

I wish to address S.258, the bill that would change the mission, and make up of the Fish, and Wildlife Board, and disallow certain methods of coyote hunting. First, just a few facts that are easily proven if you doubt me. Under the present definition of the mission of the Fish and Wildlife Board we have seen the stability, and population of all species that the Department is responsible for overseeing steady, and in a lot of cases expanding. I would point to bears and coyotes. In 1975, the bear population was estimated by the Vt. F&W Department at around 2,000, to the present number of between 7,000 to 8,500. Coyotes, the non native, some would say invasive species, have gone from non-existent in the 1940s to a steady, manageable population. According to the Vt. F&W. Department "***The population of eastern coyotes in Vermont fluctuates between 1,300 and 3,000 in the winter months and 3,300 to 5,000 during the spring, summer, and fall pup-rearing period***". The deer herd has been between 128,000, to 140,000 since 2019. The State of Vermont probably has a bigger fluctuation in the numbers of the human population, percentage wise, than deer. Of course anybody wanting to be disingenuous could include animals like Moose, Lynx, and Spruce Grouse which are living at the extreme southern edge of their comfort zone, and as such will never have large numbers in Vermont. These same disingenuous people could (do) also say that "hunters" have caused the collapse of certain species, even though "sport hunting" has **never** led to a species decline. On the other hand we most definitely can say that hunter dollars have contributed to saving, recovery, and reintroduction of quite a few species. Do you think that Turkeys, Peregrine Falcons, Bald Eagles, Ospreys, Loons, and Fishers would have the numbers that they now have without sportsmen, and women's license, and Pittman/Robertson, Dingell/Johnson tax money? Right now there is an effort to restore Pine Martens to areas that they historically inhabited. (another animal at the extreme southern edge of it's range) Do you think this money comes from Protect Our Wildlife ? No, it comes from license fees sportsmen and women's pay to the Fish and Wildlife Dept. ! Groups like POW spend the money that their "supporters" send them on lobbyists that are good at running their mouths, and greasing the skids of those who are useful to them. I can guarantee you that if one of these "animal rights" groups claims to have done anything to benefit an entire species of animals, that if you were to do the investigatory due diligence, you would find a Fish, and Wildlife Department, and sportsmen and women did the heavy lifting. In closing, why would anybody want to "fix" something that is (to say the least) not broken ? Please vote against this bill and allow this healthy relationship that has been fostered between the Vt. F&W Department and the Board to continue it's successful management of these renewable natural resources.

Sincerely,

Pat Finnie