



**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
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**SOLUTION OF KAIBAB DEER PROBLEM NOW EXPECTED**

Uncertainty regarding authority to dispose of surplus deer on the Grand Canyon Federal Game Preserve in the Kaibab National Forest in Arizona has blocked effective administration of the game resources there. A recent decision of the Supreme Court partially clears up the question of the Federal Government's authority to regulate the numbers of animals on lands belonging to the United States and removes one barrier from the way of applying effective measures to maintain the deer herds at the maximum number for which feed is available and at the same time make economic use of the excess deer that heretofore have been allowed to die of starvation.

What to do with surplus deer on the Kaibab has been an acute problem for several years, says the Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture. An attempt to work out a plan with the State officials of Arizona whereby the State regulations would be waived so that hunters could kill a number of deer each year equivalent to the surplus, was unsuccessful. The State also objected to hunters employed by the Federal Government attempting to remove deer from the Preserve contrary to State law. A temporary injunction secured from the United States District Court left the Federal Government free to kill deer but not to dispose of the animals in any

economical manner. The State appealed from this decision to the Supreme Court.

In order to take advantage as far as possible of the decree of the District Court, the Forest Service proposed that a limited number of deer be killed and transported in Government trucks to Indian Reservations to be used at the Government Indian Schools. In a decision recently handed down, the Supreme Court upheld the opinion of the District Court with the modification that all carcasses of deer shipped outside the boundaries of the Preserve shall be marked to show that the deer were killed under authority of the Secretary of Agriculture within the limits of the Preserve.

This decision will afford only temporary relief from the overstocked condition of the Preserve, says the Forest Service. A basis for efficient management of the game and other forest resources can be had only by working out and applying a feasible plan for removing each year the number of deer above the conservative carrying capacity of the available range. It is fully expected that this need will be appreciated by both State and Federal officials concerned and a satisfactory solution reached without further serious delay.

The Grand Canyon Game Preserve was established in 1906 by President Roosevelt primarily for the conservation of mule deer. It comprises about 850,000 acres largely within the Kaibab National Forest in northern Arizona between the Grand Canyon and the dry, semi-desert country to the north and west. The Forest Service, which is responsible for the administration of the Kaibab Forest, is also charged with managing the game resources of the Preserve. When the Preserve was established there were comparatively few deer as the number had been greatly reduced by excessive hunting and by

predatory animals. The area was closed to hunting, and the Biological Survey conducted an effective campaign against coyotes, wolves, and mountain lions. As a result of these protective measures the deer increased steadily. To make room for the growing herds, the livestock grazed on the forest under permit were gradually decreased, until at present less than 2,500 cattle are grazed on the area which formerly supported 14,000 head. There is feed available for not more than 20,000 or 25,000 head of deer, but the herd has now increased to some 30,000. On large areas the more valuable forage plants have been greatly depleted by excessive grazing and young forest trees have been seriously injured.

How to dispose of the excess deer has been a matter of serious concern. The character of the surrounding country prevents migration to other feed areas. The number of deer killed during the hunting season under permit by the State and Federal Governments has been small in comparison with the total number that needed to be removed. Capture and disposal of fawns as a control measure likewise has been entirely inadequate. According to the Forest Service, the only way it can discharge its responsibility for the conservation of the deer herd, the forage resources upon which the deer depend, and the vast amount of young tree growth, is to regulate the number of deer on the area in accordance with the carrying capacity of the range.

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