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Fish and Wildlife Service, Albert M. Day, Director

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BIG-GAME INVENTORY OF THE UNITED STATES, 1946
Compiled in
Section of Wildlife Investigations on Public Lands
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Annual inventories, by States, of big-game mammals in the United States were compiled by the Bureau of Biological Survey and its successor, the Fish and Wildlife Service from 1937 to 1941. During the war years only one compilation (1943) was made. It is planned to complete the inventories for the missing years and publish a five-year summary 1942-46.

With the exception of the Refuges of the Fish and Wildlife Service, all the data for these inventories are supplied by the various organizations under which they are listed. In other words, the Fish and Wildlife Service simply assembles the figures and should not be assumed to have made any general inventory independently.

Believing that the data could be collected best on a regional basis, the 1946 figures were assembled by the five regional offices of the Fish and Wildlife Service. In each region the estimates were obtained from the Forest Service, Park Service, Office of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service and the State Fish and Game Departments for the lands each covered. The data for military reservations are included with state and private lands. The reports from the regional offices were checked against those available for all the states involved from the central offices of the various federal agencies.

Almost all states now make annual appraisals of their big game populations. These vary from estimates for the state as a whole to definite projects in which well trained personnel sample or count populations. Definite kill figures are now obtained for big game in most states. In many states the figures can be considered as accurate within a small limit of error. Generally the kill figures have a better basis than those for populations.

The figures of 1,000 or above have been rounded to the nearest hundred. With species where only small numbers are concerned it was thought best to show where even a few animals were present. In spite of this, the estimates given should not be considered as exact counts. Wild animals are difficult to count even under ideal conditions and on small areas, so state-wide figures should be regarded as only the best estimates we have and not as accurate to the last animal.

Since the last United States inventory was completed for 1943, the estimated total big game increased from 6,598,422* to 8,240,100 animals in 1946. This amounts to an increase of 25% for the three year period. While the indicated changes in some species with relatively small numbers may not be significant most of them should show true trends. Comparative figures and percentages for the two years are given in Table 18.

Of the total big game 67% was on state and private lands, 28% in National Forests, 3% in Grazing Districts, 1% in National Parks, 1% in Indian Reservations and less than 1% in Fish and Wildlife Service Refuges (which, it should be pointed out, are managed largely for waterfowl, not big game.)

Following are summaries of estimated populations by states and types of ownership for the various big game species, comparison of population changes from 1943-46 and of kill figures by states and species.

*This total was changed from that given in the 1943 Inventory to correct an error in the figure given for the white-tailed deer in Pennsylvania.

ESTIMATED POPULATIONS

TABLE 1.--White-tailed deer (Odocoileus virginianus) and related groups

State	Service refuges	National forests	National parks and monuments	Indian reserva- tions	Grazing districts	State and private lands	Total
Alabama .....	.....	2,500	.....	.....	.....	30,000	32,500
Arizona .....	.....	20,500	350	2,100	1,800	9,300	34,000
Arkansas	4,500	12,100	.....	.....	.....	28,700	45,300
Connecticut .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	6,000	6,000
Delaware	35	.....	.....	.....	.....	100	135
Florida 1/...	1,200	5,500	.....	125	.....	31,600	38,400
Georgia	1,200	4,000	.....	.....	.....	14,000	19,200
Idaho .....	.....	21,800	.....	255	.....	6,500	28,600
Illinois	10	90	.....	.....	.....	5,000	5,100
Indiana .....	.....	105	.....	.....	.....	3,200	3,300
Iowa .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2,000	2,000
Kentucky	1,100	25	12	.....	.....	1,000	2,100
Louisiana ...	478	800	.....	.....	.....	50,000	51,300
Maine	2,500	125	588	.....	.....	300,000	303,200
Maryland	3	.....	.....	.....	.....	1,500	1,500
Massachusetts	12	.....	.....	.....	.....	15,000	15,000
Michigan	450	172,000	.....	250	.....	700,000	872,700
Minnesota ...	1,800	103,000	.....	4,900	.....	500,000	609,700
Mississippi .	100	1,900	.....	.....	.....	19,800	21,800
Missouri	6	10,500	.....	.....	.....	11,500	22,000
Montana	580	25,000	2,200	2,100	2,000	5,600	37,500
Nebraska ....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	200	200
New Hampshire	.....	1,800	.....	.....	.....	56,000	57,800
New Jersey ..	.....	.....	50	.....	.....	29,800	29,900
New Mexico ..	500	10,200	.....	530	3,400	22,000	36,600
New York	60	.....	.....	.....	.....	300,000	300,100
North Carolina	425	6,300	.....	.....	.....	41,500	48,200
North Dakota.	1,800	.....	.....	1,100	.....	12,600	15,500
Ohio .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	8,500	8,500
Oklahoma	734	250	.....	.....	.....	8,500	9,500
Oregon .....	.....	150	.....	.....	.....	350	500
Pennsylvania.	.....	16,000	10	.....	.....	660,000	676,000
Rhode Island.	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	500	500
South Carolina	250	2,400	.....	.....	.....	31,000	33,600
South Dakota.	487	13,000	.....	270	.....	8,600	22,400
Tennessee ...	1	1,800	30	.....	.....	2,800	4,600
Texas	2,800	4,400	350	.....	.....	503,500	511,100
Vermont	15	4,800	.....	.....	.....	70,000	74,800
Virginia	13	16,300	293	.....	.....	30,000	46,600
Washington ..	2,000	11,400	.....	1,800	.....	5,100	20,300
West Virginia	.....	13,500	.....	.....	.....	106,500	120,000
Wisconsin....	5,700	83,000	.....	2,400	.....	700,000	791,100
Wyoming .....	.....	2,500	.....	.....	.....	3,400	5,900
Total ..	28,800	567,700	3,900	15,800	7,200	4,341,600	4,965,000

