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BIG GAME IN NATIONAL FORESTS
INCREASED 10 PERCENT IN YEAR

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The big game in the National Forests -- bear, deer, elk, moose, mountain sheep and goats -- are more than holding their own.

"Census" estimates on big game animals just released by the Forest Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, show an increase of some 250,000 in population at the start of 1936 -- a clear gain of 10 percent over the number recorded January 1, 1935. They number, altogether, 1,523,000.

Antelopes, grizzly bears, deer, and mountain goats added appreciably to their numbers this year; elk, moose, and mountain sheep dropped off slightly, although of the latter there are some six percent more than in 1933. Despite the rigorous conditions under which they live, and the toll taken upon them annually by predatory animals, mountain goats made a nice comeback from their heavy drop in 1933-34.

Black and brown bears dropped about one and one-half percent. These animals are present in the National Forests of 25 states, although the California National Forests are home to more than a fifth of all the black and brown bears. Alaska National Forests report some 4,500 of the big Alaska brown bear. The largest number of grizzlies are in Montana and Wyoming Forests.

Next to deer, elk are the most widespread big game animals in the National Forests. In some cases airplane counts have been used in estimating the numbers present. A flight over the Cache National Forest, in Utah, last year permitted a count of 674 of the animals against the snow-covered backgrounds.

Poachers in Minnesota, and a woodtick disease, are believed to be mainly responsible for the decrease in moose.

Largest counts of each species include Wyoming's 2,200 moose, 3,800 mountain sheep, and 34,500 elk; Alaska's 5,900 mountain goats and 4,500 grizzly bears; California's 271,000 deer and 12,000 brown and black bears; and Arizona's 5,400 antelope.

In practicing game management, the Forest Service holds to its general policy of "sustained yield," of all forest resources, of which big game is an important one. The objective is to develop and maintain as much wildlife, in coordination with other forest values, as the Forests can support. Lack of adequate winter range within the National Forests is a limiting factor in the case of certain big game animals, notably elk, where some herds have exceeded the capacity of their local habitat. Necessary measures for reduction of elk population in certain over-populated areas are at present being agreed upon by various interested agencies. The U. S. Biological Survey and state authorities cooperate with the Forest Service.

In a few instances where there is conflict between game and domestic animals in the use of national forest range, the Forest Service is attempting to adjust this on the basis of highest social and economic values. In general, however, little conflict of this kind occurs, since some 60,000,000 acres of suitable game range in the National Forests is not allotted for the grazing of any domestic stock.

Many game refuges have been designated within the National Forests. These are aiding in the reestablishment of depleted species in many areas. On other National Forest areas, hunting is allowed under state game laws, in enforcement of which the Forest Service aids. The Forest Service has the cooperation of the

Biological Survey in technical game management studies; range conditions are carefully checked and if, as sometimes happens, there is serious over-population of certain ranges by big game, it is remedied either by transplanting of game or by regulated hunting.

Estimated big game population of the National Forests, by species, as of January 1, 1936, is as follows:

Antelope	16,500
Black or brown bear	55,000
Grizzly, (including Alaska brown bear)	5,270
Deer	1,291,300
Elk	117,900
Moose	6,180
Mountain goats	18,500
Mountain sheep	12,900