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ADVOCATES GAME AS
A REPLACEMENT CROP

Encouraging game birds and animals will help solve the land-use problems of farmers who have taken areas of wheat, corn, and other crops out of production, advises the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Game, the bureau points out, has value as a source of recreation and food for the landowner and as an attraction to hunters who will pay for shooting privileges or will reimburse the farmer in other ways.

Game as a replacement crop will also help prevent a serious decrease in this natural resource, says the Biological Survey. In periods of economic depression, the value of game as a food resource becomes more widely appreciated, and squirrels, rabbits, and game birds thus have a much greater importance than in times of plenty. Under the pressure of increased hunting, however, game is likely to be seriously decreased unless something is done to aid it.

Many farmers, the bureau recognizes, have sufficient interest in game and other wild life to undertake replenishment measures on their own initiative, and others can be interested if satisfactory reimbursement is provided. Local groups of hunters, sportsmen's organizations, and State conservation departments, it is suggested, could well help in thus increasing game by arranging to finance food-plant and cover restoration-- something that is much needed in most farming sections, is in harmony with the program of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, and will be of great benefit to sportsmen.

Following are preliminary suggestions made by W. L. McAtee, biologist in charge of the bureau's studies of game propagation:

"The most economical and effective method known for increasing stocks of game is improvement of the environment. The greatest hindrance to game production in areas of intensive farming is deficiency of cover, and in less cultivated or overgrown lands it is lack of food. To encourage game, farmers should therefore develop cover and grow game-food crops, especially crops to be left standing for winter food and cover.

"Erosion control can be made to include restoration of game cover. Gullied lands, and stream and ditch banks can be guarded against further erosion by planting operations, and the materials chosen can well include plants of special value to game, particularly locust, briars, and such vines as honeysuckle, grape and bitter-sweet.

"Increasing the acreage of farm woodlots will also benefit wild life. Heavily shaded areas are not of much value for this purpose, but around the margins, among young growth, and in brushy places, wild life flourishes. Besides woodlots and eroded areas there are ^{on} many farms odd corners that can well be left in cover for wild life. Low, stiff, or thorny plants, such as rose, blackberry, buffaloberry, waxmyrtle, and the vines previously mentioned, make excellent cover. The particular kinds best to use vary according to the section concerned; advice on their choice can be obtained from State agricultural experiment stations or from the Bureau of Biological Survey. In general the use of species providing both cover and food is best.

"Feeding game and other wild life on tracts taken out of cultivation of staple crops will be more successful if the areas selected for feed patches are next to or near, permanent cover. Crops that can be used and in nowise conflict with the agricultural-adjustment program include bush clovers and beggarweeds (*Lespedeza*), cowpeas, soybeans, Sudan grass, sorghums, millets, proso, hemp, flax, and sunflower. Broadcasting in mixtures is an excellent way of sowing these plants, and the seed should not be covered very deeply. Long feed patches adjoining cover are desirable. Those interested may obtain further information from the Department's Miscellaneous Publication No. 159, *Winter Feeding of Wild Life on Northern Farms*, on sale at 5 cents a copy by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C."