

The damage done is usually greatest in a sparsely settled district where the areas under cultivation are scattered and often limited in area. The little pests are extremely fond of tender grain plants and will travel long distances to reach them. Hence when a field of grain is preyed upon, not only by the gophers living on the land itself, but also by those living from a distance of a quarter to even three-quarters of a mile on all sides, the damage done is serious. This accounts for the occasional apparent uselessness of applying poison, as this habit of coming long distances to appetizing forage ground is overlooked and the farmer naturally comes to the conclusion that the poisoning was not effective. There is, however, not likely to be much trouble with gophers coming from adjoining land that is in crop.

NATURAL ENEMIES.

The natural enemies of the gopher are coyotes, badgers, skunks, weasels, snakes, hawks, and owls. Many gophers, especially on the waste lands, are destroyed by hawks and owls, yet unfortunately, whenever one of these birds appears near the average farm in the West, it is greeted with a shot, the farmer forgetting that the occasional theft from the barnyard by these birds is usually much more than offset by the number of gophers killed by them. If it were not for the useless bird destruction, many more gophers, whose ravages in the farmer's crops are much greater than those of the hawk in his barnyard, would be killed.

METHODS OF CONTROL OR EXTERMINATION.

There are many methods of destruction but only a few are practicable on the average farm. These methods are, poisoning, shooting, trapping, snaring, drowning and suffocating.

POISONING.

There are a number of patent gopher poisons on the market; very few of these, however, are to be recommended, and the only safe way to use such preparations is to demand a guarantee of effectiveness or to buy subject to analysis. Nevertheless, during the past few years certain of these preparations tried out on the branch Farms and Stations have proven quite satisfactory.

A tried and proven recipe that has been effective wherever properly handled is given below. One of the strong points in favour of this recipe is its simplicity, while its cheapness is also an important consideration.

Recipe for Preparing Wheat for Poisoning Gophers.—Dissolve one ounce of strychnine or sulphate of strychnine in one quart of vinegar to which has been added one quart of hot water. Stir with a stick until all the strychnine is dissolved, boiling if necessary. Add one pound of sugar or one pint of molasses, and a teaspoonful of oil of anise. Pour the hot solution over half a bushel of wheat, and, if necessary, add enough hot water just to cover all the wheat. Let the grain stand in the solution for 24 hours, and if any of the solution is then still unabsorbed, add a handful of shorts and stir the whole mixture well. Put a tablespoonful of the moist grain well into the entrance of each gopher hole.