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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Immediate Release.

The limited supply of shotgun and rifle ammunition which will be released for the fall hunting season, together with supplies already in hunters' hands will, with judicious use, be sufficient for taking a reasonable crop of wild game, Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes said today.

The War Production Board announced this morning that it had approved release of 32,250,000 shotgun shells, 12,000,000 rounds of center fire ammunition, and an as yet undetermined quantity of .22 caliber cartridges. This represents about one-sixth of the quantities normally used by hunters.

The action of the WPB followed a fact-finding survey initiated months ago by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and conducted in cooperation with an Ammunition Committee representing State Game Departments. Both Federal and State officials urged the WPB to allow the manufacture of some additional ammunition for civilians in order to permit the taking of the annual crop of surplus game, keep predatory animals in check, and protect agricultural crops from depredations.

Secretary Ickes pointed out that the major portion of the shotgun ammunition is being made with steel bases and does not require critical brass and that the manufacture of a reasonable quantity of ammunition for civilians will not interfere with production for war use.

Civilian hunting normally can produce a substantial addition to the nation's meat supply. Last year hunters took more than 250,000,000 pounds of meat as a by-product of hunting for deer, elk, wild rabbits, pheasants, ducks, and geese.

Ammunition is also necessary for the control of predators, chiefly in the Western states. It is estimated that coyotes, bobcats, and other predators take an annual toll of as much as 5 percent of the 37,000,000 head of sheep on Western ranges. Hunting is also one method of protecting growing crops and forage from destruction by prairie dogs, ground squirrels, woodchucks, and other rodent pests.