



10 April 2023

Re: Legislative Document 814

Dear Senator LaFontaine, Representative Landry, and members of the Inland Fisheries & Wildlife Committee:

On behalf of Safari Club International (SCI), I write opposition to LD 814 which would reduce the current year-round coyote season by more than half and significantly hamstring the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's (DIFW) ability to appropriately manage coyote populations. SCI is dedicated to protecting the freedom to hunt and promoting wildlife conservation worldwide and, being so, we strongly oppose this bill.

SCI believes that emotionally based arguments, such as the ones used in support of LD 814, fly in the face of wildlife science, and are arbitrarily used to shut down active management of predator species. The experts at the DIFW are best suited to make on the ground management decisions and these trained, technical professionals understand how respective landscape level changes can occur based off various management decisions.

Based off the 2020 DIFW Furbearer Management Plan, the vast majority of Mainers support active predator management and specifically active management of coyotes. Restricting active management of coyotes for 6 months (the time of year which could have the greatest potential impact on coyote populations) will only allow the growing coyote population to expand further. This expansion will have negative impacts on various game species, livestock, and Maine's economy while also setting the stage for increased human-wildlife conflict. Allowing for the year-round harvest of coyotes is one tool in the toolbox for DIFW to manage this species; Forty-five other states also incorporate this management tool.

Properly managing coyote abundance, including through year-round hunting, is important for ecosystem management. As mentioned, the growing number of predator species in Maine – especially coyotes – will continue to significantly impact game species. As you know, Maine enjoys a rich hunting heritage for a variety of game species. Unfortunately, as coyote populations expand their negative impact on whitetail deer and small game populations is noticeable and the resulting opportunities to pursue these game animals is lessened. This, in turn, directly reduces the economic impact of hunting in Maine as well as funding for DIFW through the sale of hunting licenses and permits.

SCI believes that sound science-based conservation involving hunting as the primary management tool, while maximizing opportunities for all huntable species is necessary to the long-term health of wildlife. Hunters have long paid the way for conservation, both game and non-game wildlife, and maximizing opportunity for hunting is also key to long-term funding for all conservation.



Thank you for the opportunity to comment on LD 814.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sven K. Lindquist". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Sven Lindquist
President
Safari Club International