



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION
PRESS SERVICE



WASHINGTON, D. C.

Release - Immediate

August 23, 1933.

BIG GAME HOLDING ITS OWN
IN NATIONAL FOREST RETREATS

Big game is more than holding its own in the National Forests, according to figures issued today by the Forest Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture. The annual game "census", based on estimates for the year 1932, gives a total for the 148 National Forests of 1,163,142 big game animals. Although this figure was slightly lower than the total for 1931 of 1,175,955, game animals on the National Forests are estimated to have increased 40 percent since 1926.

The greater part of the big game in the Western States is to be found in the National Forests. According to the Forest Service, 75 percent of the total western big game range lies within the National Forests.

Although under protection and planned management, wild life is being gradually increased in certain States and within the National Forests, wild life in general has decreased and is still decreasing on much of the forest land of the country. In the recent "Copeland Report" to the Senate, the Forest Service recommended a coordinated program of wild life management and land management looking to the maintenance of wild life on the principle of sustained yield. Several requirements were listed:

1. Provision of adequate areas for wild life, and unification of wild life and forest land management.

2. Provision for adequate public hunting grounds. The National Forests, the bulk of which are in the Western States, are the only existing large-scale public hunting grounds.

3. Establishment of non-partisan State game commissions in all States.

4. Basic wild life research.

5. Public education to obtain a general recognition of the values of wild life as a forest land resource and to promote good sportsmanship.

According to the estimates of game on the National Forests, deer decreased from 969,330 in 1931, to 946,546 in 1932, carrying with this decline the slight decrease in the total of all big game. Forage conditions and more intensive hunting are believed to have temporarily halted the increase in deer. Antelope, brown and black bears, elk, and moose, under game and forest management have shown consistent gains for two years.

Grizzly bears, including the big Alaska brown bear, are estimated at 5,164, against 3,747 in the National Forests the preceding year. Excluding Alaska, however, the grizzlies have dwindled in number from 747 to 664. They have so decreased in the West that in several States extinction of the species seems near. National Forests in Montana lead with 421.

Black and brown bears, the playboys of the forests, have increased from 50,596 to 52,331. There are 9,961 in California National Forests, around 5,000 to 8,000 each in Washington, Oregon, Montana, Idaho and Alaska and 1,500 to 2,900 each in Colorado, Minnesota and Wyoming. The White Mountain Forest in New Hampshire claims 780. Florida National Forests show heavy gains with 255, Pennsylvania heavy losses with 125 bears remaining in the Alleghany National Forest. North Carolina Forests have 310, Virginia 495, West Virginia about 300.

Elk are gaining in the National Forests of the West, but only about 60 remain in the forests of the East. Altogether the Forest Service accounts for 103,856 of them, against 96,905 in 1931. Moose are holding their own, with 7,854 head, chiefly in Minnesota, Oregon, Washington, Montana and Wyoming. Nearly half of the 21,736 mountain goats range in Alaska with numbers also in Washington, Montana, and Idaho Forests. Mountain sheep are most numerous in the National Forests of Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho and Alaska, in order given, and number altogether about 12,500.

Deer, interesting vast numbers of hunters, have had particular attention in Forest Service game management plans. Removals have been made from several over-stocked areas. Several hundred were removed from the Pisgah National Forest in North Carolina last winter by regulated hunting. In other National Forests restocking is encouraged. California National Forests still lead with 278,660 head. In New Mexico, a rapid gain last year brought the deer population above 100,000, Oregon and Arizona Forests have over 80,000 each, and Utah, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska Forests over 50,000 each. The Lake States National Forests now have 23,595 deer, showing tremendous gains in two years. In the Eastern and Southern States there are some 30,000, the bulk of them in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Arkansas, and Florida National Forests.