

150
413

The Black Bear as a Game
Animal in Pennsylvania

BY

SETH E. GORDON

Secretary, Pennsylvania Game Commission
Harrisburg, Pa.

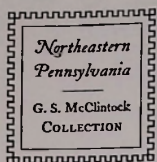
Presented Before The

EIGHTH NATIONAL GAME CONFERENCE

Held Under the Auspices of the

AMERICAN GAME PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION

NEW YORK CITY
DECEMBER 12th and 13th, 1921.



THE BLACK BEAR AS A GAME ANIMAL IN PENNSYLVANIA.

By Seth E. Gordon, Harrisburg, Pa.

Mr. Chairman and Fellow-Sportsmen:

While the subject assigned to me, viz., "The Black Bear as a Game Animal in Pennsylvania," may be of but little interest to many here assembled because the advance of civilization and natural conditions in many States of the Union precludes the possibility of enjoying the exhilarating sport of a real hunt in pursuit of *Ursus Americanus* and his relative, I am confident there are a number of sportsmen within my hearing who are sufficiently interested to come to my rescue in any discussion that may follow. If you do not all agree with the conclusions reached in this paper, I am not going to pray for strength to overpower the bear as the preacher did in the time-worn and much over-worked tale of the preacher and the bear when he thought the bear was about to partake of a hearty repast, but to the contrary in this particular instance am earnestly hoping I may say something that will help secure proper legislation to protect the bears of North America, especially the black bear, in all extensive wooded areas, regardless of the calamity that may befall the "preacher" in this instance.

I consented to address this audience on the above subject solely for the purpose of assisting interested sportsmen throughout the United States to secure badly needed Legislation for the protection of these splendid game animals, and not to exploit what we believe to be a very fortunate situation for the sportsmen in Pennsylvania so far as future sport in hunting these game animals is concerned. Upon making a survey of the laws and conditions in the various States of the Union, I am astounded to learn of the lack of protection—in some instances, Maine for example, even a price upon his head—accorded *Ursus Americanus* and other species of bears found in the several States. The reasons given for failure to protect these game animals properly in many instances are without foundation, or exist solely because of selfishness of certain interests. In some States it is openly admitted that non-residents are far more appreciative of the bear hunting afforded than are the residents.

PLACE OF BEARS IN DEVELOPMENT OF NATION.

In the development of this Nation the black bear, especially of the eastern part of the United States, had a very important place economically. The value of his flesh, hide and grease to the early settlers cannot possibly be estimated in dollars and cents, because they invariably lived almost wholly upon our wild life resources of that time. The carcass of a bear frequently saved families from starvation, while the skin was of material value for clothing and shelter, and even today bear skins are highly prized for robes, coats, etc. To those who may look upon the black bear of the eastern part of the United States as comparatively small and of little value in comparison with the grizzly and other large species, I wish to call attention to the fact that many adult bears are annually killed in Pennsylvania weighing from 250 to 500 pounds and more hog dressed, although few exceed 400 pounds. A number of specimens of which we have record in Pennsylvania tipped the scales at 500 pounds and better. Only recently a black bear was killed in the southeastern corner of Potter County near one of our game refuges that was so large four men could not lift it, and it was even found impossible to drag it out of the forest with a mule. The length of the skin of this particular animal was 8 feet 4 inches, and the bare part of the sole of the hind foot I am told was 8½ inches. One of our prominent sportsmen, who was a member of the party, has in the past killed a number of grizzlies, and claims that in comparison with bears of that species accurately weighed, this particular specimen weighed at least 550 and probably 600 pounds. The same party killed a 350 pound bear which was actually weighed and the sole of the foot of that animal measured only 6¼ inches. Bears weighing 400 pounds are not infrequent, so that the economic value of black bears to the early settlers in this Nation was no small item.