1/ 175 Sambar deer in addition.

TABLE 2.--Mule deer (Odocoileus hemionus except columbianus)

State	Service refuges	National forests	National parks and monuments	Indian reserva- tions	Grazing districts	State and private lands	Total
Arizona	426	43,500	845	1,500	1,800	2/ 54,300	102,400
California ...	.....	254,000	12,000	2,000	14,200	60,000	342,200
Colorado .....	.....	161,500	500	.....	.....	222,000	384,000
Idaho	17	115,000	35	.....	25,900	3/ 6,000	147,000
Montana	2,300	63,000	900	820	12,500	24,700	104,200
Nebraska	32	350	.....	.....	.....	4,000	4,400
Nevada	1,600	57,000	.....	.....	41,000	13,600	113,200
New Mexico ...	1,200	55,700	600	1,300	15,300	100,000	174,100
North Dakota .	.....	.....	.....	170	.....	590	760
Oregon	700	115,000	50	5,000	20,000	31,900	172,600
South Dakota .	.....	4,200	375	200	.....	2,000	6,800
Texas .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	7,500	7,500
Utah .....	.....	174,000	1,800	2,000	22,200	20,000	220,000
Washington ...	200	53,000	.....	5,500	.....	21,000	79,700
Wyoming	15	58,000	907	5,000	24,500	60,600	149,000
Total ...	6,500	1,154,300	18,000	23,500	177,400	628,200	2,007,900

2/ Ten times kill plus Fort Huachuca (70).

3/ Based on 1943 estimate.

TABLE 3.--Columbian black-tailed deer (Odocoileus hemionus columbianus)

State	National forests	National parks and monuments	Indian reserva- tions	State and private lands	Total
California	178,000	900	1,200	40,000	220,100
Oregon	40,000	150	300	45,600	86,000
Washington	24,000	5,000	250	67,000	96,200
Total	242,000	6,000	1,700	152,600	402,300

TABLE 4.--Woodland caribou (Rangifer caribou)

State	National forests	State and private lands	Total
Idaho	10	.....	10
Minnesota .....	.....	15	15
Washington	15	.....	15
Total	25	15	40

TABLE 5.--Elk (*Cervus canadensis*)

