University of Nebraska - Lincoln
DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Third Eastern Wildlife Damage Control Conference, 1987 | Eastern Wildlife Damage Control Conferences

10-18-1987

THE CRITTER CONTROL CONCEPT APPROACHES OF A FIRM SPECIALIZING IN NUISANCE WILDLIFE CONTROL

Lynn Braband
Critter Control, Inc.

Kevin Clark
Critter Control, Inc.

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ewdcc3

Part of the Environmental Health and Protection Commons

Braband, Lynn and Clark, Kevin, "THE CRITTER CONTROL CONCEPT APPROACHES OF A FIRM SPECIALIZING IN NUISANCE WILDLIFE CONTROL" (1987). *Third Eastern Wildlife Damage Control Conference, 1987*. Paper 5.
http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ewdcc3/5

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Eastern Wildlife Damage Control Conferences at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Third Eastern Wildlife Damage Control Conference, 1987 by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

THE CRITTER CONTROL CONCEPT
APPROACHES OF A FIRM SPECIALIZING IN NUISANCE WILDLIFE CONTROL

by Lynn Braband[1/] and Kevin Clark[2/]

INTRODUCTION

The private sector has been involved in certain aspects of nuisance wildlife control for some time. Examples include commensal rodent control by pest control companies, capture of nuisance furbearers by trappers, and repair of structural damage by carpenters. Social trends, such as increased urbanization, increased population of certain wildlife species, and decreased government funding have combined to provide increased opportunity and need for the private sector in nuisance wildlife control.

Critter Control, Inc. has sought to bring an integrated and specialized approach to nuisance wildlife control. Our general approach includes consultation on the nature of the nuisance situation, removal of nuisance animals and habitat modification.

Initial interaction with clients functions not only to elucidate the nature of the problem but to educate the client on the animal involved. Occasionally, little or no control is needed, just an understanding of the situation. When we remove raccoons from chimneys, frequently an audience, complete with cameras, gathers to watch the operation. Such episodes are excellent opportunities to promote positive attitudes toward wild animals and their conservation. With increasing concern over the rate of species extinction, any opportunity to promote conservation should be taken advantage of.

Animal removal is often necessary in order to rectify a problem situation. For example, if squirrels are excluded from attics and the entrance holes are repaired, our experience is that usually the nuisance individuals will chew out new holes.

Live trapping and translocation are our preferred techniques, although lethal methods (such as body-gripping traps) are also utilized.

We make recommendations concerning habitat modification which can decrease nuisance situations and, when feasible, perform the work. Such modifications often involve exclusion such as rat walls to prevent skunks from digging under porches, chimney covers, and hardware clothe over squirrel entrance holes in houses.

RACCOON REMOVAL FROM CHIMNEYS

The presence of a raccoon in a chimney is a legitimate concern of any client, as they have been known to open dampers and enter houses, introduce fleas to the living area, and may carry raccoon roundworm (Baylisascaris procyonis).

The technique we have developed entails the use of a control stick, chimney rods and chimney brushes. The chimney brush is run down the chimney attached to flexible fiberglass chimney rods. When the brush enters the smoke chamber and drops to the damper, an escape route is opened up for the raccoon to exit the chamber. When the raccoon climbs into the flue, the brush is pulled up behind the animal, preventing it from going back down the chimney. The rods are then pulled up the chimney until the raccoon is 4-5 feet from the top of the chimney, where the control stick is used to snare the animal and pull it from the chimney for transferring into a live trap. The raccoon is then taken a minimum of 10 miles from where captured.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF BATS

Bats suffer from cultural misconceptions which tend to magnify the nuisance situation in the minds of many clients. Some individuals and firms

1/ Regional director for the State of New York for Critter Control, Inc. P.O. Box 19389 Rochester, NY 14619
2/ President of Critter Control, Inc. 32932 Warren (Suite B) Westland, MI 48185 (800) 451-6544 (313) 522-6888

"play upon" a fear of bats in selling their services. Accurate information needs to be communicated concerning the actual risks involved. Our New York State office gives reprints of a research review article about bats and health risks (Tuttle and Kern 1981) to clients concerned about bats.

BAT CHECK VALVE USE

Our New York office utilizes polypropylene bird netting to facilitate bat exclusion (Frantz 1986). We search basically the upper half of the house to locate all holes 3/8 of an inch or larger for bat entries (Greenhall 1983). Probable major entry holes are identified by signs of bat activity (droppings, stains) and/or the size of the hole. The hole search can be augmented by dusk or dawn observations of bat movement. The client can assist by doing such observations before work begins (Frantz, personal communication).

Smaller, less important holes are closed by caulking, hardware clothe, or other appropriate materials. Check valves made of Bird-X Inc. structural bird netting are then suspended over the main entry holes. The netting is secured around the entrance hole so that the only opening out of the netting is approximately one meter below the hole (Frantz 1986). Usually staples and duct tape are sufficient to secure the netting, but modifications can be made depending on the structural construction and length of time the netting should be attached so that it is not constricted near the entrance hole; otherwise bats may be reluctant to leave at that site (Frantz, personal communciation). The bats normally find their way out the bottom of the netting. Since the netting does not interfere with air movement and odor cues from the entrance hole, bats still try to enter, unsuccessfully, near the hole (Frantz 1986). After at least five days (Frantz, personal communication), the netting can be removed and the holes repaired. A major advantage of the bird net check valve is the flexibility in arranging over essentially any bat entrance site. We have attached the netting to holes in roof corners along baseboards, under overhangs, along chimneys and under dormers.

Several of our bat exclusion jobs have been subcontracted to a carpenter who brings excellent knowledge of structural repair. In still other jobs, we did the entrance site search and hanging the check valves while the client contracted a carpenter or mason to do the repair work. This gives the homeowner an opportunity to be involved in the actual operation of excluding the bats, if they desire.

FLUSHING AND REPELLING BATS

The only pesticide labeled for use on bats in many states is Rozol tracking powder. DDT is no longer allowed to be used on bats (Frantz, personal communication). Both of these poisons leave a lot to be desired in the control of bats. They are slow working, leave long term residuals of highly toxic dusts, may cause an increase in the number of bats that have human contact (Tuttle and Kern 1981), and may lead to secondary poisoning and exposure to rabies.

A method we are using in Michigan is the introduction of Chloropicrin (tear gas) into attic roosts of bats. The Chloropicrin is labeled for use as a space fumigant to combat the fungi associated with histoplasmosis, and thereby negate any related health hazards. Bats are driven from the roost by the irritation of the fumigant, and entry holes are repaired soon after the bats are driven from the roost.

CONCLUSIONS

As a business, nuisance wildlife control is at the interface of traditional pest control firms, conservation agencies, and humane societies. Perspectives and techniques appropriate to the control of nuisance wildlife within the context of private enterprise are called for.

LITERATURE CITED

FRANTZ, STEPHEN C. 1986. Batproofing structures with bird netting checkvalves. Pages 260-268 in Proc. 12th Vertebrate Pest Conference, Davis,

California.
GREENHALL, ARTHUR M. 1983. Bats. Pages D-9 to D-22 in Robert M. Timm, Ed. Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage, Great Plains Agricultural Council and Nebraska Coop. Ext. Service, Lincoln, Neb.
TUTTLE, MERLIN D. AND STEVEN J. KERN. 1981. Bats and Public Health. Milwaukee Public Museum Contrib. Biol. Geol. No. 48, 11pp.