



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release to PM's MONDAY, MAY 14, 1945.

The Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior has taken on the job of solving a problem which has cost telephone companies as much as \$500,000 a year, it was reported today.

The job consists of finding a repellent which will prevent common gray squirrels from chewing holes in the lead coverings of aerial telephone cables. Previous efforts to discourage the squirrels have failed.

Why gray squirrels find the lead cables toothsome is a matter of conjecture. Certainly the 1/8 inch thick covering presents no considerable obstacle to the sharp teeth of the squirrel. Samples turned over to the Service show holes of large size neatly cut out.

Efforts to make the cables unpalatable by coating them with an asphalt base paint in which had been mixed large amounts of oil of aloes, an extremely bitter substance, have been in part successful and will be the subject of further experiment.

Experiments with other repellants will be undertaken at the laboratory of the Service's Division of Wildlife Research in Denver, Colo.

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