State	Service refuges	National forests	National parks and monuments	Indian reserva- tions	Grazing districts	State and private lands	Total
Arizona .....	.....	5,900	.....	360	330	.....	6,600
Arkansas .....	.....	150	.....	.....	.....	25	175
California ...	.....	.....	.....	.....	200	529	729
Colorado .....	.....	25,000	843	.....	.....	30,000	55,800
Idaho .....	.....	33,000	.....	.....	3,200	.....	36,200
Michigan .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	250	250
Minnesota .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	160	160
Montana	98	24,000	5,800	2,200	3,300	5,300	40,700
Nebraska	44	.....	.....	.....	.....	75	119
Nevada	75	370	.....	.....	210	.....	655
New Hampshire.	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	25	25
New Mexico ...	.....	1,600	.....	.....	.....	4,500	6,100
North Carolina	.....	5	.....	.....	.....	.....	5
North Dakota .	13	.....	.....	.....	.....	39	52
Oklahoma	218	.....	.....	.....	.....	50	268
Oregon .....	.....	16,000	25	25	50	4,500	20,600
Pennsylvania .	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	17	17
South Dakota .	.....	290	450	80	.....	1,500	2,300
Texas .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	500	500
Utah .....	.....	4,400	15	27	.....	3,500	7,900
Virginia .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	175	175
Washington ...	.....	11,000	4,600	450	.....	4,700	20,800
Wisconsin ....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	20	20
Wyoming	6,000	32,000	13,400	1,000	5,200	31,100	88,700
Total ...	6,400	153,700	25,100	4,100	12,500	87,000	288,900

TABLE 6.--Moose (*Alces americana*)

State	Service refuges	National forests	National parks and monuments	Indian reserva- tions	Grazing districts	State and private lands	Total
Idaho .....	.....	2,100	.....	.....	110	.....	2,200
Maine	4	.....	4	.....	.....	5,000	5,000
Michigan .....	.....	4	600	.....	.....	30	600
Minnesota	29	520	.....	574	.....	3,400	4,500
Montana	35	3,500	283	20	50	.....	3,900
New Hampshire.	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	40	40
Vermont .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3	3
Wyoming .....	.....	3,500	730	200	115	2,500	7,100
Total ...	68	9,600	1,600	794	275	11,000	23,300

TABLE 7.--Prong-horned antelope (Antilocapra americana)

State	Service refuges	National forests	National parks and monuments	Indian reserva- tions	Grazing districts	State and private lands	Total
Arizona	50	5,200	175	225	230	1,300*	7,200
California ...	.....	2,700	.....	.....	2,000	.....	4,700
Colorado .....	.....	285	.....	.....	.....	7,000	7,300
Idaho	80	5,400	.....	.....	5,000	.....	10,500
Montana	357	1,800	800	190	14,400	20,300	37,800
Nebraska .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2,000	2,000
Nevada	1,500	350	.....	.....	6,700	140	8,700
New Mexico ...	30	2,500	.....	630	9,300	27,500	39,900
North Dakota .	.....	.....	.....	140	.....	2,400	2,500
Oklahoma	47	.....	.....	.....	.....	30	77
Oregon	430	2,100	.....	50	6,000	1,000	9,600
South Dakota .	.....	265	150	250	.....	9,000	9,700
Texas .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	12,000	12,000
Utah .....	.....	300	.....	2	.....	1,000	1,300
Washington ...	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	50	50
Wyoming .....	.....	5,900	816	1,000	24,900	48,000	80,600
Total ...	2,500	26,800	1,900	2,500	68,500	131,700	233,900

* Estimated from 1943 report.

TABLE 8.--Rocky Mountain bighorn (Ovis canadensis canadensis
and O. c. sierrae)

State	Service refuges	National forests	National parks and monuments	Indian reserva- tions	Grazing districts	State and private lands	Total
California ...		460	.....	.....	.....	.....	460
Colorado		2,200	220	.....	.....	3,500	5,900
Idaho		2,100	.....	.....	40	.....	2,100
Montana	12	990	425	50	.....	.....	1,500
New Mexico ...			15	.....	65	27	107
Oregon		4/ 10	.....	.....	.....	.....	10
South Dakota .						8	8
Utah		20	15	.....	.....	400	435
Washington ...		20	.....	.....	.....	.....	20
Wyoming		2,900	305	100	.....	2,200	5,500
Total ...	12	8,700	980	150	105	6,100	16,000

4/ From N.F. Big Game Estimate, 1946.

