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Workshop Summary

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WORKSHOP SUMMARY

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Proceedings 10th Great Plains Wildlife Damage Conference
(S.E. Hygnstrom, R.M. Case, and R.J. Johnson, eds.)
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The Tenth Great Plains Wildlife Damage Control Workshop (GPWDCW) was held 15-18 April 1991 at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln, Nebraska. The goal was to provide a forum for individuals involved in the field of wildlife damage management to discuss new ideas and recent advances in ecology, technology, public education, and policy. The format allowed for interaction and exchange on damage control strategies, priority areas for research, and public information and extension activities. The GPWDCW is 1 of 3 national conferences (including the Vertebrate Pest Conference and the Eastern Wildlife Damage Control Conference) that deal specifically with wildlife damage management.

Over 250 people from 22 states and 2 provinces participated in the workshop. Most participants were responsible for management, administration, or extension duties through federal or state agencies, or educational institutions. Others reported research, regulatory, commercial, teaching, consulting, policy, and producer responsibilities. Most participants were involved with wildlife damage management relative to agriculture (especially livestock, field crops, cash crops, nurseries, and fruit crops) and dealt with damage caused by predators, birds, field rodents, ungulates, commensal rodents, and others.

The focus of this year's workshop and general session was *Wildlife Damage Management and the Public*. The keynote

address, delivered by Gary J. San Julian of the National Wildlife Federation, dealt with the need to identify current audiences and to define changing roles as natural resources professionals in today's environment. This message was accentuated by Rick D. Owens who presented a thesis that highlighted environmentalism and animal welfare as cornerstones of wildlife damage management. During the same session, 2 administrative leaders, James E. Miller and Bobby R. Acord, delivered presentations that provided guidance for the future of the field. Jeffrey S. Green discussed the role of education and the public's understanding of wildlife damage management, in particular as it applies to youth. In addition, Alice P. Wywialowski presented a pertinent and timely description of the animal rights movement and discussed the implications of their actions on society and the field of wildlife damage management. These papers that were requested or selected for the opening session were instrumental in setting the tone of the workshop—that wildlife damage management is a societal need and concern that must evolve to meet the needs of a changing society.

During the next 2 1/2 days, 7 subject sessions were held on a wide variety of topics, including: predators, rodents, birds, special programs and projects, general management, and U.S. Department of Agriculture-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) activities. Thirty-two 20-minute presentations covering

a wide range of topics were made during these sessions. Ecological/behavioral papers were presented on coyotes (*Canis latrans*), black-tailed prairie dogs (*Cynomys ludovicianus*), burrowing owls (*Athene cunicularia*), double-crested cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*), plains pocket gophers (*Geomys bursarius*), deer mice (*Peromyscus maniculatus*), Canada geese (*Branta canadensis*), elk (*Cervus elaphus*), and others. Methods-related papers illustrated the search that continues for new products and the imaginative uses of old products. Presentations addressed livestock protection collars, barrier fences, field rodent toxicants, monofilament lines, repellents, and computer-assisted decision making models. Two videos on public perceptions of coyotes and coyote control by Dale Rollins were shown and Leonard Askham presented a dynamic 3-dimensional, computer-generated image of subterranean vole burrows—a real eye-opener. The session on USDA-APHIS addressed a variety of new activities including: the Utah State University cooperative program, USDA-APHIS-Cooperative Extension joint activities, compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, and the programs being conducted through the Denver Wildlife Research Center.

One of the really positive aspects of this year's workshop was the involvement of students who made presentations relative to wildlife damage management. The National Animal Damage Control Association (NADCA) sponsored an Outstanding Student Awards program that recognized the 3 best papers presented by students at the workshop. Six students participated in the program and Kimberly K. Kessler of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln won top honors with her presentation entitled, "Lines to Selectively Repel House Sparrows from Backyard Feeders." Other award winners were John L. Koprowski of the University of

Kansas with, "Damage Due to Scent Marking by Eastern Gray and Fox Squirrels," and Bruce A. Jasch of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with, "A Cultural Method of Reducing Pocket Gopher Impact on Alfalfa Yields." Kim received a plaque from Terrell P. Salmon, President, NADCA, and all were awarded an autographed copy of "Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage." In addition, 20 undergraduate students from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln served as hosts to the workshop. The students, who were enrolled in a 3-credit course in wildlife damage management, assisted with registration, audio-visual projection, field tours, displays, and transportation. They were also provided the unique opportunity to meet many of the leaders in the field of wildlife damage management.

