the provincial economy as a result of the total spending attributed to resident and non-resident

⁵⁵² The reports for 1978 and 1979 all used nearly identical language and figures, "Black bear numbers, though difficult to assess, are believed to be constant. Nuisance bear are trapped and released elsewhere whenever possible, or destroyed if necessary. Hunters take about 4,000 bears per year, and the number of bear hunters is increasing," 18. (1978) "Black bear numbers, though to difficult to assess, are believed to be generally constant. Hunters take about 4,000 bears per year, and the number of bear hunters is increasing. Bears causing conflict with agricultural activities or public safety are trapped, and relocated whenever feasible or destroyed," 22. (1979)

hunters.⁵⁵³ *Ontario Out of Doors*, the province's premier angling and hunting magazine, also reflected the rise in black bear hunting with its increasing coverage. Prior to the 1980s, bear hunting was rarely discussed in any detail but as the sport grew more popular with resident hunters, it received much more focus.⁵⁵⁴

The reason for the surge in interest could be attributed to several factors. It is possible that after witnessing the financial importance of black bear hunting to the guiding and tourist industry, resident hunters also began to see value in the animal from both an economic and recreational standpoint. With this shift, more residents hunters capitalized on excellent bear hunting opportunities in the province and demand increased. Also, residents born in the 1960s represent a first generation of hunters to grow up without the mentality of understanding black bears as vermin. Hunters born in decades as far back as the 1920s would have been indoctrinated, on some level, to perceive bears as nuisances and unworthy of the title of game-animal. By the late 1970s and early 1980s a new crop of hunters would have come of legal hunting age and it is arguable that without the baggage of their predecessors they might have more easily found the recreational hunting value in the animal. As a result, with a new generation of hunters interested in bear hunting, the Ministry experienced a higher demand than ever before. Regardless of what facilitated this shift in interest, the Ministry introduced considerable changes to its

⁵⁵³ Christine Beachey, "Bears Get Protection," *Landmarks*, Vol. 5, 3 (Summer 1987), 7.

⁵⁵⁴ Please see Ted Gorsline, "The Key to Ontario Bear," *Ontario Out of Doors*, Vol. 12, 9 (October 1980), 23-33; J.D. Taylor, "Ontario's Killers in Black," *Ontario Out of Doors*, Vol. 13, 2 (March 1981), 17-23; Bob Gilsvik, "Spring Bear," *Ontario Out of Doors*, Vol. 14, 3 (April 1982): 38-44; Ted Gorsline, "Spring Bear," *Ontario Out of Doors*, Vol. 15, 2 (March 1983), 10-12, 69-72; Robert M. Alison, "Bears: An Issue of Management," *Ontario Out of Doors*, Vol. 20, 4 (May 1988), 10-12; Bob Grewell, "Manipulating the Elusive Black Bear," *Ontario Out of Doors*, Vol. 21, 2 (March 1989), 24, 78-79.

bear management program in the 1980s as a way to address these new changes and modernize its program to better manage the animal for the long-term.

Significant developments emerged in the 1980s that led to a greater understanding of the province's black bears, which in turn translated into more comprehensive management strategies. In June 1980 the Ministry made substantial changes to Ontario's licensing structure system by cancelling the combined big-game licensing program.⁵⁵⁵ The impetus behind this was largely to better control deer and moose harvests but it also had significant implications for the province's black bears. For the first time, black bear licenses could be purchased separately. Previously, black bear licenses could be purchased through the acquisition of six different license combinations which included deer-bear, moose-bear, and spring bear for resident hunters and deer-bear, moose-deer-bear, and bear-wolf for non-resident hunters. This made it very difficult for the Ministry, then the Department of Lands and Forests, to assess the true desirability of black bears as game animals. Through these combination purchases, deer or moose were still the primary targets for hunters, with bears largely killed incidentally in the pursuit of these other animals. Wildlife management officers had long cited this issue, S. St. Jules, for example, argued in 1972 that the system devalued bears and many hunters only shot them for "kicks" because they were covered under the license.⁵⁵⁶ According to later reports by the Ministry, the multiple licensing programs made it nearly impossible to determine the actual number of bears harvested annually and so the shift to single licenses not only

⁵⁵⁵ Ontario, *Annual Report of the Minister of Natural Resources of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto, 1981), 39.

⁵⁵⁶ AO, RG 1-443-5, Bear Files, Box 2, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, S. St. Jules, "The 1972 Swastika District Black Bear Hunt and Summer Program," (1972) page number unavailable.

began rectifying this shortcoming but also continued “the promotion of the black bear as a valuable game animal in Ontario.”⁵⁵⁷

This change was reflected in other amendments to the licensing system. In 1980, the government also restricted resident hunters to one bear per license. While non-resident hunters had been subject to this type of regulation since 1970, until this point, Ontario hunters could kill as many bears as they desired on a single license.⁵⁵⁸ This became problematic in November 1971 when the Goudreau controversy broke, prompting members of the Sudbury community and some officials in the Ministry to question the legality of this incident. This new initiative did not limit the number of licenses that resident hunters could purchase each year. As a result, while it did work towards tightening black bear hunting regulations and aligning them more with the management systems for the province’s other big-game animals, resident hunters still reaped the benefits of a fairly liberal system. Unlike the management programs for deer or moose, which restricted hunters to a maximum of one license per season, resident hunters could, essentially, kill as many bears as they liked, provided they continued to purchase additional licenses. Despite this glaring caveat, this change was significant for the Ministry because it would facilitate more accurate harvest estimates. Under a “one-for-one” system, the MNR could better extrapolate the number of bears killed per season because each license sold, in theory, represented one potential bear. As the previous example with Yvon Goudreau revealed, resident hunters could be legally killing far more

⁵⁵⁷ Ministry of Natural Resources Library, Vertical Files, Maria H. De Almeida and Howard L. Smith, “The Status of Black Bear in Ontario,” (Ministry of Natural Resources, Wildlife Branch, March 1986), 7.

⁵⁵⁸ Ontario, *Revised Regulations of Ontario, 1980*, Regulation 403 (Toronto: Queen’s Printer, 1980), 853.

than one animal. While we can argue that the Goudreau incident was likely the exception and not the rule, the Ministry only learned of this scenario because of the publicity it generated in the *Sudbury Star*. Less public incidents undoubtedly occurred as some hunters would have been keen to take advantage of the system.

The new information about the animal that was filtering in through long-term studies undergirded the changes to the Ministry's bear management program during this decade. Most notable was the conclusion of a twelve-year study on black bears in an area northeast of North Bay that had been initiated in 1969. The Ministry commented that when the study first began "little detail was recorded about the black bear or, indeed, about any bears anywhere."⁵⁵⁹ As part of the study, government researchers had fitted 125 bears with radio collar devices, allowing scientists to gain a better understanding of black bear habits, which would ultimately assist in future management. George Kolenosky, one of the biologists on the project, suggested that "the introduction of radio units has probably contributed more to our knowledge of black bear activities and habitat requirements than any other single strategy of field investigation."⁵⁶⁰

In fact, there was much that the Ministry's wildlife scientists learned about bears that was new. One of the most important realisations was that black bears reproduced at a much slower rate than was previously believed.⁵⁶¹ This discovery was important for the MNR because it had significant implications for hunting management. Animals that reach

⁵⁵⁹ Ontario, *Annual Report of the Minister of Natural Resources of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto, 1981), 41.

⁵⁶⁰ George Kolenosky, "Season of the Black Bear," *Ontario Naturalist* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1978), 5.