TABLE 7.--Prong-horned antelope (Antilocapra americana)

State	Service refuges	National forests	National parks and monuments	Indian reserva- tions	Grazing districts	State and private lands	Total
Arizona	50	5,200	175	225	230	1,300*	7,200
California ...	.....	2,700	.....	.....	2,000	.....	4,700
Colorado .....	.....	285	.....	.....	.....	7,000	7,300
Idaho	80	5,400	.....	.....	5,000	.....	10,500
Montana	357	1,800	800	190	14,400	20,300	37,800
Nebraska .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2,000	2,000
Nevada	1,500	350	.....	.....	6,700	140	8,700
New Mexico ...	30	2,500	.....	630	9,300	27,500	39,900
North Dakota .	.....	.....	.....	140	.....	2,400	2,500
Oklahoma	47	.....	.....	.....	.....	30	77
Oregon	430	2,100	.....	50	6,000	1,000	9,600
South Dakota .	.....	265	150	250	.....	9,000	9,700
Texas .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	12,000	12,000
Utah .....	.....	300	.....	2	.....	1,000	1,300
Washington ...	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	50	50
Wyoming .....	.....	5,900	816	1,000	24,900	48,000	80,600
Total ...	2,500	26,800	1,900	2,500	68,500	131,700	233,900

* Estimated from 1943 report.

TABLE 8.--Rocky Mountain bighorn (Ovis canadensis canadensis
and O. c. sierrae)

State	Service refuges	National forests	National parks and monuments	Indian reserva- tions	Grazing districts	State and private lands	Total
California ...		460	.....	.....	.....	.....	460
Colorado		2,200	220	.....	.....	3,500	5,900
Idaho		2,100	.....	.....	40	.....	2,100
Montana	12	990	425	50	.....	.....	1,500
New Mexico ...			15	.....	65	27	107
Oregon		4/ 10	.....	.....	.....	.....	10
South Dakota .						8	8
Utah		20	15	.....	.....	400	435
Washington ...		20	.....	.....	.....	.....	20
Wyoming		2,900	305	100	.....	2,200	5,500
Total ...	12	8,700	980	150	105	6,100	16,000

4/ From N.F. Big Game Estimate, 1946.

TABLE 9.--Desert bighorn (Ovis canadensis nelsoni, O. c. gaillardi,
and O. c. texianus)

State	Service refuges	National forests	National parks and monuments	Indian reserva- tions	Grazing districts	State and private lands	Total
Arizona	270	133	585	400	820	.....	2,200
California ...	.....	410	625	.....	450	.....	1,500
Nevada	1,500	210	.....	.....	1,500	150	3,400
New Mexico ...	85	108	.....	.....	.....	275	468
Texas .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	75	75
Total ...	1,800	861	1,200	400	2,800	500	7,600

TABLE 10.--Mountain goat (Oreamnos americanus)

State	National forests	National parks and monuments	Indian reserva- tions	Grazing districts	State and private lands	Total
Idaho	3,700	.....	.....	.....	.....	3,700
Montana	4,100	870	310	.....	.....	5,300
South Dakota	300	12	.....	.....	13	325
Washington	5,800	400	30	.....	200	6,400
Total	13,900	1,300	340	.....	213	15,700

TABLE 11.--Peccary, or javelina (Pecari angulatus)

State	Service refuges	National forests	National parks and monuments	Indian reserva- tions	Grazing districts	State and private lands	Total
Arizona	200	10,300	1,200	1,900	710	200	14,600
New Mexico ...	.....	1,200	.....	.....	.....	610	1,800
Texas	150	.....	75	.....	.....	100,000	100,200
Total ...	350	11,500	1,300	1,900	710	100,800	116,600

TABLE 12.--European wild boar (Sus scrofa)

State	National forests	State and private lands	Total
California ...	160	.....	160
North Carolina	350	225	575
Tennessee	1,000	25	1,000
Total ...	1,500	250	1,700

TABLE 13.--Black bear (Euarctos americanus)