From the foregoing it naturally follows that the black bear was closely linked historically with the development of the Nation. Many of our early pioneers explored uncharted territory while in pursuit of game, especially the black bear, which if persistently pursued in a still hunt will cover many miles and will invariably return to the territory from which it was routed. Through the pursuit of such game many of our early settlers developed stamina, accuracy in the use of firearms and self-reliance that was of inestimable value later on. We are in possession of authentic reports from various sections of Pennsylvania indicating that the early sportsmen of the State in still hunting bears frequently pursued the same animal for three, four or more successive days, during which a maximum distance of sixty to seventy-five miles from the point where the bear was routed was frequently reached. Invariably the animal would be

Animals of Such Unique and Curious Interest Deserve Protection. They are Blamed for Many Depredations not Committed by Them.



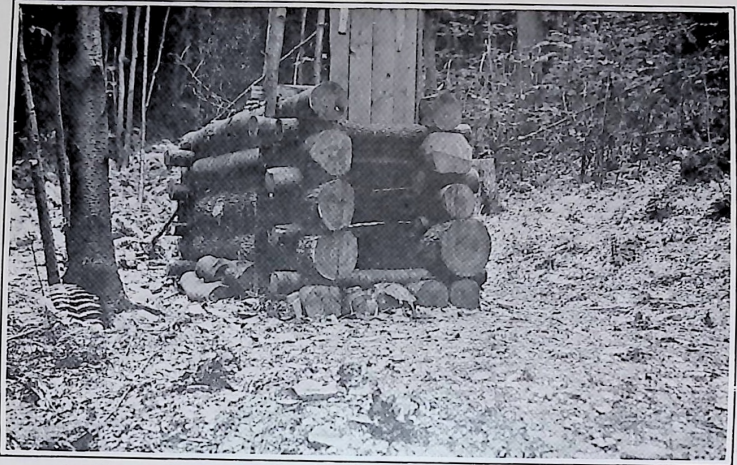
PLACE OF BEARS IN DEVELOPMENT OF NATION.

In the development of this Nation the black bear, especially of the eastern part of the United States, had a very important place economically. The value of his flesh, hide and grease to the early settlers cannot possibly be estimated in dollars and cents, because they invariably lived almost wholly upon our wild life resources of that time. The carcass of a bear frequently saved families from starvation, while the skin was of material value for clothing and shelter, and even today bear skins are highly prized for robes, coats, etc. To those who may look upon the black bear of the eastern part of the United States as comparatively small and of little value in comparison with the grizzly and other large species, I wish to call attention to the fact that many adult bears are annually killed in Pennsylvania weighing from 250 to 500 pounds and more hog dressed, although few exceed 400 pounds. A number of specimens of which we have record in Pennsylvania tipped the scales at 500 pounds and better. Only recently a black bear was killed in the southeastern corner of Potter County near one of our game refuges that was so large four men could not hit it, and it was even found impossible to drag it out of the forest with a mule. The length of the skin of this particular animal was 8 feet 4 inches, and the bare part of the sole of the hind foot I am told was 8½ inches. One of our prominent sportsmen, who was a member of the party, has in the past killed a number of grizzlies, and claims that in comparison with bears of that species accurately weighed, this particular specimen weighed at least 550 and probably 600 pounds. The same party killed a 350 pound bear which was actually weighed and the sole of the foot of that animal measured only 6¼ inches. Bears weighing 400 pounds are not infrequent, so that the economic value of black bears to the early settlers in this Nation was no small item.

From the foregoing it naturally follows that the black bear was closely linked historically with the development of the Nation. Many of our early pioneers explored unchartered territory while in pursuit of game, especially the black bear, which if persistently pursued in a still hunt will cover many miles and will invariably return to the territory from which it was routed. Through the pursuit of such game many of our early settlers developed stamina, accuracy in the use of firearms and self-reliance that was of incalculable value later on. We are in possession of authentic reports from various sections of Pennsylvania indicating that the early sportsmen of the State in still hunting bears frequently pursued the same animal for three, four or more successive days, during which a maximum distance of sixty to seventy-five miles from the point where the bear was routed was frequently reached. Invariably the animal would be



Animals of Such Unique and Curious Interest Deserve Protection. They are Blamed for Many Depredations not Committed by Them.



