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WILDLIFE DAMAGE EDUCATION AT AUBURN UNIVERSITY

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Wildlife Damage Control is offered as a 3-hour course during winter quarter in alternate years at Auburn University. This course is taught simultaneously at the undergraduate and graduate levels. *Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage* (R. Timm, ed.) 1983. Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service, University of Nebraska-Lincoln) is the course text, but numerous outside readings are provided on specific topic areas. Graduate students are given additional required reading material, must complete a term paper, and are given examinations requiring greater synthesis of ideas than do those administered to undergraduates. An optional weekend field trip, arranged in cooperation with United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Animal Damage Control (ADC) personnel, is included and considered to be an important component. The course is taken as an elective under the undergraduate wildlife curriculum, usually in the junior or senior year. The wildlife curriculum is structured to meet both university core curriculum and The Wildlife Society (TWS) certification requirements. This does not allow Wildlife Damage Control to be included as a required course. Average combined class size is 15.

I have developed the course to meet a number of objectives: (1) to impress students with the importance of wildlife damage control as a discipline within the wildlife profession; (2) to familiarize students with the history, complexity, and emotional nature of wildlife damage control, as practiced in the United States; (3) to provide students with an understanding of current federal and state aproaches to wildlife damage control problems; (4) to assist students in formulating a philosophy regarding wildlife damage control that recognizes both the needs of the wildlife resource and of the public that is being affected; (5) to provide an overview of the types of control measures that are available and of the factors to be considered in selecting which measures to use in a given situation; (6) to familiarize students with the pesticide registration and regulation process and with important existing vertebrate pesticides; (7) to provide an overview of the major vertebrate groups containing problem species, the types of problems associated with each group, and the various control measures that are currently available; (8) to provide students with an understanding of the role of Wildlife Extension Specialists in wildlife damage control programs; and (9) to discuss research consideration relative to the development of wildlife damage control methods and programs.

My goal in this course is to give students an overview of the discipline of wildlife damage control and an appreciation for the complexity of wildlife damage situations and issues. I stress the importance of problem definition and understanding the ecological and political implications of undertaking expensive andoftencontroversialcontrolprograms. Students areinformed that many damage situations arise because of human intrusion into natural communities, and that many "pest" species, in other situations, are valued by humans. I emphasize that effort should be directed to controlling damage, and if possible, altering the situation so that damage is no longer incurred, rather than simply reducing numbers of those species responsible for inflicting damage. In the past I have included 1 lecture presented by a representative of the federal ADC program, one by our Wildlife Extension Specialist on the role of extension, and one by a representative of United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service-S&T on an integrated pest management approach to a problem situation. I also have arranged for outside speakers to visit with students at an informal social at my home. I believe that students benefit greatly from the personal viewpoints of these visiting lecturers.

It is my opinion that Wildlife Damage Control should be included as a required course for undergraduates majoring in wildlife biology. However, current core curriculum and TWS certification requirements allow for little flexibility. It may be worthwhile for TWS to review it's certification requirements to determine whether Wildlife Damage Control could be substituted for an existing requirement. I would not recommend including it as an additional required course, as some universities are already experiencing difficulty integrating these requirements into their 4-year curriculum.

' Cooperators: U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Game and Fish Division of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Wildlife Management Institute, and Auburn University (Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station, Department of Fisheries and Allied Aquacultures, Department of Zoology and Wildlife Science). Contribution No. 15913128, Agricultural Experiment Station.