

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Biological Survey

DIVISION OF INFORMATION

FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1939.

Rabbits Good Food,
Fine Fur, Survey Says

Whether in a casserole or on a coat, the domestic rabbit is popular in many sections of the country, according to a recent Bureau of Biological Survey report. Rabbit meat, the report stated, is highly nutritious, and much used, while the fur is employed extensively in the hat trade and for making fur garments.

To encourage the raising of domestic rabbits, the Biological Survey recently revised a Farmers' Bulletin of the Department of Agriculture that discusses the various phases of the industry.

Discussing the "A, B, C" of rabbit production, the bulletin includes information on choosing a breed, selecting animals for the original herd, foods and feeding, breeding, management practices, rabbitries and their equipment, preparing products for market, and tanning skins for home use. Sketches and lists of building materials show how hutches may be constructed.

Much of the information in the publication is based upon improvement in managing, feeding, and breeding rabbits developed at the United States Rabbit Experiment Station, where new selective methods of self-feeding whole grains have been developed to reduce materially the cost of production.

Because it lends itself to a wide range of possibilities, this type of work can be performed either by children or by adults. Commercially, the industry is open to any individual. One can start with backyard units of

3 or 4 hutches for supplementing the family meat supply or can operate a large commercial rabbitry with as many as 500 hutches.

An outlet through local butcher shops is the logical profitable market, the bulletin suggests. Fryers, which weigh $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 pounds when weaned at 2 months, can be offered to the public throughout the year. When dressed fryers, including heart and liver, weigh 50 to 55 percent of the live weight, and roasters 55 to 65 percent.

All rabbit skins, regardless of color or size, have commercial value, it was said. In fact, rabbit pelts are used more extensively by the fur trade than any other kind of fur. In recent years also, it was pointed out, increasing numbers of rabbits are used for biological, laboratory, and other experimental purposes.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary

DIVISION OF INFORMATION

FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1939.

Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes today announced the transfer of the Wildlife Division of the National Park Service to the Bureau of Biological Survey and the Bureau of Fisheries. The transfer becomes effective at once.

The change was made, Secretary Ickes said, in accordance with President Roosevelt's reorganization plan to coordinate Federal activities and effect economy. The Biological Survey and Bureau of Fisheries were transferred to the Department of the Interior last July as conservation agencies were grouped in Interior.

The transfer will provide opportunities for closer cooperation and coordination of the wildlife programs of the Biological Survey, the Bureau of Fisheries and the Park Service.

Those employees of the National Park Service's Wildlife Division whose work dealt with wildlife other than fish, have been transferred to the rolls of the Bureau of Biological Survey. Those employees specializing in fisheries have been transferred to the Bureau of Fisheries. Thereby reorganization objectives are attained by terminating a condition whereby different agencies in one department had jurisdiction over the same subject matter. All will be reassigned to duties in the National Park Service. The change does not increase or decrease the personnel involved, all of whom are civil servants.

Under their new status, those employees transferred to the Biological Survey will work through both the Chief of that Bureau and the Director of the National Park Service. Their office will be known as the Section on National Park Wildlife, Division of Wildlife Research, Bureau of Biological Survey. Victor H. Cahalane, Chief of the transferred division, will serve as head of the new unit.

The work program of the Section will be based on the needs of the National Park Service and will be directed by the head of the Section in accordance with plans developed in consultation with the Supervisor, Branch of Research and Information, and other officials of the National Park Service. Such work program will be approved by the Chief of the Biological Survey and by the Director of the National Park Service. Plans are being evolved to provide for informal and speedy handling of joint problems and policy questions between the two agencies.

Commenting on the transfer, Secretary Ickes pointed out that it will give the National Park Service the advantage of increased facilities for research and the benefit of diversified knowledge in many complex fields. Policies on the protection of all fauna will be rigidly observed, he said, as they have been in the past.

The consolidation of services, Secretary Ickes pointed out, was made possible only by the President's Reorganization Plan No. 2, which was approved by the Congress in the last regular session. It is in line with the coordination of conservation activities within the Department.

Under the wildlife policy of the Park Service, from the first moment of an area's official consideration for national park status, its original and normal plant and animal structure is investigated. Immediately after park establishment, natural restoration to normal abundance and relationships of species by means of protection and encouragement, rather than restocking or other artificial aids, is begun. Once normalcy has been attained, any unnatural assistance previously necessary is abandoned, and the animals are left to carry on their struggle for existence unaided.

Presentation of the animal life of the parks to the public will be a wholly natural one under this policy. All wildlife is protected, with the exception of game fishes, which may be taken under strict regulations in keeping with National Park Service objectives.