Log Pen used by Game Commission in Trapping Black Bears in Sections of State Where Numerous for Stocking Purposes in Areas Formerly Inhabited by Them.

killed after such continuous pursuit near the point where routed, and while the value of the carcass of an animal so pursued is more or less of a debatable question, the skin was still of the same value economically as an animal pursued a short distance only.

Among the early methods used in killing bears in Pennsylvania were dead-falls, pits, log pens, steel traps and fire-arms. These methods are all now obsolete when killing bears as game except the use of firearms discharging single bullets only.

FOOD HABITS.

The food of the black bears of Pennsylvania consists of a varied diet. A large portion of their food is a purely vegetable diet, such as berries of all sorts, beechnuts, chestnuts, acorns, honey and fruits. Their animal diet consists largely of insects, especially ants, and rodents of various sorts, among which are included burrowing mammals and the porcupine. Occasionally an individual bear will develop a destructive tendency in his food habits in Pennsylvania just the same as occurs among the western members of the bear family, with a result that small pigs, sheep, calves, etc., are destroyed. This tendency, however, fortunately is rarely developed. When it does occur the only cure is to pursue and kill or reduce to captivity the individual responsible. The amount of damage so done in comparison with the sport supplied by the black bears of Pennsylvania is considered negligible.

BLACK BEARS SELDOM ATTACK HUMANS.

Strange to say, many people throughout Pennsylvania and other States of the Union, are erroneously under the impression that the black bear is extremely dangerous to human beings at all times and should always be given a wide berth. Upon investigation of a number of cases reported where a black bear was supposed to have pursued or attacked human beings without provocation, the Game Commission of Pennsylvania found that such reports were in every instance without foundation in truth, although in some cases those making the reports were doubtlessly under the impression that they were being pursued because of the disposition of the bear to depend almost wholly upon his sense of smell and sense of hearing to guide him in case of danger, depending but little upon their eyesight. Frequently when a bear scents danger he will take fright and pursue a fixed course in the direction he desires to go whether there happens to be a human being along the line of travel or not, apparently depending upon his wonderful strength and adroit skill in warding off blows in case of a hand-to-hand encounter. We have yet to find a single authentic case in Pennsylvania where a black bear actually made an unprovoked attack upon a human being. A badly wounded bear when closely cornered, or an enraged female with young cubs, are both to



Log Pen used by Game Commission in Trapping Black Bears in Sections of State Where Numerous for Stocking Purposes in Areas Formerly Inhabited by Them.

killed after such continuous pursuit near the point where routed, and while the value of the carcass of an animal so pursued is more or less of a debatable question, the skin was still of the same value economically as an animal pursued a short distance only.

Among the early methods used in killing bears in Pennsylvania were dead-falls, pits, log pens, steel traps and fire-arms. These methods are all now obsolete when killing bears as game except the use of firearms discharging single bullets only.

FOOD HABITS.

The food of the black bears of Pennsylvania consists of a varied diet. A large portion of their food is a purely vegetable diet, such as berries of all sorts, bechnuts, chestnuts, acorns, honey and fruits. Their animal diet consists largely of insects, especially ants, and rodents of various sorts, among which are included burrowing mammals and the porcupine. Occasionally an individual bear will develop a destructive tendency in his food habits in Pennsylvania just the same as occurs among the western members of the bear family, with a result that small pigs, sheep, calves, etc., are destroyed. This tendency, however, fortunately is rarely developed. When it does occur the only cure is to pursue and kill or reduce to captivity the individual responsible. The amount of damage so done in comparison with the sport supplied by the black bears of Pennsylvania is considered negligible.

BLACK BEARS SELDOM ATTACK HUMANS.