State	Service refuges	National forests	National parks and monuments	Indian reserva- tions	Grazing districts	State and private lands	Total
Alabama .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	125	125
Arizona .....	.....	888	50	369	.....	.....	1,300
Arkansas	35	8	.....	.....	.....	30	73
California ,..	.....	16,800	520	200	.....	4,000	21,500
Colorado .....	.....	5,700	63	.....	.....	5,000	10,800
Florida	20	610	.....	.....	.....	1,200	1,800
Georgia	600	25	.....	.....	.....	300	925
Idaho .....	.....	7,800	.....	.....	250	.....	8,000
Louisiana ....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	900	900
Maine	69	31	1	.....	.....	20,000	20,100
Maryland .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	25	25
Michigan .....	.....	2,500	.....	78	.....	4,500	7,100
Minnesota	5	4,000	.....	175	.....	4,000	8,200
Mississippi ..	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	25	25
Montana	5	7,400	300	626	.....	5/ 100	8,400
Nevada .....	.....	40	.....	.....	.....	.....	40
New Hampshire.	.....	360	.....	.....	.....	1,000	1,400
New Mexico ...	.....	1,600	15	416	.....	3,800	5,800
New York .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1,000	1,000
North Carolina	20	525	100	10	.....	6,600	7,300
Ohio .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	12	12
Oklahoma .....	.....	10	.....	.....	.....	.....	10
Oregon .....	.....	6,800	20	100	.....	3,000	9,900
Pennsylvania .	.....	280	.....	.....	.....	3,200	3,500
South Carolina	.....	14	.....	.....	.....	442	456
Tennessee ....	.....	250	200	.....	.....	180	630
Texas .....	.....	.....	10	.....	.....	200	210
Utah .....	.....	500	25	60	.....	400	985
Vermont .....	.....	410	.....	.....	.....	500	910
Virginia .....	.....	830	15	.....	.....	700	1,500
Washington ...	70	11,600	2,000	1,900	.....	5,500	21,100
West Virginia.	.....	810	.....	.....	.....	500	1,300
Wisconsin ....	.....	1,900	.....	638	.....	2,000	4,500
Wyoming .....	.....	2,800	510	250	.....	1,700	5,300
Total	824	74,500	3,800	4,800	250	70,900	155,100

5/ Estimated from 1943 report.

TABLE 14.--Grizzly bear (Ursus horribilis)

State	National forests	National parks and monuments	Indian reserva- tions	State and private lands	Total
Colorado	10	.....	.....	26	36
Idaho	60	.....	.....	.....	60
Montana	550	145	77	.....	772
Washington ...	3	.....	.....	.....	3
Wyoming	175	212	3	97	487
Total ...	798	357	80	123	1,400

TABLE 15.--American bison, or buffalo (Bison bison)

State	Service refuges	National parks and monuments	Indian reserva- tions	Grazing districts	State and private lands	Total
Arizona .....	.....	.....	.....	208	.....	208
Colorado .....	.....	26	.....	.....	.....	26
Montana.....	577	.....	750	.....	.....	1,300
Nebraska	158	.....	.....	.....	200	358
New Mexico ..	.....	.....	18	.....	.....	18
North Dakota.	15	.....	.....	.....	12	27
Oklahoma	494	11	.....	.....	171	676
Pennsylvania.	.....	.....	.....	.....	60	60
South Dakota.	.....	315	.....	.....	600	915
Texas .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	300	300
Utah .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	50	50
Washington ..	.....	.....	.....	.....	25	25
Wyoming .....	.....	930	.....	.....	100	1,000
Total ..	1,200	1,300	768	208	1,500	5,000

TABLE 16.--Big-game inventory according to land ownership or control.

Species	Service refuges	National forests	National parks and monuments	Indian reserva- tions	Grazing districts	State and private lands	Total
White-tailed deer	28,800	567,700	3,900	15,800	7,200	4,341,600	4,965,000
Mule deer	6,500	1,154,300	18,000	23,500	177,400	628,200	2,007,900
Columbian black-tailed deer	.....	242,000	6,000	1,700	.....	152,600	402,300
Woodland caribou .....	.....	25	.....	.....	.....	15	40
Elk	6,400	153,700	25,100	4,100	12,500	87,000	288,900
Moose	68	9,600	1,600	794	275	11,000	23,300
Prong-horned antelope	2,500	26,800	1,900	2,500	68,500	131,700	233,900
Rocky Mountain bighorn	12	8,700	980	150	105	6,100	16,000
Desert bighorn	1,800	861	1,200	400	2,800	500	7,600
Mountain goat .....	.....	13,900	1,300	340	.....	213	15,700
Peccary, or javelina	350	11,500	1,300	1,900	710	100,800	116,600
European wild boar .....	.....	1,500	.....	.....	.....	250	1,700
Black bear	824	74,500	3,800	4,800	250	70,900	155,100
Grizzly bear .....	.....	798	357	80	.....	123	1,400
American bison, or buffalo.	1,200	.....	1,300	768	208	1,500	5,000
Total	48,500	2,265,900	66,700	56,800	269,900	5,532,500	8,240,400

TABLE 17.—Summary by states of big-game animals in annual inventory, 1946.

