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CONTROL OF PREDATORY ANIMALS TO BE AIDED BY 10-YEAR PROGRAM

The ten-year program of predatory-animal and rodent control, authorized by the last Congress will make more effective the control work as already organized, rather than stimulate new lines, according to officials of the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Biological Survey activity in predator and rodent control, it is pointed out, has been encouraged by State and other cooperating agencies which have provided funds far in excess of Federal appropriations.

Cooperative control operations have been dependent upon annual appropriations. Congress now puts the work on a long-term basis, and authorizes appropriations of \$1,000,000 annually. The increased appropriations, however, can not become available before July 1, 1932, because the last Congress adjourned before the increased funds could be made available.

On Federal lands the ten-year program contemplates continued cooperation by the Biological Survey with the Forest Service, the Indian Service, and with other agencies. The national forests include more than 16,000,000 acres of lands, infested with rodents, principally prairie dogs and ground squirrels. Prairie dogs destroy from 20 to 80 per cent of the succulent forage grasses near their towns. The ten-year program plans the eradication of prairie dogs where they are seriously competing with livestock.

In many of the Eastern States, also, increased efforts will be exerted for the control of rodents. Additional funds will permit Biological Survey leadership in organized work for the control of such rodents as cotton rats in the South, of pine mice and pocket gophers, and of the common brown rat, which is probably the most destructive of all animals.

Coyotes breed in the national forests and on the public domain. Control operations have been limited by current appropriations. The ten-year program contemplates adequate control, so as to reduce to the minimum the infestation of adjacent stock-grazing areas. At present, satisfactory control of the large predators on livestock ranges is not possible.

The Biological Survey strives to make clear that the established policy of the bureau in this economic field is one of control rather than complete eradication of any species. "The Survey," as Stanley P. Young, in charge of the bureau's Division of Predatory-Animal and Rodent Control, said recently, "is not embarked upon a general extermination program, but with every proper consideration for conservation interests it has as its objective in this field the adequate local control of injurious mammals. Only by such control can the burdensome losses suffered by farmers and stock raisers be reduced to the minimum and beneficial forms of wild life protected from undue destruction by their natural enemies. Though this policy in some cases may mean local extirpation of harmful forms, it will not result in the complete eradication of any species that adds interest to the wild when far removed from industrial operations."

A recent publication of the Biological Survey states briefly the necessity and legal authorization for predatory-animal and rodent control, and consolidates in a few pages the fundamental instructions issued to control workers and the safeguards that they should observe for the protection of useful wild species, domestic stock, and human beings. Copies of Miscellaneous Publication No. 115-MP, on the control of rodents and predators, may be had on request addressed to the Office of Information, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.