Strange to say, many people throughout Pennsylvania and other States of the Union, are erroneously under the impression that the black bear is extremely dangerous to human beings at all times and should always be given a wide berth. Upon investigation of a number of cases reported where a black bear was supposed to have pursued or attacked human beings without provocation, the Game Commission of Pennsylvania found that such reports were in every instance without foundation in truth, although in some cases those making the reports were doubtlessly under the impression that they were being pursued because of the disposition of the bear to depend almost wholly upon his sense of smell and sense of hearing to guide him in case of danger, depending but little upon their eyesight. Frequently when a bear scents danger he will take fright and pursue a fixed course in the direction he desires to go whether there happens to be a human being along the line of travel or not, apparently depending upon his wonderful strength and adroit skill in warding off blows in case of a hand-to-hand encounter. We have yet to find a single authentic case in Pennsylvania where a black bear actually made an unprovoked attack upon a human being. A badly wounded bear when closely cornered, or an enraged female with young cubs, are both to

be avoided. In a few cases of this sort we have found that the black bear will attack a human being, although the mother bear with young cubs rarely attacks unless a cub is captured and calls desperately for help.

As an example of the extreme timidity of a black bear I might cite an instance only a few days ago where my attention was directed to a demure, mountain lad about fifteen years of age, who while out hunting rabbits slipped down off a ledge of rocks and landed almost astride a large black bear. The bear took fright immediately, but to the credit of the young hunter it is said he made a clean kill even though his nerves were slightly disturbed.

One of the reasons advanced for the lack of proper protective laws for black bears in various States is that certain mountain sections are so extensively used by tourists during the summer months that there is strong opposition to protecting bears for fear that these animals would attack persons desiring to enjoy the outdoors. In Pennsylvania it has been our experience that tourists in sections where they are known to be plentiful are usually disappointed if they fail to see black bears, or at least the evidence of their work, such as turned up stones, rotten logs and stumps torn to pieces, etc.

BEARS FIRST PROTECTED IN 1905.

Bears were accorded no protection by the laws of Pennsylvania until 1905, when by an act of the Legislature they were given protection as game animals with an open season from October 1st to March 1st. Said act also provided for the killing of bears when destroying personal property, or when coming near the residence of any inhabitant. The penalty for killing a bear contrary to said act was \$50.00 and this same penalty has been continued in our laws protecting bears down to the present date.

Under the Act of 1905 it was permissible to use any method to kill bears. It was found, however, that many steel traps of enormous size and dangerous dead-falls were being extensively used, and on more than one occasion sportsmen entirely ignorant of the use of steel traps for bears were unfortunate enough to step into a large steel-jawed bear trap, on the jaws of which teeth a half inch or more long were fastened along the inside edge. Many of these traps were home made and so powerful that the result was the loss of at least a leg; in a few cases even death resulted. More frequently domestic animals were crippled and sometimes killed through the use of steel bear traps and dead-falls. In addition to these serious objections, the use of steel traps is deemed unnecessarily cruel and even hazardous to those using same.

The Legislature of 1909 decreed that steel traps should be used only when a metallic tag bearing the name of the owner was

attached; that such trap should not be set without surrounding same by a barrier of poles or logs or other material so arranged as to prevent human beings and domestic animals from being caught therein; also that any bear trap or bear pen set should be visited at least once in every 48 hours. This act also reduced the length of the open season to three months, viz., October 1st to January 1st.

It was found that in many remote sections of Pennsylvania, steel traps were still being set without a sufficient marker to prevent persons unacquainted with the methods of the bear trapper from getting caught and injured. It developed that the rail barrier surrounding a steel trap frequently served only to arouse the curiosity of the unwary sportsman to the extent that he began examining the enclosure, occasionally to find to his sorrow the thing which aroused such curiosity.

STEEL TRAPS MADE ILLEGAL.

The Legislature of 1911 prohibited the use of steel traps and dead-falls, thus permitting the use of log pens only, in addition to firearms, in the taking of bears, continuing the provision relative to killing bears when destroying property and visiting pens every 48 hours.