State	White-tailed deer	Mule deer	Columbian black-tailed deer	Woodland caribou	Elk	Moose	Prong-horned Antelope	Rocky Mountain bighorn	Desert bighorn	Mountain goat	Pecary or javelina	European wild boar	Black bear	Grizzly bear	American bison or buffalo	Total
Alabama	32,500	102,400	.....	.....	6,600	.....	7,200	.....	2,200	.....	14,500	.....	125	.....	.....	32,600
Arizona	34,000	102,400	.....	.....	175	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1,300	.....	208	168,500
Arkansas	45,300	.....	.....	.....	729	.....	4,700	460	1,500	.....	.....	160	75	.....	.....	45,500
California	.....	342,200	282,100	.....	55,800	.....	7,300	5,900	.....	.....	.....	.....	21,500	.....	.....	591,300
Colorado	.....	384,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	10,800	36	26	483,900
Connecticut	6,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	6,000
Delaware	135	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	135
Florida	38,400	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1,800	.....	.....	40,200
Georgia	19,200	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	20,100
Idaho	28,600	147,000	.....	10	36,200	2,200	10,500	2,100	.....	3,700	.....	.....	8,000	60	.....	238,400
Illinois	5,100	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	5,100
Indiana	3,300	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3,300
Iowa	2,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2,000
Kentucky	2,100	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2,100
Louisiana	51,300	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	52,200
Maine	303,200	.....	.....	.....	.....	5,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	308,300
Maryland	1,500	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1,500
Massachusetts	15,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	15,000
Michigan	872,700	.....	.....	.....	250	600	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	880,600
Minnesota	609,700	.....	.....	15	180	4,500	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	622,600
Mississippi	21,900	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	21,900
Missouri	22,000	.....	.....	.....	40,700	3,900	37,800	1,500	.....	5,300	.....	.....	.....	772	1,300	241,400
Montana	37,800	104,200	.....	.....	119	.....	2,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	388	7,100
Nebraska	300	4,400	.....	.....	555	.....	8,700	.....	3,400	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	126,000
Nevada	113,200	.....	.....	.....	25	40	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	113,200
New Hampshire	57,800	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	57,800
New Jersey	29,900	.....	.....	.....	6,100	.....	39,900	107	468	.....	1,800	.....	.....	.....	.....	29,900
New Mexico	36,800	174,100	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	18	264,900
New York	300,100	.....	.....	.....	5	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	301,100
North Carolina	48,200	.....	.....	.....	52	.....	2,500	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	48,200
North Dakota	15,500	750	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	27	15,800
Ohio	8,500	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	8,500
Oklahoma	9,500	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	10,500
Oregon	576,000	172,600	86,000	.....	20,600	.....	9,600	10	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	60	299,200
Pennsylvania	.....	.....	.....	.....	17	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	679,600
Rhode Island	33,600	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	34,100
South Carolina	22,400	6,800	.....	.....	2,300	.....	9,700	8	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	915	42,400
South Dakota	4,600	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1,000	.....	.....	.....	6,300
Tennessee	511,100	7,500	.....	.....	500	.....	12,000	.....	75	.....	100,200	.....	.....	.....	300	631,900
Texas	.....	220,000	.....	.....	7,900	.....	1,300	436	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	50	230,700
Utah	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	230,700
Vermont	74,800	.....	.....	.....	175	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	75,700
Virginia	46,600	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	46,600
Washington	20,300	79,700	96,200	15	20,900	.....	50	20	.....	6,400	.....	.....	.....	.....	25	244,600
West Virginia	120,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	121,500
Wisconsin	731,100	.....	.....	.....	20	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	731,100
Wyoming	5,900	149,000	.....	.....	88,700	7,100	80,600	5,500	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	795,600
Total	4,955,000	2,007,900	402,300	40	288,900	23,300	233,900	16,000	7,600	15,700	116,500	1,700	125,100	1,400	5,000	8,240,400

