

**Wolf Pup, Defined. Bounty, for Wolf Pup and Grown Wolf.**

The bounty of fifteen dollars for slaughtered wolves should be allowed and paid by the state only where it happens that the wolf has attained the dimensions contained in the opinion, or has reached the age of puberty.

October 8th, 1913.

Mr. R. N. Hawkins,  
Clerk of State Board of Examiners,  
Helena, Montana.

Dear Sir:

I am in receipt of your letter of even date, wherein you state that you have received a communication from Mr. William Moses, sheriff of Rosebud County, in which he asks as to when a wolf pup may be considered as a grown wolf, or as you propound it:

"When does a wolf pup cease to be a pup?"

You say in your letter that the state is interested in this matter by reason of the fact that in one instance the bounty fixed by law is three dollars and in the other fifteen dollars. In reply to your letter, will say that I have gone carefully over this matter. Chap. 50 of the Session Laws of the Twelfth Legislative Assembly provides in part:

"There shall be paid from the bounty funds of the state for the killing of wild animals inimical to the stock industry, the following bounties: For each grown wolf, fifteen dollars; \* \* \* for each wolf pup, three dollars."

The word "pup," according to Webster, is an abbreviation of the word "puppy," and is defined as "the young of various carnivores."

The word "puppy" is defined by the same author as "the young of a canine animal." If the determination of the question depended solely upon the proper solution of the query as to when a pup ceases to be a pup, I am free to confess that the matter would be most difficult of solution, but reason would lead one to believe that a wolf pup might properly be considered as ceasing to be such when weaned and left to shift for itself by its parents, for being a carnivorous animal, and eking out its existence by preying upon game and domestic animals, it would then commence its work of destruction. Since the end sought to be attained by the bounty law is the annihilation of such animals as are inimical to the livestock industry of this state, it might properly be held that when a wolf pup has been weaned and then killed, and a claim for bounty made under the laws of this state, that the claimant for the services thus rendered ought properly to be paid in the larger sum, but when the law is examined it will be found that the legislature has expressly limited the payment of \$15 bounty to grown wolves alone. In my opinion, therefore, it is idle to speculate as to when a wolf pup ceases to be such, for in any event until such pup becomes a grown wolf, no more than three dollars may be claimed for its destruction.

A question nearly if not quite as difficult of solution presents itself when an endeavor is made to answer the query as to when a wolf is a grown wolf. The Century Dictionary and Encyclopedia defines "grown" as "arrived at full growth of stature." Probably a wolf attains full growth when arriving at the age of puberty. In the third volume of Audubon and Bachman, on Quadrupeds of North America, at page 279, appears an article on the American grey wolf (*Canis Lupus, Griseus*). With regard to its characteristics, it is said that it is about the size of the black and white wolf, broad skull, neck and tail covered with bushy hairs, broad feet, and color, dark brindle grey. The general dimensions are given as follows: Length from point of nose to root of tail, four feet; length of tail, one foot, one inch; length of tail to end of hair, one foot, five inches; height of ear, four inches; breadth of ear, three inches; from point of nose to end of skull, eleven and a half inches; from eye to point of nose, five inches; from shoulder to longest nail, two feet, four inches; longest upper canine tooth, one and a half inches; length of the hair on the back, three to four inches. It is pointed out, however, that these dimensions are not invariable, but generally may be considered as approximately correct. It is said that the animal from which these measurements were made was killed in February, and the animal was, of course, at that time in full winter pelage. The age at which a wolf may be considered as grown is not disclosed, either by this author or by the Encyclopedia Britannica, which I have consulted.

Since it appears by the law that the legislature has left the matter, by the peculiar wording of the statute, open to conjecture, it seems to me, after a full and careful consideration of the matter, that a bounty of fifteen dollars for slaughtered wolves should be

allowed and paid by the state only in such instances where it appears that the dimensions of the slain animal are substantially as those given by Audubom and Bachman, or at least that it be first ascertained that the animal for which bounty is claimed has reached the age of puberty.

Yours very truly,  
D. M. KELLY,  
Attorney General.