



# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release MAY 24, 1950

### FOX HUNTING URGED TO CONTROL RABIES SPREAD

Fox hunting was given the endorsement of the U. S. Department of the Interior today—as one means of fighting the spread of rabies.

The Fish and Wildlife Service of the Interior Department said that the number of foxes in southern and southwestern states and in California has increased in the last few years and that State diagnostic laboratories have recently reported a sharp rise in the number of rabid foxes. Large-scale hunting and destruction of foxes in areas where rabies has broken out, especially when combined with mass inoculation of dogs, is an effective method of controlling the disease, the Service said.

Several European countries, notably England, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, have practically eliminated rabies by this method.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has led anti-fox campaigns during rabies outbreaks in Alabama, California, Georgia, Mississippi, and Arkansas. Cooperating with state and local health and conservation authorities and with fox hunting clubs, predator-control agents of the Service have demonstrated hunting technique and assisted in organizing control programs.

Rabid foxes roam widely, far beyond the normal range of uninfected animals, and increase the chances of spreading the disease among human beings, by infecting other foxes, dogs, and farm stock over large areas.

Besides causing human deaths and stock losses, rabies, if left unchecked, would ultimately wipe out local fox populations. Therefore, hunters who help to control excess numbers of foxes not only reduce the danger of rabies but aid in the preservation of the sport of fox hunting, the Service said.

In previous years the Fish and Wildlife Service has acted to halt rabies outbreaks among coyotes in the West and Southwest. In 1916, the year the Service began predator-control work, there was a severe outbreak in Nevada. The epidemic spread throughout many parts of the West, and Congress placed on the newly-formed predator-control branch the primary responsibility for stopping the spread of rabies among wild animals. The epidemic was brought under control by intensive cooperative efforts — but not until many thousands of dollars worth of ranch stock had been destroyed.

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