STANDARD FORM NO. 64

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Mr. Edwin H. Chandler, Refuge Manager, Missisquoi N. W. Refuge, Swanton, Vermont

DATE: November 20, 1959

FROM : Acting Regional Refuge Supervisor, Boston, Massachusetts

SUBJECT: MANAGEMENT - Animals (Trapping Program 1959-60) - Missisquoi

In connection with your memorandum of November 18, I realize that a muskrat house count could not properly be conducted until the marshes are frozen.

Since your trapping of muskrats is usually carried out in the spring, we will appreciate having a report of your house count and population estimate along with your recommendations for trapping as soon as it is available.

Please do not overlook the need for maintaining up-to-date estimates of all fur animal populations for inclusion in form NR-4 with your September - December Narrative Report.

Merton Radway

Merton F. Radway

cc: Central Office

STANDARD FORM NO. 64

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Mr. Edwin Chandler, Refuge Manager, Missisquoi N. W. Refuge, Swanton, Vermont

DATE: February 4, 1960

FROM : Regional Refuge Supervisor, Boston, Mass.

SUBJECT: MGT.-Animals (Fur Trapping Program, 1959-60 season) - Missisquoi Refuge

We are in accord with your recommendations with regard to a trapping program for the 1959-60 season, contained in your memorandum of February 2.

The statistical data you furnished would prompt me to believe that there are more contributing factors governing the muskrat populations, some of which may be controlled by some phase of management.

It would be interesting to know how our muskrat problem on the refuge compares with similar problem outside the refuge.

Arthur F. Miller

Arthur F. Miller

cc: Central Office
w/cy memo 2/2

Regional Director, Boston, Mass. February 2, 1960

Missisquoi Refuge, Swanton, Vermont

MANAGEMENT - Animals (Trapping Program, 1959-60) - Missisquoi

Reference is made to correspondence between this office and Mr. Radway regarding recommendations for or against a trapping program to be conducted here at Missisquoi this season. As authorized, I have waited until we were able to complete our house counts on the marshes; this could only be accomplished after sufficient ice was present.

This winter's muskrat house count has been completed and the results are as follows:

Unit	Houses
1 (Goose Bay)	33
2 (Big Marsh, east)	28
3 (Big Marsh, west)	33
4 (Patrick Marsh)	37
Total	131

This total of 131 houses compares with a total of 853 houses a year ago. Those houses present this winter are much smaller than those of last year and probably do not contain more than 3 'rats per house. Undoubtedly much of this decline can be traced directly to high and widely fluctuating water levels late this past fall during that time when the bulk of house building would normally occur. It is suspected that some 'rats moved back into the flooded timber, but it is quite doubtful that we have anywhere near as many muskrats as we did last year. Some slack may have been taken up by the dikes and nesting islands, but evidence does not show much more than normal use of these areas. Last year our population was estimated to be about 3400; this year it probably does not exceed 500.

As we are still in the process of developing our impoundments- which is where our muskrats are most plentiful- we have been relying upon some natural vegetation control by muskrats. It does not appear to be wise at this time to initiate a trapping program on a share basis. Some control trapping by refuge personnel may be warranted, but as we expect to continue dike construction this coming year, this may not be necessary.

We continue to have a fairly sizeable population of predator species- red fox and raccoon. It is expected that we will experience more trouble in the future with foxes as most of the commercial turkey growers in this area are going out of business. These growers have had predator problems right along and turkeys have acted as a buffer for waterfowl. How acute this problem will be in another year or two is problematical. We have had continual trouble with foxes and raccoons on the island, especially in regard to penned Canada Geese. We have effected some controls, but have not reduced their populations to any extent. Tentative arrangements have been made with the Branch of Predator and Rodent Control, thru District Agent Fred Courtsal, to conduct a control program this spring. Also, we have received 25 new No. 2 fox traps which should aid us in our own control programs.

Beavers, while present, do not impose any great threat to our area; most beaver damage which occurs on the refuge is the work of "off-refuge" animals. No trapping is recommended for this coming season (Beaver season not yet set).

The season for muskrats is from October 25, 1959 to April 19, 1960, inclusive.

Recommendations

Muskrat: No share trapping; maintenance trapping by refuge personnel may be necessary, but this is doubtful.

Fox: Continue and expand control program by use of refuge personnel and in cooperation with Branch of Predator and Rodent Control.

Raccoon: Same as for Fox.

Beaver: No trapping recommended this year.

Other: No trapping recommended for Mink, Otter, Skunk, etc.

Edwin H. Chandler
Refuge Manager

Regional Director, Boston, Mass. November 18, 1959

Missisquoi Refuge, Swanton, Vermont

MANAGEMENT - Animals (Trapping Program, 1959-60) - Missisquoi

With reference to Mr. Miller's memo of November 10, 1959 regarding recommendations for or against a trapping program during the 1959-60 season, the following is submitted:

As you know, we have no means of evaluating our muskrat population this early in the season; rats are only beginning to build houses. Normally, we cannot conduct a census until after the marsh freezes up, usually in December. Last year, we were able to make a house count on December 9th; some years, not until January.

At the present time, this area is experiencing abnormally high water levels as a result of heavy rains. Consequently, the marshes, lake, and river have been fluctuating in levels; this is a further deterrent to house building. This may affect our rat population by permitting or encouraging an influx to our impoundments. Since it is best to make our recommendations on the basis of house counts, I do not feel that I can recommend either for or against a trapping program at this time.

However, if we feel that a trapping program is warranted, it would be best to conduct it during the spring, even though the time during which open water is present is short. Fall trapping is not recommended for the reason that our waterfowl concentrate in the areas inhabited by muskrats, i.e., Big Marsh Slough and Goose Bay Pools. Winter trapping is usually precluded by ice up to 36" in depth, with several feet of snow and ice layers above that. We may have had a winter kill as a result of last year's ice and snow conditions, but this cannot be ascertained at this time.

Therefore, I should like to request that any recommendations for or against a trapping program on Missisquoi be postponed until after our marshes freeze and we have had an opportunity to make a house count.

Edwin H. Chandler

Edwin H. Chandler
Refuge Manager

MEMORANDUM

TO : Refuge Managers (indicated below) DATE: November 10, 1959

FROM : Regional Refuge Supervisor, Boston, Massachusetts

SUBJECT: MGT. - Animals (Fur Trapping, 1959-60 Season) - Refuges

At this time we wish to call your attention to the preparation and submission of your proposals with regard to a trapping program at your refuge for the coming season.

If you do not plan to conduct trapping, let us have a statement to that effect. Be sure that your recommendations either for or against a trapping program are accompanied by adequate justification.

Arthur F. Miller

Arthur F. Miller

Copies to:

Bombay Hook (& Killcohook)
Brigantine
✓Missisquoi
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