Bears in Pennsylvania up to about 1911 to 1913 seemed to be regarded in about the same manner as in many other States today. The sportsmen, however, began to realize that bear hunting was real sport which should rightfully be enjoyed by all who wished to participate rather than have natives in remote sections enjoy the sport and reap all the benefits through the sale of skins and carcasses, and demanded that additional protection be accorded to bears, with the result that the Legislature of 1913 reduced the open season to two months, October 15th to December 15th, prohibited the use of pens in taking bears, and limited the number of bears that might be taken to one bear to each hunter. This, therefore, left firearms as the only legal method for taking bears.

Under the Act of 1917 a limit of large game for camps was established and our Legislature decreed that not more than three bears should be killed by one camp or hunting party.

LAW PROTECTS PROPERTY.

In 1919 the Legislature was confronted with complaint from one or two counties in the State to the effect that bears were extensively destroying sheep, bee-hives, etc., with the result that the Legislature gave the Game Commission authority to provide special rules and regulations applying to the taking of bears in counties upon petition of 200 citizens where conditions would warrant such action.

It later developed that by restricting the killing of bears to the use of firearms only without stipulating the ammunition to be used, a number of hunters were shooting and wounding bears with fine shot while hunting for small game, either leaving the animals to crawl off and die or, in rare instances, enraging the animal to the extent that a hand-to-hand encounter followed, and under the Act of 1921 our Legislature decreed that when killing bears as game they must be killed with single bullets only, also reduced the season to one and one-half months, November 1st to December 15th.

The provision of our law as it existed during a number of years past relative to killing game when destroying property was amended and so clarified that all of our citizens would understand just what was required in order to kill game during the close season as a protection to their property. Under this feature of our present law, bears may be killed by the Board of Game Commissioners when becoming extensively destructive to property or otherwise becoming a nuisance in any section of the State, and any person residing upon and cultivating lands as either the owner or lessee, or the legitimate employe of such owner or lessee, may kill a bear at any season of the year by any method except steel traps when on such lands engaged in the material destruction of cultivated fruit trees, cultivated crops, live stock, bee hives, etc., but such person must at all times be in a position to prove that material damage was being done, must report the killing within 24 hours to the nearest officer or the Department, and dress and properly care for the carcass for delivery to a charitable institution. Bears may also be killed at any time and in any manner when such animals are inflicting, or attempting to inflict, injury to persons, or may be killed in a pursuit commenced within 48 hours after the commission of such offense, or may be killed at any time when found within one-half mile of any place of residence if the occupant has just cause to fear injury to persons or personal property.

BEARS ANNUALLY KILLED IN PENNSYLVANIA

In addition to protective legislation accorded black bears from time to time as above outlined, the number of game refuges was constantly being increased until today Pennsylvania has 32 of these refuges ranging in area from 1,800 to 3,000 acres each, on which no hunting of any sort is permitted at any time, with plenty of free shooting ground surrounding same. Because of the roving disposition of black bears these refuges, in a number of instances within fifteen to twenty miles of each other, form a continuous line of protection for bears, with the result that not only bears but game of all sorts has increased splendidly in that surrounding territory. The fear that a material increase in the number of bears will seriously interfere with a proper increase in other game has been absolutely contradicted in Pennsyl-

Combination Trap and Shipping Crate. Employes of Game Commission Transporting Black Bear from Woods to Shipping Point.

