



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Secretary
Press Service



RELEASED FOR PUBLICATION, MONDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 13, 1924:

KAIBAB DEER HERD MUST
BE REDUCED IMMEDIATELY

Immediate reduction of the deer herd on the Kaibab National Forest in northern Arizona is strongly urged by the special committee appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to study and report on the conditions existing on the Grand Canyon Game Preserve, announces the Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

The special committee is composed of John B. Burnham, chairman, representing the American Game Protective Association; Heyward Cutting, of the Boone and Crockett Club; T. Gilbert Pearson, of the Audubon Society and the National Parks Association; and T. W. Tomlinson, of the American National Livestock Association.

This committee has made its report to the Secretary of Agriculture following a personal inspection of the Kaibab Plateau on which the Grand Canyon Game Preserve was established in 1906 by President Roosevelt. This area also forms part of the Kaibab National Forest and is under the supervision of the Forest Service.

Upwards of 30,000 head of mule deer are now on the Kaibab Plateau, according to the report of the committee. This is fully twice as many deer as the vegetation can support and the entire herd is in imminent danger of extinction through starvation unless reduced to a safety number.

Moreover, the condition of what forage is still to be found on the area is far below normal and several years will be required to grow new forage crops before the region can support more than 15,000 head of deer in addition to the scattering small herds of domestic livestock owned by settlers living in and around the Kaibab Forest. The grazing of livestock on this area has been sharply curtailed for several years, the Forest Service this year having issued permits only to those few settlers whose livelihood depended on being allowed to use the Government range. This is in harmony with the

committee's report which states that due to the different foraging habits of livestock and deer, a complete elimination of the former would not meet the crisis facing the latter.

The Forest Service has already announced its policy of giving away as many deer as possible to all applicants who are willing to pay the cost of crating and getting the deer to the nearest railway shipping point, estimated at \$35 per animal plus express charges to destination. The committee recommends that if an insufficient number of deer is taken off the area by this method then hunting be allowed under proper regulations.

As a last resort the committee concedes that it may be necessary for the Department of Agriculture to officially kill enough of the herd to prevent the possible extinction of the remainder through starvation.

Secretary Wallace and Chief Forester Greeley have announced their intention to closely follow the recommendations made by the committee. In a letter to John B. Burnham, chairman of the special committee, Secretary Wallace said:

"I am distressed to learn that the danger of the destruction of this splendid herd of about 30,000 head of deer due to congestion and overstocking of the range, which was reported as a possibility nearly two years ago by officers of the Biological Survey and the Forest Service, is now actually imminent, unprecedented drought conditions having unexpectedly hastened the crisis. The steps which your committee recommends be taken to avoid this calamity meet with my general approval.

"If the public response to the offer of free disposal of deer is not sufficient to meet the situation adequately, I have instructed the Forest Service to take such further practical steps, consistent with your recommendations, as may be possible within the limited time at their disposal."