⁵⁶¹ Ontario, *Annual Report of the Minister of Natural Resources of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto, 1981), 41. Since this initial finding, it is believed that black bears have the second slowest reproductive rate amongst North American mammals, behind only muskoxen.

sexual maturity late, such as black bears, are much more sensitive to increases in hunting pressure than other big-game animals, like deer, which begin reproducing much earlier. The Ministry also learned that black bears are not truly carnivorous but instead, better characterized as omnivores that generally seek out any high-energy food, explaining their attraction to anthropogenic food sources or garbage. Through the extensive monitoring done as part of the study it was also found that most black bears travel considerable distances for food sources, particular in the autumn, when “bears go on long-range foraging expeditions to load up on favorite [sic] foods prior to hibernation.”⁵⁶² While some of these findings may fall into the category of common knowledge, for those familiar with black bears, at the time of the study these were still considered to be novel discoveries. This not only attests to how understudied black bears had been in North American up to this point but also how significant this information would be for the Ministry, and other jurisdictional wildlife agencies, moving forward.

These monumental findings were circulated amongst Ministry staff but many of important conclusions were also showcased in media read by the general public. In an effort to disseminate some of the MNR’s new knowledge with interested readers in the public sphere, biologist George Kolenosky shared the government’s findings in *Ontario Naturalist*, the official magazine of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (now Ontario Nature).⁵⁶³ While Kolenosky reiterated many of the same conclusions that were outlined in the Ministry’s annual report, it is evident that outlining how this new information

⁵⁶² Ibid., 41.

⁵⁶³ The Federation of Ontario Naturalists was formed in 1931. *Ontario Naturalist* was first published in 1963 as the organization’s official magazine (it was renamed *Seasons* in 1980. In 2004, the organization changed its name to Ontario Nature and *Seasons* subsequently became *ON Nature*. *Ontario Nature*, <http://www.ontarionature.org/discover/history.php> (accessed 3 November 2014)

effects the relationship between humans and bears was a focal point of his writing. In particular, he emphasized the connection between the availability of natural food sources and nuisance behaviour. Kolenosky wrote that “during years of natural food shortages, bears often become more visible as they are forced to seek alternate food sources. The incidence of people-bear conflicts also increases during such years.”⁵⁶⁴ While we have seen how wildlife management officers and biologists have stressed this correlation as far back as the 1960s or how Algonquin Park implemented a progressive garbage management program to mitigate negative human-bear interactions, it is clear that these new findings validated these early concerns. In fact, Kolenosky argued that much of what the Ministry learned throughout the course of the twelve-year study not only armed the government with a “greater knowledge of bear behaviour and activities [but will also] assist in the development of techniques useful for reducing people-bear conflicts.”⁵⁶⁵

The Ministry also shared some of their new information about black bears in *Landmarks*, a quarterly magazine that it launched in 1982 to help keep the public informed of the it’s activities in the fields of resource management, planning, utilisation and protection.⁵⁶⁶ Ted Gorsline, a *Toronto Sun* reporter, spent some time with a couple of the Ministry’s biologists in the field, as part of an article he penned for the MNR’s magazine. He wrote that the governments, recently completed, study on black bears will “ensure that black bears are neither overhunted nor become a nuisance to man and, secondly, to map out the life history of black bears to discover how they relate to the

⁵⁶⁴ Kolenosky, 1978, 11.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁶⁶ Bill Foster, “Presenting Landmarks,” *Landmarks* 1, 1 (Fall 1982), 1.

Ontario forest.”⁵⁶⁷ Gorsline also wrote about how the Ministry’s findings on black bear reproduction should enlighten many people in northern Ontario that assumed that the population fluctuates significantly from year to year. Instead, paraphrasing biologist George Kolenosky, he suggests to general readers that “bears can’t reproduce quickly enough to make a noticeable difference from one year to the next.”⁵⁶⁸ With *Landmarks* serving as the Ministry’s official organ to the public, it was eager to convey some of the new science it found about black bears as a way to promote a more meaningful understanding of the animal, something that would be essential in concert with its new management plans.

The fact that the Ministry chose to convey some of its new black bears findings in magazines or outlets that were more accessible to the general public says a great deal about how much more it believed that people might want or accept wildlife management decisions to be guided by scientific discourse. In *Saving America’s Wildlife*, Thomas Dunlop argued that the shift occurred as early as the 1960s when the American public began incorporating ideas about ecology and the environment in their efforts to repeal the use of poison in varmint killing. For him, the significance was not only that the public had become more involved in the issue but that they had made science central to their arguments.⁵⁶⁹ Previously in Ontario, whenever the MNR, or its predecessor the DLF, published stories about black bears in its weekly press releases or *Fish and Wildlife Review*, the focus was on the animal’s propensity to be a nuisance or its hunting value. By

⁵⁶⁷ Ted Gorsline, “The Bear in Winter,” *Landmarks* 1, 2 (Spring 1983), 10.

⁵⁶⁸ Gorsline, 11.

⁵⁶⁹ Thomas R. Dunlop, *Saving America’s Wildlife: Ecology and the American Mind, 1850-1990* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 111-123.

the 1980s, it is clear that something had changed, which allowed the Ministry to more confidently use and emphasize the importance of science in its outreach to the general public.

While both stories in *Ontario Naturalist* and *Landmarks* had elements that appealed to readers on a basic level, there was also considerable emphasis on the importance of these new scientific studies and how they would impact the ongoing relationship between humans and black bears in the province. It was also evident in the second article, that the Ministry used science to assert and legitimize its authority to manage Ontario's bears. When Gorsline reiterated Kolenosky's point about limited black bear reproduction, it was actually prefaced the words, "Kolenosky says that in Northern Ontario, people have the impression that the bear population is higher in some years than in others. He says that in the short term this just isn't the case."⁵⁷⁰ As a result, the Ministry subtly challenged and dismissed the perceptions of individuals, in northern Ontario, that might suggest that they were experiencing higher-than-normal black bear numbers in their areas. Instead, the Ministry's biologist cast doubt on these local inferences and argued that they should be more accurately attributed to seasonal variations in behaviour and food availability. While the MNR would not actively strive to rebuff the opinions and perceptions of locals, it was becoming clear that the development of the government's bear management policy in the 1980s would lean more heavily on professional science than in any previous decades.

⁵⁷⁰ Gorsline, 11.

The Ministry's new attitude and approach to dealing with black bears can also be seen with its establishment of a subcommittee to begin the process of developing a more comprehensive and sound management plan. Established in early 1982, by the MNR's Wildlife Policy Committee, the Ontario Black Bear Working Group (OBBWG) comprised of MNR biologists and conservation officers, was tasked with reviewing the province's current management system and recommending changes for better policy in the future. The group needed to address the increasing hunting demands for the animal from a hunting perspective and changing attitudes towards black bears from non-hunters. From the beginning, the OBBWG recognized the challenges it faced. Peter Croskery, Fish and Wildlife Supervisor for the Ignace District, commented that "traditionally, Ontario's black bears have been looked upon as nuisance or pest species... With such attitudes in place, the species has received little attention from a resource management standpoint."⁵⁷¹

After spending the better part of a year reviewing the province's current bear management system, the OBBWG submitted a report on what it believed were the major issues confronting black bear management in Ontario. In total, it identified thirteen major issues, accompanied by forty sub issues, for which it forwarded forty-three final recommendations. While this might not seem that arduous or comprehensive at first glance, the group also made an effort to highlight the potential advantages and disadvantages for each of its proposed solutions. The solutions were then weighed based on their prospective benefits or drawbacks and the most appropriate, or ideal, solution was recommended for the Wildlife Policy Committee of the MNR. Some of the

⁵⁷¹ Ministry of Natural Resources Library, Vertical Files, Peter Croskery, "Black bear Management Programs in North America: A Review," (Ignace: Ministry of Natural Resources, 1982), 1.