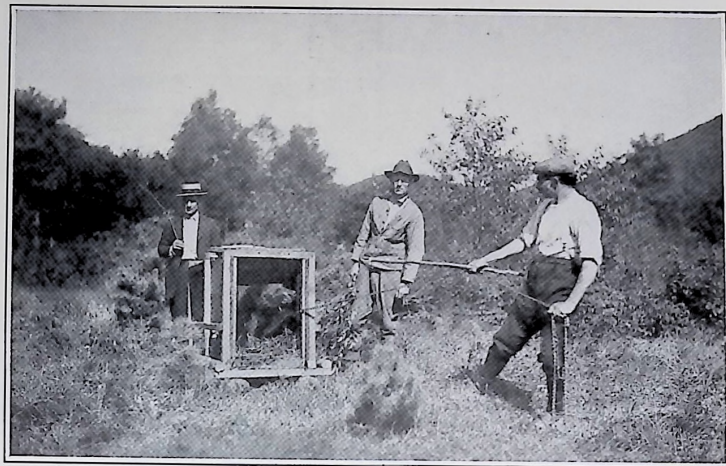


It later developed that by restricting the killing of bears to the use of firearms only without stipulating the ammunition to be used, a number of hunters were shooting and wounding bears with fine shot while hunting for small game, either leaving the animals to crawl off and die or, in rare instances, enraging the animal to the extent that a hand-to-hand encounter followed, and under the Act of 1921 our Legislature decreed that when killing bears as game they must be killed with single bullets only, also reduced the season to one and one-half months, November 1st to December 15th.

The provision of our law as it existed during a number of years past relative to killing game when destroying property was amended and so clarified that all of our citizens would understand just what was required in order to kill game during the close season as a protection to their property. Under this feature of our present law, bears may be killed by the Board of Game Commissioners when becoming extensively destructive to property or otherwise becoming a nuisance in any section of the State, and any person residing upon and cultivating lands as either the owner or lessee, or the legitimate employee of such owner or lessee, may kill a bear at any season of the year by any method except steel traps when on such lands engaged in the material destruction of cultivated fruit trees, cultivated crops, live stock, bee hives, etc., but such person must at all times be in a position to prove that material damage was being done, must report the killing within 24 hours to the nearest officer or the Department, and dress and properly care for the carcass for delivery to a charitable institution. Bears may also be killed at any time and in any manner when such animals are inflicting, or attempting to inflict, injury to persons, or may be killed in a pursuit commenced within 48 hours after the commission of such offense, or may be killed at any time when found within one-half mile of any place of residence if the occupant has just cause to fear injury to persons or personal property.

BEARS ANNUALLY KILLED IN PENNSYLVANIA

In addition to protective legislation accorded black bears from time to time as above outlined, the number of game refuges was constantly being increased until today Pennsylvania has 32 of these refuges ranging in area from 1,800 to 3,000 acres each, on which no hunting of any sort is permitted at any time, with plenty of free shooting ground surrounding same. Because of the roving disposition of black bears these refuges, in a number of instances within fifteen to twenty miles of each other, form a continuous line of protection for bears, with the result that not only bears but game of all sorts has increased splendidly in that surrounding territory. The fear that a material increase in the number of bears will seriously interfere with a proper increase in other game has been absolutely contradicted in Pennsyl-



Combination Trap and Shipping Crate. Employees of Game Commission Transporting Black Bear from Woods to Shipping Point.



Black Bears are not Considered Dangerous to Human Life. C. E. Logue, Official Trapping Instructor for the Game Commission, Frequently has Occasion to Lead his Captives to a Nearby Road.

vania, because other game, especially deer, have increased quite rapidly in the same territory where bears are found most plentiful. For comparison, the kill of bears and male deer in Pennsylvania over a period of years, during which period the laws protecting them were constantly being made more restrictive, was as follows:

	1907	1915	1918	1919	1920
Bear.....	200	188*	387	472	420
Deer.....	200*	1287	1754	2939	3300

Indications are that the kill of bears in Pennsylvania this year will run upwards of 800, while the kill of legal bucks, with antlers at least 4 inches long (but very few "spike" bucks only one and one-half years old with horns without prongs among them) will run considerably over 4,000†.

The kill of both these animals depends somewhat upon weather conditions, as more bears at least are always killed if we have early tracking snows than if the ground is bare.

