

# INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS

## United States Department of Agriculture

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### FIVE BIG GAME ANIMALS REPORTED FOR EACH SQUARE MILE OF NATIONAL FORESTS

An average of more than five big game animals for every square mile within National Forest boundaries is reported by the Forest Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, in its annual big game estimates for 1939. The estimates were made during the past winter by forest rangers and other officers using skis, snow shoes, airplanes, canoes, horses, or any other means of transportation which would take them into the haunts of the big game.

The total of big game in the National Forests of the United States as of January 1, 1939, including Alaska National Forests, was 1,842,000 - an increase of 6 percent over the 1,740,000 reported for 1938. The two Alaskan National Forests reported 58,000 big game animals on January 1, 1939. The 1939 big game population nearly trebles that of 1924, when 693,000 big game animals were reported in the National Forests.

"Throughout the entire United States, about one-third of all big game is on National Forests," says Dr. H. L. Shantz, Chief of the Division of Wildlife Management of the Forest Service. "In the Western part of the country, more than three-fourths of the big game animals range on the National Forests for a large part of the year."

Dr. Shantz explained that the Forest Service is cooperating with the Biological Survey and the game departments of the States in developing management plans for the wild herds and flocks which will provide a sustained yield of big game animals, thereby furnishing highest values in sport, recreation and economic benefit to the communities.

"Best results in increasing and maintaining the number and vigor of the big game animals in balance with the food supply seems to be taking place where there

is proper cropping by hunting," said Dr. Shantz. "Sustained yield of big game is an important feature of forest management, as abundant summer feed is found on practically every National Forest."

#### Big Game Increase Since 1924

The Forest Service estimates of 1,784,000 big game animals of all kinds in National Forests of the United States proper include antelope, bear, deer, elk, moose and mountain goats and mountain sheep.

Deer represent the bulk of the big game, numbering 1,546,000 in National Forests of the States or more than three times as many as reports showed in 1924. An additional 39,000 were reported in the Chugach and Tongass National Forests of Alaska on January 1, 1939.

Elk counts in 1939 showed 139,800 animals as compared to 52,600 in 1924. Antelope on National Forests numbered 18,000 in 1939 as compared to a few more than five thousand in 1924, an increase of 268 percent or the greatest of any big game on National Forests.

Black and brown bear have increased to 51,300 in 1939 from 38,700 in 1924. Only 689 grizzlies were reported in the National Forests of the United States, which, however, is about the same number as in 1924.

Moose have increased on the National Forests to 6,660 in 1939 from 4,560 in 1924. Mountain goats in the United States numbered 11,700 as compared to 8,200 in 1924.

Mountain sheep have decreased by about 2,800 since 1924, according to this year's estimates. The animals however showed an increase on 18 National Forests in 1939 as compared to 1938, decreased on 20 National Forests and remained the same on 17 National Forests. The total for 1939 was 8,450. The Forest Service is giving special attention to the status of mountain sheep, as they have been decreasing in number in some areas even when given full protection.

1939 game counts of deer on National Forests by States are as follows:

Alabama	856
Arizona	70,020
Arkansas	4,680
California	318,200
Colorado	117,100
Florida	4,310
Georgia	750
Idaho	93,455
Illinois	25
Louisiana	60
Kentucky	10
Maine	90
Michigan	151,680
Minnesota	77,000
Mississippi	376
Missouri	1,095
Montana	87,755
Nebraska	318
Nevada	15,000
New Hampshire	1,200
New Mexico	72,220
North Carolina	9,350
Oklahoma	350
Oregon	141,860
Pennsylvania	40,000
South Carolina	1,607

South Dakota	6,300	
Tennessee	860	
Texas	2,975	
Utah	115,000	
Vermont	3,700	
Virginia	2,430	
Washington	64,760	
West Virginia	4,770	
Wisconsin	97,864	
Wyoming	<u>38,475</u>	
Total - States		1,546,500
Alaska	<u>38,950</u>	
Total - Alaska		<u>38,950</u>
GRAND TOTAL		1,585,450