The workshop closed on 18 April with a session on professionalism. The session was closely linked with the opening session and provided many thought-provoking ideas. Robert S. Cook lamented on the evolution of the field and the search for a name that would best convey our image and activities to the public. Terrell P. Salmon discussed the legal, political, and social aspects of the field, and Jay B. McAninch challenged every member of the audience to evaluate themselves and to adapt to new challenges with a presentation entitled, "Wildlife Damage Management in the 90s—Does the Professional Fit the Profession?" It was a strong, but necessary message for members of a profession that must change to serve a changing society.

In addition to the scheduled presentations, there were several meetings that were conducted in association with the workshop. A reception was held for authors, reviewers, and sponsors of the handbook, "Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage" (Timm 1983). NADCA held an

executive board meeting and a membership business meeting in conjunction with the workshop. These meetings reflected a change in the organization with several new officers, a revised newsletter format, an awards program, and activities addressing several issues that are currently affecting wildlife damage management. The Wildlife Committee of the Great Plains Agricultural Council, which sponsors the GPWDCW, met to discuss the workshop and several other activities. The committee passed a motion that the Eleventh GPWDCW be held in Kansas in 1993 and hosted by F. Robert Henderson. In addition, USDA-APHIS, Denver Wildlife Research Center hosted a meeting on "zinc phosphide re-registration" for zinc phosphide registrants and other interested agencies, organizations, and individuals.

An exhibit and trade show was hosted in conjunction with the workshop. Eighteen commercial exhibitors displayed their wares for 2 days in the Cornhusker Hotel atrium, immediately adjacent to the workshop session rooms. Items displayed included: bird frightening devices, electric fencing materials, repellents, rodenticides, trapping supplies, capture devices, educational brochures, a service franchise, and much more. It provided an excellent opportunity for the workshop attendees to interact with the private sector, to discuss ideas, and view new products.

Another objective not mentioned earlier was to have a good time. The workshop kick-off was a field trip for 40 eager souls to the Platte River near Grand Island, Nebraska to view migrating Sandhill cranes (*Grus canadensis*). Gary Lingle, Platte River Whooping Crane Trust, presented a program on management and environmental concerns. The tour continued to the USDA Meat Animal Research Center near Clay Center. Here Kirk E. Gustad, USDA-APHIS-

Nebraska Animal Damage Control, discussed predator control activities on the facility. Before returning to Lincoln, the group toured a portion of the Rainwater Basin area where they viewed migrating waterfowl, and learned about habitat loss and management in the area from Richard A. Gersib, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

While the workshop was in progress, 2 spouse tours were led by Janet R. Hygnstrom. One tour encompassed the historical Haymarket Square area, and the second included special tours of the State Capitol, and the historic Kennard and Ferguson houses. For those who still had not had fun there was Richard D. Turpin, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission who delivered a very humorous and message-oriented presentation at the Tuesday luncheon. To top off the program, Roger Welsch of Dannebrog, Nebraska, spoke at the Wednesday evening banquet. His prairie humor and hilarious observations of rural life provided an excellent release for the workshop participants who had been seated listening to scientific and position papers for 2 days.

To evaluate the workshop, participants completed questionnaires that were included in the registration packets. Fifty-six useable questionnaires were returned and overall they were very complimentary. When asked what they liked most about the workshop in general, respondents reported: the overall organization (23%), facilities/accommodations (23%), and the location (20%). Others liked the social and recreational aspects, as well as the student award program, and the professionalism of participants. When asked the same about the subject sessions, most respondents reported: the diversity of subjects and speakers (39%), keeping on time (20%), and the opening session on Wildlife Damage Management and the Public (18%). Others liked the

breaks, room controls, and having no concurrent sessions. When asked what they liked least about the workshop in general, most said "nothing" (23%). When asked the same about the subject sessions, respondents reported: lacks practical information (16%), session papers (11%), need concurrent sessions (9%). Ninety-four percent of the respondents reported that the information presented at the workshop was very useful or somewhat useful.

Overall, the workshop was successful in achieving its objectives. It provided a forum for the exchange of information and ideas among individuals of the public and private sectors associated with wildlife damage

management. It highlighted the importance of defining and dealing with various audiences, and provided information on new approaches and new solutions aimed at safe, cost-effective, and socially acceptable animal damage control. Participants recognized the need to continue to foster professionalism and to be aware of and responsive to the changing needs and issues in wildlife damage management.

LITERATURE CITED

Timm, R. M. 1983. Prevention and control of wildlife damage. Univ. of Nebraska-Lincoln and the Great Plains Agric. Council. Lincoln, Nebraska. 650 pp.