OBBGW's most noteworthy recommendations were that all future non-resident black bear hunters conduct their hunts through a licensed outfitter or guide.⁵⁷² This partly stemmed from the concern that non-resident hunters were simply harvesting the province's resources while contributing little to the economy. A non-residency requirement was also believed to remedy logistical issues with harvest reporting. This had long been a concern of local Ministry officials, arguing that "many bear hunters do not stay with an operator, but camp out and hunt on their own. These parties are very difficult to calculate into a report" and therefore made the accurate assessment of the annual harvest rates quite difficult.⁵⁷³ It also advocated that the spring season be maintained but that the Ministry actively discourage the shooting of female bears with cubs. The committee also called for an increase in license fees for both resident and non-resident hunters. It recommended a nominal hike for residents, from \$10 to \$15 but suggested that current non-resident fee of \$25 should be quadrupled to \$100.⁵⁷⁴ These were among the most notable recommendations and many of these would be applied by piecemeal throughout the decade.

The Ministry was not the only organisation interested in the direction of the province's bear management. The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) also had a vested interest. It represented the province's resident hunters, many of whom increasingly valued black bear hunting and also the province's guides and outfitters, two

⁵⁷² Ministry of Natural Resources Library, Vertical Files, Ontario Black Bear Working Group, "A Review of the Major Issues of Black Bear Management in Ontario," (1982), iii.

⁵⁷³ AO, RG 1-443-5, Bear Files, Box 2, Final Bear Hunt Reports, 92-3H:3, S.T. Fleming, "Spring Bear Hunt, Temagami District, 1973," (1973), 2.

⁵⁷⁴ Ministry of Natural Resources Library, Vertical Files, Ontario Black Bear Working Group, "A Review of the Major Issues of Black Bear Management in Ontario," (1982), iv.

groups that had a clear stake in the animal's long-term viability. Taking it upon itself, the OFAH presented Minister of Natural Resources, Alan Pope, with its own assessment. The report began with the acknowledgement that,

our society lacks consistently defined attitudes towards the Black Bear; some farmers and landowners still consider the bear to be vermin. The status of Black Bear in Ontario is, at best, varied and confusing. Television, children's story books and some educators misrepresent the bear as cute, cuddly, and entertaining. Most of society believed the bear has a place in the ecosystem and must remain viable.⁵⁷⁵

Similar to the OBBWG's own synopses around this time, the OFAH noted how ambiguous and, often, competing attitudes had hindered management. The OFAH made a number of recommendations that were similar to the final submission of the OBBWG report and also advocated for a number of innovative responses to address the ongoing gap in opinion and perceptions towards the animal. Most notably, the Federation argued that the Ministry should initiate an educational program to correct misconceptions about black bears to the general public, in turn, this could help "alter public opinion of bear by fostering a desirability of bear as a big game animal, to be hunted in a sportsman-like, ethical, biologically sounds manner."⁵⁷⁶

Non-resident hunters had been reaping the benefits of Ontario's hunting system for decades. By the 1980s, with the Ministry possessing a better idea of how significant hunting pressure could impact black bear populations and the reality that hunting pressure was increasing from the outside and within the province, the government looked to clamp

⁵⁷⁵ Ministry of Natural Resources Library, Vertical Files, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, "Brief on Black Bear Management in Ontario," (Peterborough: The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, 1983), 1.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 12. Although heavily oriented towards hunting, the OFAH's 1983 proposal to introduce an educational program to better the relationship between humans and bears in Ontario, resembles the Bear Wise program that was later implemented by the Ministry of Natural Resources in 2004.

down on its black bear hunting regulations. One of the first suggestions was to target non-resident hunters. Non-resident hunters have often been seen as would-be clients but they have also been scrutinized for enjoying the benefits of the province's natural resources while contributing little to the economy. Colloquially referred to as "pork-and-bean" hunters, in some circles, because they were often described as travelling to Ontario with a camper filled with supplies, not purchasing accommodations or provisions on their trips. Some described them as "not really sportsmen at all but persons who are looking for a cheap freezerful [sic] of meat and combine their vacation with a hunting trip."⁵⁷⁷ The Department of Lands and Forests had previously examined revising some of its game laws in order to compel non-resident hunters to contribute to the provincial economy by forcing them to use the services of a guide or outfitter. In 1974, in regards to hunting, Minister Leo Bernier, told the *Chronicle-Journal*, a Thunder Bay newspaper that "we'll be tightening up on all our resources."⁵⁷⁸

Building off of Bernier's promise to review the province's natural resources, the Ministry implemented a pilot program for the 1983 fall hunting season that required non-resident deer or bear hunters in northwestern Ontario to stay at an established tourist outfitter or utilize the services of an approved guide. In terms of black bear hunting, non-resident hunters would only be permitted to pursue their quarry if they could demonstrate they booked the services of an outfitter or guide.⁵⁷⁹ The program was to be implemented on a three-year trial basis and according to the Ministry of Natural Resources, Alan Pope,

⁵⁷⁷ Letter to the editor (author unknown), "Non-Resident Free-loaders," *The Times-News*, 30 May 1974, 4.

⁵⁷⁸ Bob Ekholm, "Bernier may end 'Pork-and-Bean' hunter," *The Chronicle-Journal*, 27 May 1974, 25.

⁵⁷⁹ Ministry of Natural Resources Library, Vertical Files, Maria H. De Almeida and Howard L. Smith, "The Status of Black Bear in Ontario," (Ministry of Natural Resources, Wildlife Branch, March 1986), 9-10.

it was set up in order to “protect Ontario resources from unlimited use.”⁵⁸⁰ Under this new strategy, the Ministry aimed for improved conservation and management of deer and bear by reducing hunting pressure and, also, strengthening the tourist industry in the north. While some hunters from the United States, that had been hunting freely in northwestern Ontario for years, were upset, some even referred to the pilot project as “economic blackmail,” for the most part it was a success, and the Ministry noted “a positive impact on local economies.”⁵⁸¹ In the coming years, black bears would be an integral part of this growing industry and this early pilot project cemented the connection between dollars and bears for the province, especially since a key feature of the management program at the end of the decade would focus on implementing a complete non-resident hunter tourist requirement.

The advent of new technology also allowed the Ministry to manage its black bears with greater precision and care. Computer modelling, or what the MNR referred to as “the 20th century equivalent of the crystal ball” gave the government the ability to incorporate predictive estimates as part of its management strategies.⁵⁸² With the Ministry already in possession of considerable information from its twelve-year study, computers and other digital technologies allowed it begin building up a database for the “better management of the species in Ontario.”⁵⁸³ It continued with plans for more long-term studies. Later in the

⁵⁸⁰ AO, RG 1-46-1, General Correspondence-Bear and Deer (12-9-63), Box 3, “Hunting Restrictions Affecting Non-Resident Sportsmen take Effect in Northwestern Ontario this Fall,” 13 July 1983, 1.

⁵⁸¹ AO, RG 1-46-1, General Correspondence-Bear and Deer (12-9-63), Box 3, Melvin E. Dale to Alan W. Pope, 1 May 1984, 2. Ontario, *Annual Report of the Minister of Natural Resources of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto, 1984), 18.

⁵⁸² Ontario, *Annual Report of the Minister of Natural Resources of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto, 1983), 25.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*, 25.

decade, a six-year study to determine the number and health of black bears in northern Ontario was to begin in the Chapleau district, in order to “help managers predict allowable levels for hunting” and will also help assess how many bears there are in other parts of the province by using extrapolation techniques.⁵⁸⁴ With the development of computer modelling and the continuation of long-term field studies, the MNR began making more informed estimations about how many animals were harvested each year and the impact that this could have on the sustainability of the population. This would be significant for guiding future policy.

