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First Eastern Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators Shortcourse A Huge Success

Thomas G. Barnes, Department of Forestry, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky

Something fantastic happened on February 21 through 23 in Lexington, Kentucky. The University of Kentucky, with sponsorship from the University of Kentucky's Barnhart Fund for Excellence, Utah State University's Academic Program in Wildlife Damage Management, and NADCA, hosted the first Eastern Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators Shortcourse. Over 140 participants from 32 states attended the meeting. The theme of this conference was "professionalism," and conference educational programs were directed at providing information that urban nuisance wildlife control operators (NWCOs) could use to understand their role in the wildlife damage management field.

NADCA member Robert Schmidt, from Utah State University, provided the keynote address on animal damage control theory and application. The remainder of the educational program on day one provided information on wildlife habitat selection, population dynamics, bat identification, and endangered species concerns, followed by sessions reinforcing Schmidt's keynote address on how and when to use pesticides, repellents, exclusion, and habitat modification. The day was capped off with an enlightening discussion on animal welfare concerns in the industry.

The next group of talks provided information on mammalian disease identification and worker protection, followed by a snake identification program and a mix of other topics including the American Veterinary Medical Association's euthanization guidelines, federal wildlife transport guidelines, equipment, and USDA-APHIS-ADC's program. The highlight of day two was the dinner program by Guy Hodge of the Humane Society of the United States, also a NADCA member, entitled

"Should we be releasing live-trapped animals back into the environment?"

The final group of presentations on day three provided some practical information on mole and bat management, in addition to business talks on liability, public relations, and running a small business. There was an active discussion session on the benefits and limitations of a national certification program for NWCOs.

A post-seminar survey revealed that participants were very pleased with the program. One participant noted that the best part of the meeting was "... having all this knowledge about this business in one place." Another said the shortcourse was "... a start to bring professionalism to the wildlife damage control field." Another participant stated that "The overall meeting was a benefit to me. The educated participants look at both sides of all issues and speak to the issue. The uneducated participants and special interest persons only look at the benefit to them."

A brief look at pre- and post-seminar surveys revealed the nuisance wildlife field is rapidly growing as most operators have been in business less than 5 years. Most have a high school diploma and have not had extensive training in wildlife management, wildlife damage management, or wildlife identification. The survey revealed most NWCOs use live-trapping and release as a preferred management method because 1) it improves public relations, 2) it is what the customer wants, 3) it gives the animal another chance, and/or 4) state law mandates release of animals after capture. In general, respondents felt euthanization should not be required for captured nuisance wildlife. They did feel that nuisance

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From Our Readers

To Wes Jones, Treasurer:

Enclosed is a check for a patron membership in behalf of R.J.E. Publications. We at Wildlife Control Technology are totally committed to this field and to the professionalism that your organization promotes. We will actively solicit our readers to join N.A.D.C.A. We feel that your organization is a great benefit to this diversified field of wildlife management.

*Robert J. Erickson, Editor
Wildlife Control Technology*

The following letter to Mr. Cal Cope of Myrtle Creek, Oregon, was sent in response to a letter written to James Forbes, NADCA President.

Dear Mr. Cope:

I received a copy of your letter to National Animal Damage Control Association from James Forbes. I appreciate your interest in wildlife management as it relates to trapping and effects on wildlife species.

As to your concerns regarding the bobcat legislation in California—you may be interested to know that the bill that would have banned trapping bobcat for commercial purposes was defeated soundly on the floor by a vote of the Senate of 11 to 21. This was viewed as a major victory for the trapping community and wildlife managers. The bill was based solely on emotion, and even the author

admitted there was no scientific basis for banning trapping.

I would encourage you to continue your subscription to NADCA because the benefits you receive are far greater than just the newsletter. For example, the leadership of NADCA keeps abreast of legislative actions and alerts members into action, communicates with legislators, special interest groups, and the news media. Without the support of people like yourself, NADCA could not function.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to drop me a line.

*Michael V. Worthen,
Regional Director, NADCA*



CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

June 3-5, 1994: The Eastern Cougar Conference, Gannon University, Erie, Pennsylvania. Contact Jay W. Tischendorf, American Ecological Research Institute, AERIE, P.O. Box 380, Fort Collins, CO 80522, (303) 224-5307.

August 2-4, 1994: Bird Strike Committee—USA, Ramada Hotel O'Hare, 6600 N. Mannheim Road, Rosemont, Illinois. Contact: James E. Forbes, USDA/APHIS/ADC, P.O. Box 97, Albany, New York, NY 12201-0097, (518) 472-6492, FAX (518) 472-4364.

September 11-17, 1994: Fur Takers of America Trappers College Short Course, Limber Lost Camp, LaGrange, Indiana. Contact: Charles Park, 410 S. Poplar Street, LaGrange, Indiana 46761, (219) 463-2072.

September 22, 1994: NADCA Membership Meeting, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Held in conjunction with the First Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society (see below). Contact James E. Forbes, (518) 472-6492, FAX (518) 472-4364.

September 21-25, 1994: First Annual Conference, The Wildlife Society, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Theme: "Excellence in Wildlife Stewardship through Science and Education." Includes half-day special symposium "Wildlife Damage Management: Future Policies and Practices." Contact: (301) 897-9770.

