

m 12/6/83

William Parsons, Chief,
Law Enforcement Division,
Nevada Department of Wildlife,
P. O. Box 10678,
Reno, Nevada 89520

Dear Mr. Parsons,

December 6, 1983

This letter is to serve as a complaint against the trapper who identifies his/her traps with the inscription NV 38. It is the belief of Ria Katz and I that this person has been trapping Bobcats in the Fox Range for at least a month, well in advance of the opening of the trapping season for Bobcats on December 10, 1983.

About one month ago, I spoke in person to one of your staff, at your office, to inform him that I had found two Bobcat traps in the Fox Range. I had disabled both traps to obtain the trap identification number which was NV 38, and which was reported to your staff person. I also provided the exact location of the trap sites which I had visited two days before.

I never received any followup to my verbal complaint, nor did I make inquiry.

Today, Ria Katz and I made a repeat visit to the same location in the Fox Range. We found five active Bobcat sets, all of which were disabled by us, and all of which contained the identification NV 38. Two of the trap sites showed fresh blood stains. None contained Bobcats. Two traps had lures. All had constrictions constructed of rocks and sagebrush branches. All were in rock ledges with overhangs except for one which was under a juniper tree near a stream. Other undiscovered traps may exist since our search time was relatively brief.

The location of the trap sites is on the north side of the Fox Range, approximately 20 miles from Sand Pass. Specifically, the main access road is traveled

18.3 miles from its origin just below Sand Pass. At that point, an easily visible, smaller, access road leaves the main road at a left-hand bend in the road, and proceeds towards the first few of several small canyons exiting the Fox Range. This road is taken about 1.5 miles to its end.

The first trap site which I discovered last month, and which we found again today, is beneath the good-sized juniper tree closest to the mouth of the third canyon. This canyon is easily recognized by the large rock buttress which forms most of the right face of the canyon mouth.

The trap site consisted of a trap placed at the center of a constriction of sagebrush and rocks, with a lure comprised of a flat egg-shaped rock wrapped in aluminum foil suspended from a tree branch above the trap by fish line. The lure was discarded across the nearby creek, but the trap was left at the site in an exposed, disabled condition.

The second trap site was midway up the left face of the next canyon to the west, at the very mouth of the canyon, where a rock wrapped in aluminum foil dangled, easily visible, above the trap site which was nestled beneath a prominent overhang on a sandy ledge. The trap was at the center of a large constriction of rocks and sagebrush. The lure was creatively arranged with fishline running through two staples imbedded in the rocks, and ultimately attached to the trap itself. The site was photographed.

The lure is still in place, deceptively attached to the staples, such that its original position is unchanged. The trap, and the drag rock to which it was attached, somehow fell down the hill directly below the trap site for a distance of 30-40 feet.

The third trap site is, perhaps, 200 feet inside the mouth of that same canyon, on the right side above a small dam of rocks. It was a simple arrangement, with

a piece of sagebrush serving as a drag, and with the trap buried in the dry dirt beneath a nice overhang. No lure was present. However, bloodstains are visible. The trap is lying in place but disabled. The wire on the sagebrush drag worked loose during our photo session and is no longer present.

The fourth and fifth trap sites are a few feet outside the mouth of this same canyon under an easily observed overhang to the right of the mouth. One trap was placed under the overhang in such a way that Ria had some difficulty, short of crawling in the prone position, in approaching the trap site. It was attached to a drag rock and placed at the center of a box constructed to four rocks.

The fifth trap site was, again, of the sagebrush, rock constriction model. However, the trap was visible and sprung, with blood stains near the trap.

Of the last two, one trap is still at the site. The other is in the immediate vicinity but may require some directions from us as to its specific location.

We believe that these circumstances, which could easily be verified if acted upon promptly, show a gross and flagrant violation of your trapping regulations. This complaint is offered in the same spirit which prompted the Nevada Department of Wildlife to establish its "Hotline" for the reporting of game violations.

Furthermore, in view of the fact that the Nevada Department of Wildlife has consistently refused to establish quotas and other restrictive measures to limit the killing of furbearers (particularly the Bobcat) but has, instead, insisted that manipulation of season length is sufficient, this type of violation (trapping before the season opens) could, on a large scale, place your "management" strategy at risk. If one is successful in starting early, can others be far behind? What happens if and when further shortening of the season becomes necessary?

The hardest questions, however, have been saved for last:

1. Was the original verbal complaint of a month ago followed up by the Nevada Department of Wildlife? If not, why not?
2. If there was a followup, was a citation or reprimand issued? If not, why not?
3. If there was a followup, and if the trapper was advised of the violation, did the Nevada Department of Wildlife conduct a subsequent visit (as we did) to check on compliance? If not, why not?
4. If there was a followup, and if the trapper was advised about the infraction, and if he/she agreed to comply, and if he/she is again in flagrant violation, does this not suggest a degree of recalcitrance that demands response? What action will the Nevada Department of Wildlife take, in the face of two identical violations of the same important regulation in the space of one month (assuming the above to be true)?

While we believe and hope that the Nevada Department of Wildlife should address this matter, we remain unconvinced that the Department has the stomach to pursue trapping violations, especially since it has apparently been unable to convince the judges that its personnel know the difference between a Bobcat set and a Coyote set whenever a trapper is brought into court. We may wish to try ourselves by filing a complaint through the Washoe County District Attorney. Please provide us with the name and address of trapper NV 38, as well as any other information which the District Attorney would find helpful in processing the complaint.

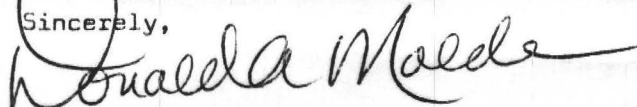
Finally, we urge you, in light of the preceding paragraph, to conduct an investigation of our allegations before December 10, 1983. Clearly, any investigation after that date will not be helpful to you, to us, or to the Washoe County District Attorneys Office.

To expedite your investigation, Ria Katz would be most willing to accompany

your staff to the area. She can be reached at 972-6566.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donald A. Molde". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Donald A. Molde, M.D.

755 Forest Street,

Reno, Nevada 89509

P.S. If your investigation shows these allegations to be correct, would you not then have probable cause to conduct a search of the premises of trapper NV 38? This violation, if true, may have resulted in a "loss" of several thousand dollars of wildlife to the citizens of this State.

cc Ria Katz
Rose Strickland
Mills Lane
Stewart White
Marv Einerwold