



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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WARNS AGAINST GAME FOR FOOD AS DEFENSE EMERGENCY IDEA

No one should get the idea that wild birds and mammals in the United States have any significant food value in connection with national defense, Ira N. Gabrielson, the nation's No. 1 wildlife administrator, said today in commenting on newspaper reports that the Royal Empire Society had pointed to its "native wildlife" as an extreme emergency source of "such delicacies as badger hams, bear steaks, roast python, and hedgehog."

The Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service emphasized that conservationists must constantly be on the alert to suppress attempts to exploit the wildlife resources under the guise of national defense.

"I wouldn't be surprised," said Gabrielson, "to hear someone propose any time now that we relax our hunting regulations to provide more emergency-time food."

No presently conceivable emergency could possibly justify this, he declared.

Gabrielson referred to a warning he sounded at the recent North American Wildlife Conference in Memphis, Tennessee, during his address on "A Future Program for Wildlife Conservation."

"I should like," he said then, "to emphasize one wildlife danger that may result from the great American tendency to turn attention from one thing to another,

according to what the headlines are. As a result of constant radio and newspaper publicity, national defense is now prominently before the public. In a world where national conduct is certainly not based on very high ideals, national defense should, of course, be welcomed by every American citizen. However, there are forces and interests always ready to take advantage of any program which promises to divert attention from their own selfish activities. Already there has been evidence of a tendency to advocate as defense measures drainage and dam construction projects that have never had enough intrinsic merit to receive public support.

"Unless conservationists are alert to these things and expose them," he continued, "we can expect further damage to the wildlife resources of this country with no adequate compensation to the public in return. We can expect, if public fever mounts in this field, to see increasing demands for all sorts of things which in the long run would be harmful to this nation. In the last World War, for example, we stepped up the fisheries take far beyond the bounds of prudence and, as a result of this very short-sighted policy, some of our important fisheries are still in a depleted condition. We can again expect all sorts of selfish schemes to promote personal gain at the expense of national resources. Conservationists must be increasingly alert and intelligent.

"I believe," said Gabrielson, "that our conservation program is so vital to the future welfare of this country that there can be no excuse for a let-down in its progress. If this country is to continue to be a good place to live in, or one worth fighting for, we must use the resources of soil and water and the products of soil and water intelligently, not only in good times but in bad times, in national emergencies as well as in normal times. Only in this way can we be assured of an adequate annual return capable of sustaining and feeding our population."