In one county of the State bears became somewhat objectionable to the inhabitants because of sheep killed and bee-hives destroyed, and after the passage of the Act of 1919 above mentioned permitting the Game Commission to open counties, the limit of bears for that county was increased to two bears to each hunter. The result was a very decided influx of hunters to that particular county. We know of but one case, however, in 1920, where one man was successful in killing two bears.

FRIENDS DEFEND BLACK BEAR.

Because of lack of tracking snow the results obtained under such special action of the Game Commission were insufficient to meet the demands of the residents of said county, and a bill was introduced in the last Legislature by interested parties and passed to the Governor attempting to remove all protection from bears in affected counties for a period of two years upon petition from 200 residents. In connection with this proposed legislation, Col. Henry W. Shoemaker, a prominent traveler, author and naturalist, in his book on "The Black Bear of Pennsylvania," said:

"An animal of such unique and curious interest deserves protection, and it is to be regretted that selfish minded persons seek to use him to divert attention from the depredations made on live-stock by half wild, unlicensed dogs. Pennsylvania set a noteworthy example to the whole world of sport by protecting bears and forbidding the use of steel traps and pens. This law was passed at a time when the black bear of Pennsylvania was on the verge of extinction from wholesale trapping at all times of the year * * *. In some instances the sheep had been killed and carried over high fences by human marauders.

*Male deer of all ages—the first year for the killing of bucks only in Pennsylvania.

†First season trapping was prohibited and number limited to one to each person.

‡The 1921 kill of bears was 510, and the kill of deer was 4840, of which 639 were spikes, 796 two points to one antler, 1248 three points to one antler, and 2157 with four points, and larger, to one antler.



Black Bears are not Considered Dangerous to Human Life. C. E. Logue, Official Trapping Instructor for the Game Commission, Frequently has Occasion to Lead his Captives to a Nearby Road.

vania, because other game, especially deer, have increased quite rapidly in the same territory where bears are found most plentiful. For comparison, the kill of bears and male deer in Pennsylvania over a period of years, during which period the laws protecting them were constantly being made more restrictive, was as follows:

	1907	1915	1918	1919	1920
Bear.....	200	188**	387	472	420
Deer.....	200*	1287	1754	2939	3300

Indications are that the kill of bears in Pennsylvania this year will run upwards of 500, while the kill of legal bucks, with antlers at least 4 inches long (but very few "spike" bucks only one and one-half years old with horns without prongs among them) will run considerably over 4,000†.

The kill of both these animals depends somewhat upon weather conditions, as more bears at least are always killed if we have early tracking snows than if the ground is bare.

In one county of the State bears became somewhat objectionable to the inhabitants because of sheep killed and bee-hives destroyed, and after the passage of the Act of 1919 above mentioned permitting the Game Commission to open counties, the limit of bears for that county was increased to two bears to each hunter. The result was a very decided influx of hunters to that particular county. We know of but one case, however, in 1920, where one man was successful in killing two bears.

FRIENDS DEFEND BLACK BEAR.

Because of lack of tracking snow the results obtained under such special action of the Game Commission were insufficient to meet the demands of the residents of said county, and a bill was introduced in the last Legislature by interested parties and passed to the Governor attempting to remove all protection from bears in affected counties for a period of two years upon petition from 200 residents. In connection with this proposed legislation, Col. Henry W. Shoemaker, a prominent traveler, author and naturalist, in his book on "The Black Bear of Pennsylvania," said:

"An animal of such unique and curious interest deserves protection, and it is to be regretted that selfish minded persons seek to use him to divert attention from the depredations made on live-stock by half wild, unlicensed dogs. Pennsylvania set a noteworthy example to the whole world of sport by protecting bears and forbidding the use of steel traps and pens. This law was passed at a time when the black bear of Pennsylvania was on the verge of extinction from wholesale trapping at all times of the year * * * In some instances the sheep had been killed and carried over high fences by human marauders.

*Male deer of all ages—the first year for the killing of bucks only in Pennsylvania.