The culmination of the Ministry’s new emphasis on bear management came with the announcement of the Black Bear Management Program in 1987. Prefacing its introduction in the Ontario Legislature, Minister of Natural Resources Vincent Kerrio stated that “in recent years, this animal has become a prized big-game species. Changes are required to permit better control of the harvest and to control hunting methods. These changes will have a very positive effect on our northern tourist industry.”⁵⁸⁵ According to the government, the goal was “to manage black bear populations and associated habitat, to ensure the maintenance of the species, and to provide for the continuous recreational and economic benefits for the people of Ontario.”⁵⁸⁶ For the first time in the province’s history, the government had instituted a clear set of objectives to guide the relationship between humans and black bears in Ontario. As part of the program’s overriding goal,

⁵⁸⁴ Ontario, *Annual Report of the Minister of Natural Resources of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto, 1990), 24.

⁵⁸⁵ Ontario, *Ontario Legislature Debates*, Vincent Kerrio, 2 December 1986, 33:2.

⁵⁸⁶ Algonquin Park Museum Archives, Bear Files, Ministry of Natural Resources, “Management Policy and Program for Black Bears in Ontario,” (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Wildlife Branch, January 1987), 2.

preserving the province's black bears, it also sought to manage the animals on a sustained yield basis, minimize any damage to property and threat to public health and safety from black bears, to maintain or expand, where possible, recreational black bear hunting and viewing opportunities for residents of Ontario, and to maximize economic benefits to Ontario from non-resident black bear hunters while providing a quality hunt for them.⁵⁸⁷ Because of the new information and technology that emerged in the 1980s, the Ministry now had a reasonable estimate of the number of black bears in the province, which it conservatively placed at around 75,000.⁵⁸⁸ Prior to this point the Ministry had rarely commented publicly on the size of Ontario's black bear population, largely because it did not have enough information in order to extrapolate a reasonable estimate from. The increased emphasis to black bear management and in turn, the advancements made in this field, the Ministry was now more confident than it had ever been with its ability to manage the province's bears. As a result, it was able to implement harvest targets that were not to exceed 5-8% of the total population per annum, which meant that 3,750 to 6,000 bears could be legally killed each year by hunters.⁵⁸⁹

As part of the new management program, a number of new bear hunting regulations were also implemented throughout the rest of the decade. Interestingly, many of the hunting restrictions that were instituted focused on issues that had previously been

⁵⁸⁷ Algonquin Park Museum Archives, Bear Files, Ministry of Natural Resources, "Management Policy and Program for Black Bears in Ontario," (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Wildlife Branch, January 1987), 3.

⁵⁸⁸ Ontario, *Annual Report of the Minister of Natural Resources of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto, 1987), 64.

⁵⁸⁹ Algonquin Park Museum Archives, Bear Files, Ministry of Natural Resources, "Management Policy and Program for Black Bears in Ontario," (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Wildlife Branch, January 1987), 3.

raised by local members of the MNR and DLF for a number of years. Most notably, it became illegal to shoot bears in their dens or on Crown lands within 400 metres of a waste disposal site. In addition, hunters were also prohibited from shooting cubs born in the year of the hunt and during the spring season. They could not kill female bears accompanied by cubs. Officials had raised these two latter issues as early as the 1970s amidst ethical concerns over the fate of orphaned cubs and the sporting concerns about the spring bear hunt in general. These measures worked to elevate the black bear's status as a big-game animal by limiting the ways or areas in which it could be killed.

In keeping with limitations and restrictions, the government also introduced measures to bring institute greater control over foreign hunters. Non-residents were now “required to use the services of the tourist industry or an approved commercial Ontario guide.”⁵⁹⁰ Obligated to inject more money into northern Ontario's local economies through the purchasing of accommodations and other expenses, they could no longer simply purchase a license and export permit. As part of the new requirement, the Ministry also introduced a new policy that it claimed would help “improve the management of Ontario's black bear population by reducing conflicts between operators, and establishing a system that will better manage bear harvests.”⁵⁹¹ Moving forward, tourist operators were now assigned specific sections of Crown land known as Bear Management Areas (BMA) where they could provide guiding or bear baiting services to non-resident hunters. In addition, the MNR also increased black bear license fees. While these also impacted

⁵⁹⁰ Ontario, *Annual Report of the Minister of Natural Resources of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto, 1987), 64; Ontario, Ministry of Natural Resources, “Black Bear Hunter's Factsheet: Spring 1987,” (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Wildlife Branch, 1987), 2.

⁵⁹¹ Ontario, *Annual Report of the Minister of Natural Resources of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto, 1989), 23.

resident hunters, the increase was considerably more for non-resident hunters, climbing from \$25 to \$80 in 1988 and \$100 in 1989.⁵⁹² Writing for *Landmarks*, Christine Beachey commented that these new regulations would provide both “long-term protection for the black bear and continued economic benefit to the province through hunting.”⁵⁹³ This shift speaks to the renewed importance of the black bear – a big-game animal but also the realization that the province’s fish and wildlife resources needed to be managed more carefully.

Despite the notable changes to the province’s black bear management, an ambiguous caveat still persisted throughout this period; black bears were still considered furbearing animals. As noted in earlier chapters, the animal held marginal importance as a furbearer in the first half of the twentieth century in Ontario. The black bear’s value as a furbearing animal paled in comparison to other creatures such as mink or fox. During the Second World War, the provincial government began implemented a new system for harvesting furbearers, wherein trappers would have licenses for registered traplines instead of fur reserves on Crown land. K.J. Rea estimates that by the mid-1960s, “some 9,000 trappers, including both whites and natives, held such licenses.”⁵⁹⁴ While wild fur production had dropped in Ontario during the Great Depression, it rebounded during the final years of the 1940s and continued to surge during the 1950s. During the 1960s, output had slowed again but by the late 1970s, wild fur was, again, netting considerable money for the province. Between 1976 and 1990, the estimated value of wild pelts

⁵⁹² Ontario, *Annual Report of the Minister of Natural Resources of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto, 1988), 46.

⁵⁹³ Christine Beachey, “Bears Get Protection,” *Landmarks*, Vol. 5, 3 (Summer 1987), 7.

⁵⁹⁴ K.J. Rea, *The Prosperous Years: The Economic History of Ontario, 1939-1975* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 155.

harvested in Ontario was \$214.5 million (please see Table 9 and Chart 8). And yet, despite important legislation in 1961 and during the 1980s that established and entrenched the black bear as a game animal, it could still be targeted as a furbearer. The number of black bears harvested as furbearers between 1972 and 1990 never represented a significant number. The average annual total over this period was 236, a minute fraction of the 745,375 average total pelts harvested per year. Nevertheless, black bear pelts were still worth an average of \$60 each during this span, so they still held considerable value to licensed trappers that still pursued them. This ambiguity irked tourist outfitters and guides who wanted to see the animal uniformly defined as a big-game animal. Roxann Lynn, owner of Moose Horn Lodge in Chapleau, had always been vexed by this loophole, she's often asked, "Is it a big-game animal or a furbearer? It can't be both!"⁵⁹⁵ While the black bear is still legally defined as a big-game animal, it can still be harvested as a furbearer by licensed trappers. Consequently, although there has been considerable change to the attitudes and management strategies towards black bears, its continued privileging as a furbearer harkens back to the early history of the relationship of the animal, a period characterized by ambiguity and loosely-defined valuation.

