

INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS



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NEW DIGEST OF FUR LAWS URGES  
STATES TO ADOPT UNIFORM LAWS  
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A digest of the fur laws of all the States and of Canada, Newfoundland, and Mexico, including such restrictions as seasons, bag limits, prohibited trapping methods, and licenses, and information on possession and sale of animals and furs, shipment and export, propagation, and bounties, is presented in Farmers' Bulletin 1648-F, "Fur Laws for the Season 1930-31," the sixteenth annual summary of its kind compiled by the Bureau of Biological Survey and issued by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Legislatures of six States (Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Rhode Island, and Virginia) enacted laws directly affecting fur-bearing animals since last year's bulletin on the fur laws was issued. In several other States changes in fur laws were made by regulations or by order of administrative officials. The general trend of the legislation has been to increase protection afforded fur-bearing animals, though there has been some liberalization in the trapping restrictions locally.

"With the great numbers of trappers in the United States ever more intensively plying their trade, and with areas that are suitable for the production of wild life becoming more restricted each year, it is inevitable," says the bulletin, "that there must be, in the not distant future, a serious depletion in the sources of our fur supply, unless uniform measures are taken

to check destructive practices and to insure that trappers shall take the annual surplus only and not further reduce the breeding stocks. Something can be done through changing open seasons on certain species, by completely closing the season on those most seriously affected, and by adopting such other measures as would tend to prevent the killing off of the fur bearers faster than they are produced. Prescribing a seasonal limit on the number of any species that might be taken would be an effective remedy if applied to fur bearers other than those raised in captivity on fur farms.

"It is essential to effective administration of the fur resources that State officials charged with the execution of fur laws have definite information regarding the number of fur animals taken in the respective States each season. Many States require licensed trappers to submit a report of the number of each species taken annually by them. Of 31 States that do not prescribe such reports by trappers, 7 do require fur dealers or buyers to report on their transactions. Though universal application of this requirement would not disclose the number of fur animals actually taken in any one State, because of the fact that in practically all States residents may trap on their own lands without a license, it would give comparative figures on the relative number taken annually. A summary of such reports containing comparable data would furnish most valuable statistical information for economic studies of the fur situation in the entire country, as well as for the framing of legislation to control the annual take.

"If the several States would adopt uniform regulations for the licensing of trappers and the rendering of reports by them, the information resulting would be helpful to the individual State conservation departments and to the fur trade of the entire country."

The bulletin may be obtained free from the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., as long as there is a supply available for free distribution.

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