**First season trapping was prohibited and number limited to one to each person.

†The 1921 kill of bears was 510, and the kill of deer was 4840, of which 639 were spikes, 796 two points to one antler, 1248 three points to one antler, and 2157 with four points, and larger, to one antler.

* * * It seems a pity that an animal so picturesque in appearance, so grotesque in its habits, and as great a source of sport should have so many enemies; some of our mountain people are still in a tribal state, and the old desire to kill off everything still lurks in their breasts. * * * The bear deserves all the protection he can get, in Pennsylvania, in the South, in the West, to furnish sport for young manhood, amusement for childhood, and reflection for old age—he is an ally of all that is quaint and curious in the life of the forest. Bear hunting is a noble pastime if pursued according to sporting rules, and all are invigorated and strengthened by pitting human skill against such a sagacious monster. * * * It is hoped that hunters will not wage any systematic warfare on bears, either in fact or by propaganda, and that the present wise game laws protecting them will hold in force indefinitely."

Apparently there are many sportsmen in Pennsylvania who agree thoroughly with Col. Shoemaker in the foregoing quotation.

Governor William C. Sproul when vetoing the bill above referred to among other things said:

"The bill is directly contrary to the general policy of this State with reference to game. No reason appears why, upon a small petition, which might be the result of the whimsical energy of any one, all the bears in a county shall be ruthlessly destroyed. The black and brown bears of Pennsylvania are generally harmless and inoffensive. They are often called 'the clowns of the woods,' and to thus give a few citizens the right to exterminate them in an entire county would be deplorable."

In an effort to help relieve the situation in the county in which most of the trouble was occurring, the Game Commission under the provisions of the Act of 1919 above referred to, during the season of 1921 removed the bag limit from bears entirely in that county, also again permitted the use of log pens in taking bears.

STOCKING WITH BLACK BEARS.

To further relieve the situation the Game Commission took up a work that had, I believe, never before been attempted anywhere in the United States, viz., the trapping of bears in log pens for stocking purposes in sections of the State where in years gone by they were a part of the fauna of such territory and furnished splendid sport. In addition to the Game Commission arranging to trap bears, residents of the county were offered \$25.00 for each bear trapped, although but little interest was displayed in such offer except where representatives of the Department assisted in constructing the pens. The Game Commission trapped and removed—some being roped after trapping and led out of the forest single-handed by our trapping expert—to two of our game refuges in the Southwestern part of the State, a total of nine bears, which this season were difficult to trap because the supply of food during the late summer months in the shape of berries was far greater than usual, during which time baiting to pens was almost impossible, and as bears are great wanderers, immediately after the berry crops were over the bears apparently drifted out of that county in large numbers to the surrounding counties in search of other food. On November 1st when our bear season opened, thousands of sportsmen swarmed to that

territory to hunt, many under the impression bears were as easily located and killed as rabbits, and it is reported that most of the bears left in the county were either killed or driven to surrounding territory. Recent reports indicate that many more bears are being killed in territory surrounding the county where most of the trouble was experienced than in the county in question. Some of those not killed will probably return to their native heath if food conditions are sufficiently favorable and the army of hunters not too persistent in their efforts, but strange to say it is reported many of the residents of the county deserted by the bears due to annoyance by excessive numbers of sportsmen and shortage of food are now disposed to request the Game Commission to rescind their action practically removing protection from bears in that county, even though some slight damage may be done, because it is already easily apparent that a scarcity of bears also means a scarcity of sportsmen who must be housed, equipped, fed, guided, etc. Whether additional bears will be trapped for stocking purposes will depend largely upon conditions next spring and early summer.

From estimates made in various parts of the State, 40,000 sportsmen enjoyed a bear hunt in Pennsylvania this year, and Pennsylvanians certainly recommend *Ursus Americanus* as a worthy game animal deserving of proper protection wherever range, cover, and food conditions are at all suitable. The bears of many States, could they speak, paraphrasing the words of the immortal Patrick Henry, I am sure would say: "Give me protection or give me Pennsylvania." I thank you.

4312-2-1-22