* * *

Just thirty years earlier, black bears had largely been managed through a bounty system but now were regulated on a *sustained yield basis*, which meant that the animal had enough commercial and intrinsic significance that it was integral to ensure its long-term viability. The province's new management bear system would have been completely

⁵⁹⁵ Telephone interview between author and Roxann Lynn, 5 March 2012.

unrecognisable to an outside observer from just ten years prior. The new studies, practices, and regulations all contributed towards the development of the most progressive and sophisticated bear management program that the province had ever seen. Robert M. Alison, writing for *Ontario Out of Doors*, poignantly suggested that “Ontario’s world-famous black bear deserves nothing less than the most modern management.”⁵⁹⁶

By 1989 Ontario’s black bears were managed more comprehensively and rigorously than at any point previously. During the 1970s and 1980s the provincial government implemented a number of positive measures that were designed to elevate the bear as a big-game animal and ensure its long-term viability as a multi-use resource in the province. Beyond simply regulating the black bear more effectively, this period also saw values and attitudes change towards the animal, largely for the better. At the outset of the 1970s we were able to see how a notable hunting incident in Sudbury, Ontario challenged preconceived notions about killing black bears and how nuanced the reaction was. The response to Goudreau’s hunting adventure might also have been driven by the burgeoning environmental rhetoric of the time. As more people began to take stock of their health and environment, this also extended to the animals that occupied these spaces, and so at times, these concerns were often driven by ethical and emotional considerations. These issues were not only confined to Sudbury’s broadsheets, evidence also reveals that officials within the Ministry of Natural Resources were also highlighting many of these same concerns in their annual reports. Biologists and conservation officers were not merely concerned with numbers or sustainability, they also injected ethical and

⁵⁹⁶ Robert M. Alison, “Bears: An Issue of Management,” *Ontario Out of Doors*, Vol. 20, 4 (May 1988), 12.

environmental concerns into their reports, suggesting that, they too, also shared larger concerns about black bears.

Changing attitudes towards the animal can also be seen when examining hunter interest in the animal. Prior to the 1970s, black bear hunting was largely driven by non-residents, primarily from the United States, but, as interest in the animal continued to increase and its profitability was realized, more and more resident hunters also began pursuing the animal for economic or recreational purposes. Consequently, with increased hunting pressure especially during 1970s and 1980s, the Ministry began envisioning tighter hunting regulations to enhance the black bear's prestige as a big-game animal. We have also seen that around this same time, the government began acquiring new information and expanding its knowledge of the animal, which served as a driving force behind the new management initiatives in the 1980s. Prior to our end date of 1987 we have seen how ambiguous categorizations of the black bear had complicated its management on the ground but by the 1980s, new information and a greater understanding for the animal as a game species had led to the most progressive and transformative period in the history of black bear management in Ontario. Moving forward, the black bear had finally taken its rightful place in the province's woodlands as a valuable game animal.

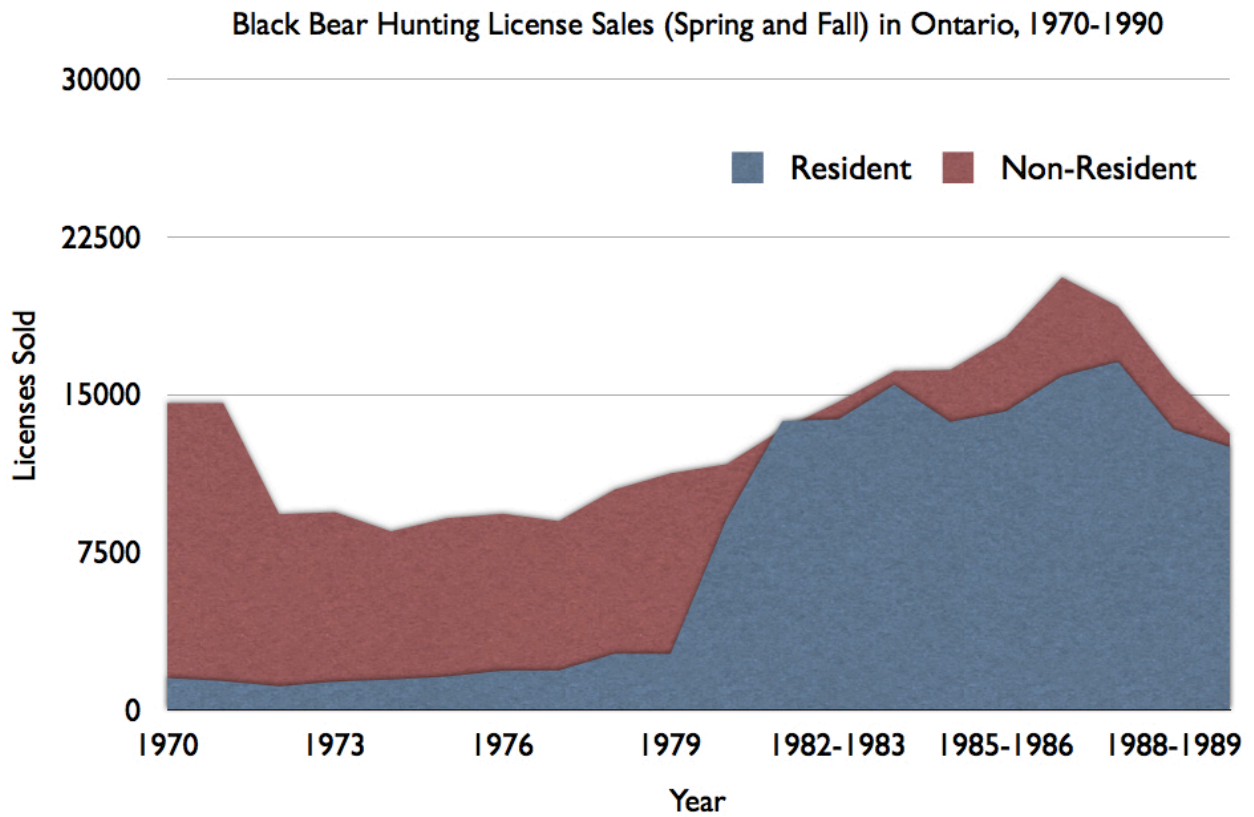
Table 7

Black Bear Hunting License Sales (Spring and Fall) in Ontario, 1970-1990

Year	Resident Licenses	Non-Resident Licenses	Annual Total
1970	1,517	14,585	16,102
1971	1,372	14,585	15,957
1972	1,121	9,299	10,420
1973	1,343	9,405	10,748
1974	1,443	8,484	9,927
1975	1,585	9,115	10,700
1976	1,869	9,325	11,194
1977	1,872	8,977	10,849
1978	2,672	10,477	13,149
1979	2,666	11,247	13,913
1980-1981	9,064	11,682	20,746
1981-1982	13,736	13,341	27,077
1982-1983	13,817	14,639	28,456
1983-1984	15,464	16,109	31,573
1984-1985	13,696	16,160	29,856
1985-1986	14,198	17,739	31,937
1986-1987	15,870	20,569	36,439
1987-1988	16,554	19,184	35,738
1988-1989	13,337	15,777	29,114
1989-1990	12,505	13,129	25,634
TOTAL	155,701	263,828	419,529

Source: Compiled from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources annual reports, 1970-1990.

Figure 8



Source: Compiled from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources annual reports, 1970-1990.