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Your contributions to *The Probe* are welcome. Please send news clippings, new techniques, publications, and meeting notices to *The Probe*, c/o Hopland Research & Extension Center, 4070 University Road, Hopland, CA 95449. If you prefer to FAX material, our FAX number is (707) 744-1040. The deadline for submitting material is the 15th of each month. Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of NADCA.

ADC News, Tips, Ideas, Publications...

NRA Internships Available

Internships are currently available with the Wildlife Management Department of the National Rifle Association of America (NRA). Interns must be able to work in the NRA Headquarters located in Fairfax, Virginia on a daily basis.

Positions are available throughout the year. Departmental issues include various aspects of federal and state legislation affecting wildlife conservation and hunting. Duties will include answering correspondence, researching information, assisting with the Grants-In-Aid program, helping to coordinate the Memoranda of Understanding Program with federal agencies, local travel for meetings, and general office responsibilities.

Applicant should be a current student or a recent graduate in a natural resource program with solid writing skills or a journalism major with sound working knowledge of hunting and conservation issues. Experience with firearms and hunting would be helpful. Possibly a small stipend and/or college credits. To apply, send cover letter indicating starting date preference, résumé, and writing sample to Wildlife Management Department, National Rifle Association of America, 11250 Waples Mill Road, Fairfax, VA 22030. Phone: 703-267-1503. Apply at least one month before preferred starting date.

PETA Rallies for Rats

According to a report in the Wildlife Legislative Fund of America's *WLFA-Gram*, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals is urging pest control companies to be kind to rats. PETA has embarked on a nationwide direct mail campaign to convince people that live trapping and better rodent proofing are a humane alternative to poisons, traps and glue board. The letter also claims that 80% of respondents to a recent survey believe all animals have rights and should be treated ethically.

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Shortcourse a Success

wildlife should be treated humanely. A large majority reported this was the first seminar on nuisance wildlife control they had attended and felt NWCs should be certified.

Plans are already underway for the next shortcourse, with an anticipation the turnout for the second will be larger than the first.

Wild Pigs Pork Out on California Grapes

As northern California grapegrowers work in their vineyards this year, they're anxiously looking forward to the harvest season. If worrying about the price of grapes wasn't enough, they wonder whether last year's battle with wild pigs will be repeated.

In Sonoma County, California, vineyards are a prime target for foraging feral hogs. Last season one grape-grower located near the small town of Healdsburg lost half his crop, a loss in revenue estimated at \$25,000. "The pigs weren't that interested in my chardonnay but they really love the pinot noir, probably because it has so much more flavor," said George Davis, owner of Porter Creek Vineyards.

According to a report in the October 13, 1993 *Healdsburg Tribune*, California agricultural officials have discovered that the wild pig population is exploding, especially in California's oak woodlands, home of the free-roaming pigs. Besides grapes, the porkers are known to attack corn and pumpkin crops and will damage young fruit trees.

With an increasing pig population, complaints are bound to increase. "They are like Sherman tanks going through chicken wire. A fence just doesn't stop them," said Davis. Davis added that he knew he was in trouble when he saw one herd that included 8 adults and 25 to 30 young pigs.

Another grower, Terry Harrison, obtained a deprecation permit from the Fish and Game Department. He hired a professional hunter who killed several pigs, one weighing in at 250 pounds. Harrison stated that the hog problems this past season were the worst he could remember.

Pigs are so prolific that hunters don't make much of a dent in their population. At Sonoma County's Lake Sonoma park headquarters, pigs have dug up the lawn near the main park office. Since 1986 the park has held pig hunts from November to January of each year. In 1992 approximately 100 pigs were killed. But according to Supervisor Ranger Merle Griffin, the animals reproduce faster than they can possibly be hunted. "They're hard to get . . . they're a smart animal," Griffin said.

The editors of The PROBE thank contributors to this issue: Mike Worthen, James E. Forbes, and Wes Jones. We also wish to thank those who sent material that we were unable to use because of space limitations. Send your contributions to The PROBE, 4070 University Road, Hopland, CA 95449.

**TIME VALUED MATERIAL
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Terrell P. Salmon
DANR-North Region
University of California
Davis, CA 95616-8575

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Membership Application

NATIONAL ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL ASSOCIATION

Mail to: Wes Jones, Treasurer, Route 1 Box 37, Shell Lake, WI 54871, Phone: (715) 468-2038

Name: _____ Phone: (____) ____ - ____ Home

Address: _____ Phone: (____) ____ - ____ Office

Additional Address Info: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP _____

Dues: \$ _____ Donation: \$ _____ Total: \$ _____ Date: _____

Membership Class: Student \$10.00 Active \$20.00 Sponsor \$40.00 Patron \$100 (Circle one)

Check or Money Order payable to NADCA

Select one type of occupation or principal interest:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Pest Control Operator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> USDA - APHIS - ADC or SAT | <input type="checkbox"/> Retired |
| <input type="checkbox"/> USDA - Extension Service | <input type="checkbox"/> ADC Equipment/Supplies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Federal - not APHIS or Extension | <input type="checkbox"/> State Agency |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign | <input type="checkbox"/> Trapper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nuisance Wildlife Control Operator | <input type="checkbox"/> University |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe) _____ | |

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