

I recognized this same appearance in Cheetahs who run down their prey in the open. The bobcat sniffed around in the path before disappearing into the woods on the other side as silently as it had appeared.

For some reason associated with a primitive atavistic competitive instinct or with self-preservation or with an attitude that brooks no peer men have warred against bobcats nearly as intensively as they have against wolves. I am not at all fond of domestic cats, but this feeling does not spill over to color my attitude towards the wild felines. Like wolves, bobcats are classed as vicious animals. Viciousness is a peyorative epithet applied to describe the natural predatory way of life as well as the self-defensive behavior of any animal that resists being killed by man or his trained dogs. A creature that fights for its life is not deserving -- by this characterization -- of respect and protection or even of the right to live by the only means to which it is adapted, and according to this point of view should be exterminated. Recent studies on wolf behavior have established beyond dispute that far from being vicious, ruthless killers they instinctively practice a thrifty exploitation of their available food resources, killing no more than they require and culling from the herd of prey species the weakest and most handicapped members. If the term viciousness is applicable at all to predatory mammalian interspecific relationships it would most appropriately be used to characterize the behavior of man himself -- the hunter both amateur and professional

who kills for pleasure or for hire. It is the hunter who condemns extempore the wolf as a ruthless blood lust killer although the description fits more appropriately his own conduct. What could be more blood thirsty, and unprovoked than the "sport" of pursuing and shooting wolves and polar bears from an airplane, or for that matter running deer and elk to exhaustion with snowmobiles? And what does man do with his prey? At most he removes a part of the animal as a trophy of his prowess and leaves the carcass to rot. But should wolves or bobcats do the same -- behavior imputed but unsubstantiated -- they are reprehended for trespassing on man's prerogatives and condemned to death for displaying instinctively the very same proclivities its judges themselves exhibit. This is called sportsmanship. Sportsmanship which once meant even-handed division of opportunities between contesting parties, to the hunter has come to imply a situation in which the advantage is vastly over-weighted on the side of the sportsman with his mechanical equipment, highpower rifle, telescopic sight, and walky-talky. The sole recourse for his prey is in flight; and when the prey is a carnivore, cornered, exhausted, unable to flee, and turns to face its pursuer in a last desperate fight for its life, it still is destroyed by remote control. The savagery is all the hunter's.

The unexpected also happens while photographing birds. On June 3rd, 1948 I had set up my camera and flash equipment by a woodhouse's Jay's nest which was built in a pinon pine near