TABLE 18.--Comparative big game populations, 1943 and 1946

Species	Populations		Changes in populations			
	1943	1946	Numbers		Percentages	
			Gain	Loss	Gain	Loss
White-tailed deer	3,649,739*	4,965,000	1,315,300	.....	36	....
Mule and Black-tailed deer .	2,146,891	2,410,200	263,300	.....	12	....
Woodland caribou	15	40	25	.....	....	....
Elk	233,714	288,800	55,100	.....	24	....
Moose	14,803	23,300	8,500	.....	57	....
Prong-horned antelope	246,090	233,900	.....	12,200	....	5
Rocky Mountain bighorn	9,152	16,000	6,800	.....	75	....
Desert Bighorn	8,732	7,600	.....	1,100	....	11
Mountain goat	16,100	15,700	.....	400	....	2
Peccary or javelina	111,785	116,600	4,800	.....	5	....
European wild boar	2,436	1,700	.....	700	....	30
Black bear	151,653	154,900	3,200	.....	2	....
Grizzly bear	1,265	1,400	135	.....	11	....
American bison or buffalo ..	6,047	5,000	.....	1,000	....	17
Total	6,598,422	8,240,140	1,657,160	15,400	....	....

* The figure of 1,100,000 white-tailed deer given for Pennsylvania in the 1943 Big Game Inventory was incorrect. It should have been 550,000 so the total has been corrected accordingly.

TABLE 19.--Big game kill by States, Season 1946

State	Deer	Elk	Moose	Prong- horned antelope	Bighorn	Mountain goat	Fecuary, or Javelina	European wild boar	Black bear	Grizzly bear	American bison or buffalo	Total
Alabama	3,100	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3,100
Arizona	10,700	251	.....	.....	6	.....	436	.....	208	.....	42	11,600
Arkansas	2,800	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2,800
California	47,400	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	750	.....	.....	48,200
Colorado	80,100	16,000	.....	1,100	.....	.....	.....	.....	515	.....	.....	97,700
Connecticut	451	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	451
Florida	5,400	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	72	.....	.....	5,500
Georgia	1,500	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	55	.....	.....	1,600
Idaho	26,900	5,400	26	13	.....	127	.....	.....	233	.....	.....	32,700
Iowa	5	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	5
Kentucky	e/ 175	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	175
Louisiana	3,600	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3,600
Maine	31,700	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	20	.....	.....	33,700
Maryland	751	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	.....	.....	753
Massachusetts	2,800	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2,800
Michigan	115,400	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1,800	.....	.....	117,200
Minnesota	106,500	.....	12	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2,100	.....	.....	108,600
Mississippi	1,400	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1,400
Missouri	743	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	743
Montana	21,900	10,500	75	1,800	.....	110	.....	.....	527	33	175	35,100
Nebraska	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Nevada	4,600	33	.....	386	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	38	5,000
New Hampshire	6,400	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	118	.....	.....	6,500
New Jersey	3,200	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3,200
New Mexico	15,200	159	.....	100	.....	.....	.....	.....	635	.....	3	16,100
New York	15,900	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	15,900
North Carolina	6,100	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	102	762	.....	.....	7,000
North Dakota	250	1	.....	10	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	5	265
Oklahoma	e/ 753	b/ 60	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	135	o/ 948
Oregon	25,000	4,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	500	.....	.....	29,500
Pennsylvania	35,300	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	325	.....	.....	35,600
South Carolina	3,900	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	67	.....	.....	4,000
South Dakota	6,400	322	.....	684	.....	.....	.....	68	.....	.....	.....	7,400
Tennessee	125	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	28	.....	.....	221
Texas	d/ 44,400	.....	.....	391	.....	.....	5,000	.....	10	.....	.....	49,800
Utah	83,100	1,600	.....	112	.....	.....	.....	.....	68	.....	.....	89,900
Vermont	4,500	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	125	.....	.....	4,600
Virginia	5,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	177	.....	.....	5,200
Washington	22,000	3,200	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3,000	.....	.....	28,200
West Virginia	3,400	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	180	.....	.....	3,600
Wisconsin	55,500	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1,300	.....	.....	56,800
Wyoming	16,800	19,000	435	9,400	59	.....	.....	.....	366	.....	.....	46,100
Total	926,200	60,500	543	14,000	65	237	5,400	170	16,000	64	398	923,600

e/ Includes 63 live donations
b/ Includes 11 live donations

o/ Includes 35 live donations
d/ Includes 362 live donations

e/ Does not include 5 fallow and 3 red deer killed.