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Note to Editor: The attached article, "How Game and Fur Farmers Can Use Biological Survey's Aid in Combating Wild-Life Diseases," has been prepared by Dr. J. E. Shillinger, in charge of wild-life disease investigations of the Biological Survey, in response to requests from correspondents. Copies are being sent to editors of periodicals dealing with game and fur-farming, outdoors and sporting, and natural history.

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United States Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Biological Survey

HOW GAME AND FUR FARMERS CAN USE BIOLOGICAL SURVEY'S AID IN COMBATING WILD-LIFE DISEASES

By J. E. Shillinger, In Charge, Disease Investigations
Bureau of Biological Survey

Many who are engaged in special lines of farming have ready-reference lists of places or persons to whom to appeal when confronted by unusual problems. It is the purpose of this article to provide such a list for those engaged in fur farming and game farming--production activities that have come into increasing prominence during the past decade.

Wild animals and birds on restricted and densely populated areas become easy prey to a number of nutritional, parasitic, and infectious diseases. The ravages of these diseases are multiplied and become of increased economic importance in the abnormal environment of captivity. To help game and fur farmers meet these problems, a wild-life disease-investigations project has been established in the Biological Survey. This unit does not carry out alone the various forms of research, but through its cooperation with several interested organizations, it investigates as far as possible the conditions that may, and often do, cause extensive losses on game and fur farms.

In conducting this work the Biological Survey has stationed throughout the country various employees and associated workers to whom specimens of diseased wild animals may be taken or sent for examination and diagnosis. At the extreme ends of the country are:

Dr. F. D. McKenney, U. S. Rabbit Experiment Station, Fontana, Calif.
Dr. L. C. Morley, 1207 State Office Building, Richmond, Va.

At the University of Minnesota the cooperative work of the Biological Survey and the well-equipped organization of the University's Department of Bacteriology is in charge of--

Dr. R. G. Green, 223 Millard Hall, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.

Collaborators of the Biological Survey at State institutions include:

Dr. H. J. Stafseth, Department of Bacterioloty, Michigan State College, East Lansing, Mich.
Dr. E. J. Frick, Veterinary Department, Kansas State Agricultural College, Manhattan, Kans.

Though each of these workers is engaged in specialized studies, all forms of pathological material and parasites from wild subjects or entire carcasses may be sent to any of them; ample facilities are available at all the places named either for making complete diagnoses or for forwarding when necessary to more specialized workers. Other cooperators of the Biological Survey are engaged in highly specialized studies of a limited group of diseases and add greatly to the general progress of the research on wild-life losses.

Specimens for study should be delivered fresh whenever possible; this can be done where the producer is near the laboratory. Specimens to be shipped long distances may be preserved in alcohol or glycerin. The glycerin may be diluted with equal parts of water. Dry powdered borax, or a 5 per cent solution of formalin, is also a satisfactory preservative. Postal regulations do not permit sending formalin through the mails, but specimens may be kept in this material for a few hours and then removed, wrapped in cloths dampened with the fluid, and sent as a dry pack in a tight container.

The body cavity of every specimen to be shipped should be opened in such manner as to allow action by the preservative on all organs and tissues. When borax is used, liberal quantities must come in contact with the internal organs as well as the skin. If an infectious disease is suspected and it seems desirable to isolate and identify the organism, glycerin or borax should be used, as organisms frequently remain alive for a considerable period in tissues stored in these substances. For the simple preservation of pathological specimens, alcohol or formalin is preferable, and for shipping long distances the formalin pack is the more satisfactory. Sick subjects may also be sent for study and diagnosis, using shipping crates appropriate for the purpose.

A letter should accompany each shipment giving, among other pertinent facts, a history of the case and describing symptoms observed, the course of the disease, the age of affected subjects, and the number affected. Diagnosis is always an intricate procedure, and the difficulties are increased in dead specimens, when the symptoms can not be studied. Hence, it is especially important that the sender furnish as much detailed information as possible.

Carrying charges on specimens shipped to the laboratories should be prepaid in all cases.