Table 8

Estimated Black Bear Harvest Per Annum for Residents and Non-Residents in Ontario, 1971-1990

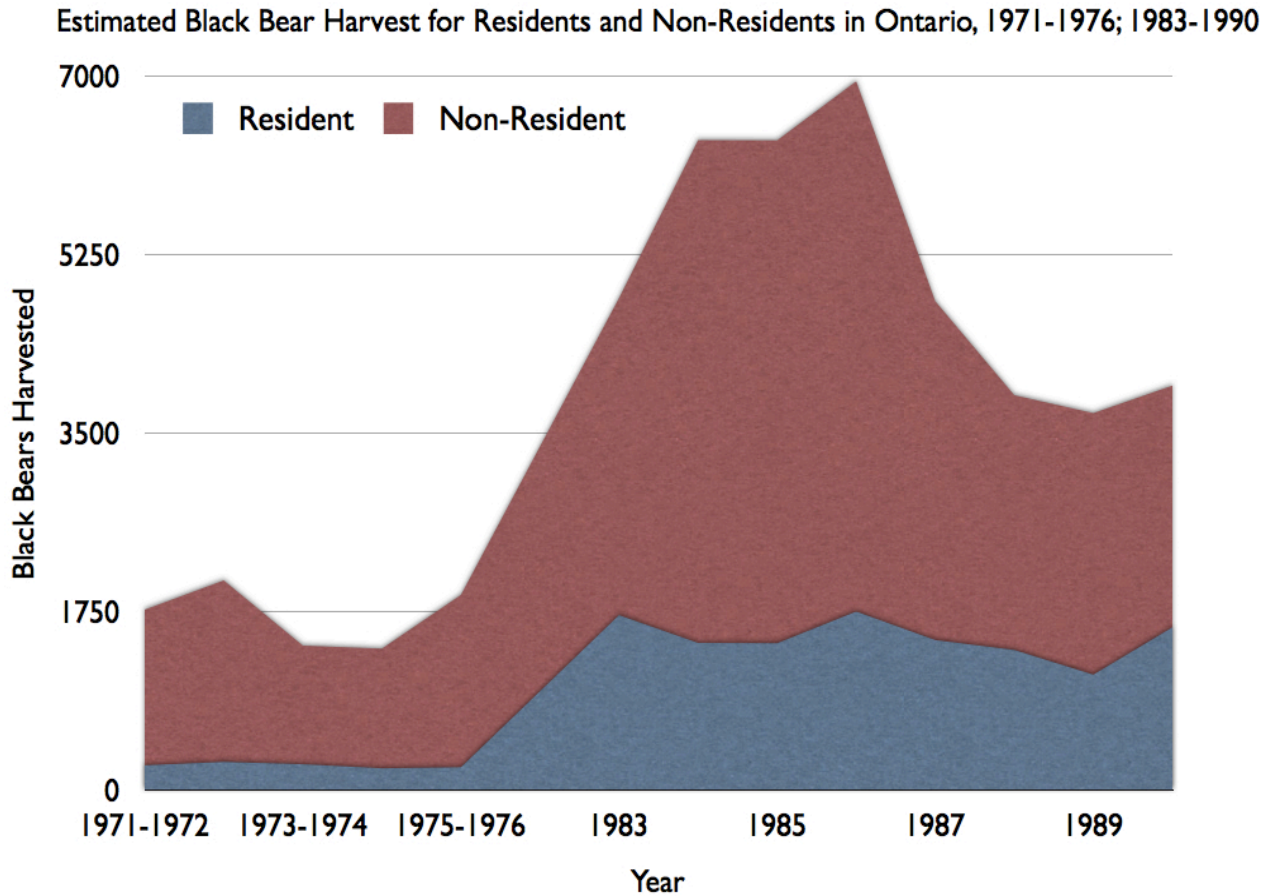
Year	Resident Harvest	Non-Resident Harvest	Total
1971-1972	243	1,769	2,012
1972-1973	277	2,056	2,333
1973-1974	254	1,417	1,671
1974-1975	214	1,387	1,601
1975-1976	224	1,914	2,138
1976-1977	N/A	245*	N/A
1977	224†	1,481†	1,705†
1978	N/A	322*	N/A
1979	275†	1,866†	2,141†
1980	N/A	N/A	N/A
1981	1367	3,703	5,070
1982	N/A	N/A	N/A
1983	1,715	4,824	6,539
1984	1,443	6,372	7,815
1985	1,440	6,370	7,810
1986	1,751	6,950	8,701
1987	1,471	4,793	6,264
1988	1,374	3,872	5,246
1989	1,132	3,696	4,828
1990	1,596	3,966	5,562
TOTAL	14,501	53,089	71,436

*Fall hunt estimate only

† Spring hunt estimate only

Source: Maria De Almeida, large carnivore biologist in Wildlife Policy Section of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Information was obtained through email correspondence between the author and De Almeida. She notes that harvest numbers are estimates based on replies received from a sample of hunters and are therefore subject to statistical error. Harvest numbers have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Figure 9



Source: Maria De Almeida, large carnivore biologist in Wildlife Policy Section of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Information was obtained through email correspondence between the author and De Almeida. She notes that harvest numbers are estimates based on replies received from a sample of hunters and are therefore subject to statistical error. Harvest numbers have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 9

Black Bear and Overall Wild Fur Harvest in Ontario, 1972-1990

Year	Black Bear Pelts	Total Pelts	Total Value (\$ in Millions)
1972	26	549,562	2.8
1973	322	681,242	4.2
1974	375	816,836	7.2
1975	268	N/A*	N/A*
1976	288	763,579	6.4
1977	283	685,752	7.9
1978	284	775,753	11.2
1979	511	929,196	20.2
1980	818	1,070,396	24.4
1981	482	980,127	18.9
1982	230	882,127	16.6
1983	120	1,021,257	14.3
1984	132	766,639	13.1
1985	81	852,837	13.9
1986	57	832,784	14
1987	68	921,099	15.4
1988	64	890,919	19.5
1989	42	453,374	12.2
1990	26	288,011	6.5
TOTAL	4,477	14,162,124*	\$228.7*

*** Accurate figures were unavailable for 1975 due to a conflict with other data sets. Therefore, the totals in columns three and four do not contain information representing the total catch and value for 1975.**

Source: Compiled from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources annual reports, 1972-1990.

Conclusion

The adoption of Ontario's Black Bear Management Program of 1987 reflected changing societal attitudes towards black bears that influenced Ontario government policy. Throughout the twentieth century, perceptions of black bears in Ontario were very malleable and had tangible impacts on how the bear was managed in the woodlands. Black bears meant different things to different people at any one time. Consequently, as a result of competing and often conflicting perceptions, the provincial system to oversee the relationship between humans and bears was haphazard and ambiguous.

The antecedents of black bear management in Ontario can be traced back to the late eighteenth century when colonial officials repealed the bounty before the end of the century. For the next one hundred years, they largely ignored the black bear as an object of regulation. Little changed when the province of Ontario created a Department of Game and Fisheries in 1907. Department officials paid more attention to more valued sport-hunting animals, such as moose and deer. While black bears may have eluded the focus of game wardens and wildlife management officers in their reports, the animals held value for other people in various parts of the province. As a furbearing animal, they had commercial value, although trappers still considered them to be less valuable than other furbearers, such as mink and fox. Because of logistical and financial considerations, they were targeted less often. Since their worth was inherently limited, this formal designation as a furbearer did not prove all that significant.

For others, black bears held value as pets. This trend was not isolated to the province's more rural areas, in fact, many people in the urban and even affluent

neighbourhoods, attempted to keep bears as pets. This made for a very unique relationship. Bears were never truly pets in the traditional sense and this was quite evident when they reached the end of their perceived, useful existence. The family bear often ended up on a butcher's block or in the local tannery, suggesting that unlike cats or dogs, bears still held value in death as protein or furbearers. The popularity of black bears as pets declined by mid-twentieth century as people began to realize the potential danger that the animals possessed.

Farmers and others living in rural areas were less likely to see any sort of value in the animal, instead perceiving them as vermin. Bears became pests or vermin when they competed with human interests. During the 1930s, opinions about how the province should proceed with black bear management varied. Many in the agricultural and outfitting industry wanted to see a bounty introduced as a way to regulate the population. Conversely, there were also other members of the outfitting and hunting community that wanted to see black bears bestowed the status of a big-game animal, to enhance their prestige and give them greater protection. At first, the Department of Game and Fisheries opted to pursue neither avenue but eventually began marketing black bears as big-game animals in the spring to non-resident hunters. While this undoubtedly pleased members of the outfitting and guiding community, farmers felt spurned, believing that not enough was being done to safeguard their interests. By 1942, the province changed its position on the issue and implemented a bounty program in Ontario's agricultural and semi-agricultural areas. Black bears were now legally viewed as vermin and residents of the province were given incentives by the state to kill them.

While the Ontario government continued to sanction the use of violence against bears as a measure of control until the early 1960s, various and competing perceptions of animal continued to persist. In addition to viewing bears as marauding monsters that needed to be destroyed, people also regarded the black bear as the “clown of the woods.” This trope became quite popular in the postwar period and was reinforced by popular media, including in the popular films of Walt Disney. As a result, people also began to recognize the intrinsic value that bears possessed. While farmers, trappers, and hunters measured the value of bears in how many they were able to kill, other people believed that there was an inherent joy in simply knowing that bears existed in provincial parks and forests. The way that Disney films and forms of print media portrayed the animals had a profound affect on how the animal was viewed and managed, often to its detriment. While the Ontario government managed the animal as vermin under the bounty system, it also contradictorily adopted the “clown of the woods” at times, which undoubtedly shaped the public’s perspective and relationship with the province’s bears.

If we stopped our timeline at 1960, it would be possible to view the myriad perceptions towards bears and how many of these operated simultaneously. From 1920 to 1960 the black bear was a furbearer, a pet, an informal nuisance, a big-game animal, legal vermin, and a clownish caricature. At no point during this period were bears viewed through a singular lens by all people. After 1961, following the particular memorable hunt in Timmins, Ontario that brought international attention to the province’s bear management system, they were classified as big-game animals. While the provincial government had begun marketing bears as big-game animals to non-resident hunters in

1937, this move signaled that it recognized the animal as having similar value to Ontario's other game species, primarily moose or deer. Residents were reluctant to soften their attitudes and had difficulty accepting that black bears suddenly befitted big-game status. The province did not take steps to facilitate an easy transition, as much of the legislation that was implemented lacked protective measures, meaning that the black bear was largely big-game in name only.

Even into the 1970s, many residents of the province, particularly those in the agricultural industry, continued to detest bears. Members from the non-hunting community also continued to find new value in the animal, recognizing its intrinsic value as a part of the province's broader collection of wildlife. For them, seeing or interacting with bears during their summer vacations at provincial parks, particularly at Algonquin, provided them with greater appreciation of the animal. Not only had people already begun to see the utility and value of the animal but it is arguable that attitudes changed during this period as were introduced to the burgeoning environmental movement. Throughout the province, people appear to have been influenced by the environmental thinking of the day. This is evidenced by the response to the notable bear hunting incident in Sudbury in 1971 and in how the Ministry of Natural Resources responded to management plans during this decade. As part of this broader shift in environmentalism, members of the Ministry began applying ethical perspectives when noting their concerns about particular bear management policies and hunting methods. By the 1980s, the Liberal government presided over the most progressive era of bear management in Ontario's history. Its legislation exhibited a greater understanding of the animal and its importance to the

provincial economy as a game animal and it created measures to protect the bear's long-term viability in the province. Culminating with the 1987 Black Bear Management Program, the government of Ontario had reached its apex in terms of bear management. The province reached a watershed moment as this signified the most universal perspective, albeit largely governmental in scope, towards black bears to date.

Beyond 1987

Although the Ontario government's new legislation signalled that black bears were undisputed game animals, other perspectives still existed throughout the province. Residents that lived in 'bear country' or agricultural areas in northern Ontario still likely to viewed black bears as nuisances. Most in the guiding and outfitting industry agreed with the government's perspective, as did resident hunters who had begun to see the value in hunting the animal recreationally. Another perspective started gaining ground in the early 1990s amongst those in the province that advocated that bears, and other animals for that matter, were not natural resources that should be harvested. While opposition towards black bear hunting, most notably in the spring season, was not novel, it crystallized in the early 1990s and challenged the dominant thinking of the time.

It is hard to pinpoint exactly when the spring bear hunt debate formally emerged in Ontario but a good starting point is with *Globe and Mail* journalist Michael Valpy. In March 1993, Valpy published his first in a series of columns on spring bear hunting that ran intermittingly until 1995. In his first release, titled "It's like shooting bears in a barrel" Valpy questioned the existence of the activity because it did not seem like sport hunting to him at all. He argued that "It is a systematic, highly efficient slaughter using

baiting stations to bring bears into point-blank range – a slaughter.”⁵⁹⁷ As Valpy rifled off more columns on spring hunting, people in the province took notice, including wealthy industrialist Robert Schad. Founder of Husky Injection Molding Systems in Bolton, Ontario, Schad annually donated five percent of his firm’s after-tax profits into charitable endeavours, the majority of which were environmental causes. After learning about the spring bear hunt issue, he committed himself to the cause and began contributing resources to lobby the provincial government to repeal the activity.⁵⁹⁸

Over the next few years, a coalition of diverse groups that included the Animal Alliance of Canada, the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (now Ontario Nature), the International Fund for Animal Welfare, and the World Wildlife Federation united to eliminate spring bear hunting. The campaign focused on the ethics of baiting but most importantly, that hunters often misidentified the sex of bears, leading to the accidental but illegal shooting of sows. Once orphaned, the overwhelming majority of cubs, still dependent on their mothers, succumbed to the conditions, a fate that these groups viewed as terrible and unnecessarily cruel. Using an array of propaganda from postcards to billboards and organized marches, these groups started pressuring the government to make a change. The Ministry of Natural Resources unequivocally opposed this position and argued that the spring season remained “the best time to hunt bears.”⁵⁹⁹ The OFAH and other groups, concerned about the prospect of growing opposition to the spring bear

⁵⁹⁷ Michael Valpy, “It’s like shooting bears in a barrel,” *Globe and Mail*, 10 March 1993, A2.

⁵⁹⁸ Michael Valpy, “Mr. Schad and the bears,” *Globe and Mail*, 27 July 1995, A15.

⁵⁹⁹ AO, RG 1-8, Box 20, Spring Bear Letters with Bait and Dogs (Doc. Data 11 sb) B819594

hunt, noted in 1996 “we must be prepared to accept and meet this challenge to protect our hunting heritage.”⁶⁰⁰

By early 1999 it was clear that the spring bear hunt issue was not going away for the Progressive Conservative government. Not wanting to have to deal with a potential distraction in an election year, Premier Mike Harris met with Robert Schad on 8 January 1999 and informed him the government was cancelling the hunt. A week later, Harris formally announced that the MNR would place a moratorium on the activity. The response in northern Ontario was overwhelmingly negative. Many communities lost the tourist dollars associated the spring bear hunt, which had generated direct revenues in the millions each year.⁶⁰¹ Aside from a loss of these dollars, many have attributed the government’s decision to a significant increase in the number of bears in and around their areas. The spring bear hunt debate in the 1990s reveals the degree to which attitudes towards bear still diverged in the province. To the government and members of the hunting community and industry, bears were resources. For others in the province, the spring hunt made black bears a *cause célèbre* as they believed certain aspects of the hunt were intolerable.

In the wake of the cancellation, the government needed to address concerns from northern Ontario residents that the decision had led to an increase in bears and therefore, more nuisance bear activity. In 2002, the Nuisance Bear Review Committee was appointed to assess the situation and it found there was no correlation between increased

⁶⁰⁰ AAC, Spring Bear Hunt Files, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, “Discussion Paper: The Black Bear Hunting Debate in Ontario,” March 1996, 1.

⁶⁰¹ Daniel Girard, “Outfitters slam ban on bear hunt,” *Toronto Star*, 16 January 1999, A8.

nuisance activity and a lack of spring hunting.⁶⁰² Instead, it recommended the creation of Bear Wise, a program designed to reduce human-bear conflict through educational partnerships between the government, communities, and individuals. Until 2012, this program was a great tool for promoting coexistence between humans and bears, but it was gutted by the Liberal government in May 2012, limiting the MNR's ability to mitigate human-bear conflicts.⁶⁰³ Since then, residents in northern Ontario have increasingly viewed black bears as nuisances, now lacking the educational and support apparatuses previously in place under Bear Wise. Regardless of the apparent consensus that the government achieved with its black bear legislation package in 1987, it is clear that perceptions and values towards the animal are always subject to renegotiation.

This study has demonstrated that human attitudes and ideas towards wildlife are malleable concepts. Throughout the twentieth century in Ontario, the image of black bears constantly underwent negotiation and contestation. As a result, competing interests hampered the management of these animals. Only by the 1980s, with greater knowledge and understanding, would many of these perspectives be streamlined to allow for greater and more efficient management. Understanding the history of black bear hunting and management gives us further insights into Ontario's environmental and intellectual history, but it also may provide value for guiding future policy. It is essential to know the history of black bear hunting and management strategies throughout Ontario's past in order to understand what policies have failed or succeeded in order to move towards a

⁶⁰² Royal Poulin, John Knight, Martyn Obbard, and Glenn Witherspoon, *Nuisance Bear Review Committee: Report and Recommendations* (28 August 2003), 6.

⁶⁰³ Michael Committo, "Trouble for Human-Bear Relations," *Toronto Star*, 14 June 2012. http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/2012/06/14/trouble_for_humanbear_relations.html (Accessed 28 March 2015)

more complete and effective policy for the province. Understanding how bears have been thought about is important to maintain a framework that promotes coexistence. For example, Canada's preeminent bear expert, Stephen Herrero has said that "the decisions we make about how we will manage bears depend on our attitudes and values related to bears."⁶⁰⁴ As German author Bernd Brunner has argued, "examining our dealings with bears throughout history will improve our understanding of our relationship to them today."⁶⁰⁵ Recognizing that our ideas and perceptions towards these animals as being integral to policy construction is the best tool we have in order to construct future policies in the province. By elucidating our past relationship and attitudes, we can better ensure that black bears are an important part of Ontario's rich heritage and environment in the future.

The Current Situation

Black bear hunting is once again making headlines in Ontario. On 15 November 2013, the Ministry of Natural Resources announced that it would implement a two-year spring bear hunt pilot project that would target eight of the province's ninety-five Wildlife Management Units (WMU) to mitigate nuisance bear issues and safety concerns. Under this plan, residents of the province would be eligible to hunt bears in these designated sections from 1 May to 15 June. Unlike previous spring seasons, non-residents

⁶⁰⁴ Stephen Herrero, *Bear Attacks: Their Causes and Avoidance* (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1985), 258.

⁶⁰⁵ Bernd Brunner, *Bears: A Brief History*, translated by Lori Lantz (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 7.

hunters have been excluded from the pilot project and hunting will only be permitted if municipalities nearest to the WMUs pass resolutions to opt into the program.⁶⁰⁶

Until November 2013, no government had reintroduced the hunt and it continued to be a sore spot in the north and a point of contention for lobby groups in southern Ontario. Despite heading into an election earlier than planned, Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals let the spring bear hunt proceed, on the assumption that they could weather any political fallout it might generate. The hunt commenced on 1 May in the eight WMUs adjacent to northern Ontario's five largest centres, North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Timmins, and Thunder Bay. Unsurprisingly, these have historically reported significant nuisance bear issues but they are also the most densely populated cities in the north, leading many to question the true intent of the Liberals motivations. The government has largely painted the issue as a public safety measure, arguing that reducing the total number of bears in the spring will decrease the overall population and therefore, limit the potential for negative interactions between humans and bears.

Yet no scientific evidence suggests that the spring bear hunt will mitigate nuisance bear behaviour. In fact, the Ministry's own research team, the Nuisance Bear Review Committee, previously arrived at this conclusion in 2003, citing "no connection between the cancellation of the spring bear hunt and recent increases in nuisance bear activity."⁶⁰⁷ Negative human-bear interactions are driven by the availability of natural food sources, so even with increased hunting pressure, it is still impossible for the MNR to forecast the

⁶⁰⁶ Rob Ferguson, "'Nuisance' bears may face Ontario hunt in spring," *Toronto Star*, 14 November 2013. http://www.thestar.com/news/queenspark/2013/11/14/nuisance_bears_may_face_ontario_hunt_in_spring.html (Accessed 12 November 2014)

⁶⁰⁷ Ontario, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, *Nuisance Bear Review Committee: Report and Recommendations* (28 August 2003), 37.

annual availability of naturally occurring foodstuffs such as summer berries and fall mast crops. Moreover, black bears are also attracted by anthropogenic food sources, such as garbage, so even in a year with increased hunting pressure and a surplus of natural fare, bears will still be attracted to areas where residents do not properly dispose or store garbage. While the science does not seem to support the Liberal's position, other organisations such as the Animal Alliance of Canada and Zoocheck Canada legally challenged the government on the grounds that the spring bear hunt constitutes animal cruelty.⁶⁰⁸ Their arguments, however, were dismissed in court and the hunt proceeded as planned but it is clear that the issue has not failed to generate controversy.

Currently, the pilot project is slated to continue in May 2015 and with the Liberals securing a firm majority in the June 2014 general election it is doubtful that they will alter their plans for the second season. After it finishes in June, the government will need to determine whether it will reimplement the spring bear hunt completely or place a moratorium on the activity again. Regardless of their decision, commentators note that the lines have been drawn. On one side there are those who see the spring bear hunt as an issue of political opportunity trumping science. Others see it as a genuine attempt by the Liberals to alleviate some of the problems between humans and bears in northern Ontario communities. The way the black bear is viewed and how the issue is handled remains to be seen but what we are left with is a clear case in the ongoing issue over how human attitudes, emotions, and values make an impact on the implementation of wildlife policy.

⁶⁰⁸ Allison Jones, "Animal rights head to court to stop Ontario's spring bear hunt," *Toronto Star*, 17 April 2014
http://www.thestar.com/news/queenspark/2014/04/17/animal_rights_head_to_court_to_stop_ontarios_spring_bear_hunt.html (Accessed 1 November 2014)

As it currently stands, the spring bear hunt debate represents another episode in the ongoing human-bear relationship in Ontario, the nuisance epoch. As outlined in the second chapter, black bears were legally classified as vermin by an Order-in-Council in 1942. For the next nineteen years, the province provided residents with an incentive to kill bears; adult bears were worth \$10 and cubs were worth \$5 respectively. Since the cancellation of the spring bear hunt in 1999 and the introduction of the Bear Wise program in 2004, we have seen Ontario's black bears re-enter the realm of pest, this time identified and labelled as "nuisance bears." Before this, black bears had previously been referred to as nuisances when they disturbed or competed with human interests but in the last fifteen years; the term nuisance has become a loaded term to describe general bear activity in northern Ontario. Some see the spring bear hunt as a panacea for unwanted black bear interactions, while others simply see the pilot project as redress for the cancellation of the original spring hunt sixteen years ago. For those who oppose the spring bear hunt for moral or ethical reasons, the Ontario black bear has once again become a *cause célèbre*. As a result, while the spring bear hunt is a highly contested activity, at the heart of the debate remains our conflicting and ever-changing attitudes towards black bears. Maybe, we as Ontarians, will never reach a consensus on black bears or what types of management policies we agree upon. Perhaps we will never be able to overcome our regional and cultural differences within the province when it comes to bears. It is possible that we do not need to arrive at a singular or universal meaning of bears but we do need to realize that we need cooperative efforts if we hope to continue to coexist with these majestic creatures.

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