

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

The Probe: Newsletter of the National Animal
Damage Control Association

Wildlife Damage Management, Internet Center for

May 1996

The Probe, Issue 165 – May 1996

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/icwdmprobe>



Part of the [Environmental Sciences Commons](#)

"The Probe, Issue 165 – May 1996" (1996). *The Probe: Newsletter of the National Animal Damage Control Association*. 20.
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/icwdmprobe/20>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Wildlife Damage Management, Internet Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Probe: Newsletter of the National Animal Damage Control Association by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

The Wildlife Damage Management Professional

Robert H. Schmidt, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Utah State University, Logan Utah 84322-5210

A USDA-Animal Damage Control specialist traps coyotes with leg-hold traps to stop predation on lambs. A licensed nuisance wildlife control operator installs one-way bat doors to keep bats from returning to an attic. A Cooperative Extension advisor sends information to a feedlot manager on using anticoagulant poisons to remove house mice from the inside of walls. A county Animal Control Officer lends a large cage trap to a house owner with a resident skunk. A Pest Control Advisor gives recommendations to an airport manager for decreasing the risk of bird-strike hazards to aircraft. A state wildlife biologist assesses deer damage in an apple orchard to determine the proper amount of compensation available to the farmer.

What do these events have in common? They all involve wildlife causing real or perceived damage to a person's interests - livestock, structures, safety, or plant agriculture. They can also involve a person with special training for solving wildlife damage problems - the wildlife damage management professional.

Wait a minute... what can an ADC specialist, a nuisance wildlife control operator, an Extension advisor, an animal control officer, a pest control advisor, and a state wildlife biologist actually have in common? Good question! Isn't the training and educational experience required for these positions different? Don't they work with different animals and in different locations? Aren't they employed by different agencies, or self-employed?

The answer is yes to all of the above. The wildlife damage profession includes a variety of people with diverse educational backgrounds and various degrees of practical experience. A trapper shouldn't expect that a person specializing in the management of Norway rats in rice fields is an expert trapper, and vice versa. There is a commonality, however, that should be expected from all of us

involved in wildlife damage management. This commonality is professionalism.

Simply put, a *professional* is a person characterized by certain technical and ethical standards. For wildlife damage management professionals, those standards are sometimes difficult to define. We don't do the same things. All practicing wildlife damage managers cannot trap a beaver, manage zinc phosphide safely, or recommend the most appropriate breed of livestock guarding animal for a particular situation. All wildlife damage management professionals cannot shoot a rifle, inventory black-footed ferrets, or design a research study. We differ greatly in our training and technical experience. Does this mean that we, as a profession, are comprised of nonprofessionals?

It does not! However, just because you can carry a box trap, put a raccoon excluding device on a chimney, or trap a fox does not make you a wildlife damage management professional. For example, I don't claim to be a mechanic because I can change the oil in my car,

or a dentist because I can brush my teeth. So what defines the wildlife damage management professional?

It comes back to the issues of technical and ethical standards. First, the professional must have the highest possible technical standards. This includes performing to the best of your abilities and standing behind your work. It includes turning down a job or referring to another technical expert whenever your skills are not appropriate or sufficient. It includes seeking out educational opportunities to continuously upgrade your skills.

In addition, the wildlife damage management professional must have high ethical standards. There needs to be a commitment to resolving damage complaints. There must be strict adherence to applicable laws and regulations. There needs to be understanding - not necessarily agreement - for

First, the professional must have the highest possible technical standards... In addition, the wildlife damage management professional must have high ethical standards.

Continued on page 2, Col. 1

Wildlife Damage Management Professional

varying viewpoints on the tools and strategies involved in wildlife damage management. These standards are in addition to traits like honesty, integrity, and sincerity, which all professionals should have.

I expect these characteristics from all people who call themselves wildlife damage management professionals. They should expect the same from me. Note that these ethical and technical standards can incorporate people from different backgrounds and with different specialties. Diversity is good. One person cannot be an expert in all areas of wildlife damage management.

I hope the professional characteristics listed above are not controversial. There are additional standards, however, which have been mentioned in professional circles that stimulate a great deal of heated debate. One controversial standard goes like this: "As a wildlife damage management professional, I will choose the most humane, selective, and effective management strategy that is practical when trying to solve a wildlife damage problem."

I think you can guess what the most controversial part of this statement is. Selectivity... no. We should always eliminate non-target impacts when possible. Effective... no. If a technique is not effective, why choose it in the first place? Humane... now, wait a minute. Who develops this standard, how is it determined, and what if the humane technique is the most expensive strategy or only solves part of the problem? What happens when the issues of humaneness, selectivity, and effectiveness conflict?

We know that, in general, many wildlife damage management professionals are skittish when discussing issues relating to animal suffering. This is the heart of much controversy, yet the public looks to us for leadership and inspiration. Many of us tend to avoid the issue. But if the professional can't address or discuss this issue, we can't complain when our clients go elsewhere for information and advice. We should be bold enough to address controversial issues.

I believe that these types of questions and concerns are what really separate the wildlife damage professionals from the rest of the pack. The wildlife damage management professional should be in the best position to determine the needs and concerns of the client. The wildlife damage management professional should understand the full range of management options and explain the consequences - economic, social, practical, and legal - of each to the client. Finally, the wildlife damage management professional should be able to say "no" to a particular course of action when he or she believes that it is not in the best interest of either the profession or the client to continue.

There is no standard answer for what should be done in a particular situation, nor should there be one. Professionals, as defined above, should take the credit and responsibility for their actions. Wildlife damage management activities are important to the well-being of the nation, to the quality of life of its citizens, and to the well-being of wildlife. Our professional activities are in demand, and that demand will only increase into the future. We are competent, we are proud, and we are useful. We are the wildlife damage management professionals.

Robert H. Schmidt

Dept. of Fisheries and Wildlife, Utah State University,
Logan UT 84322-5210
telephone 801-797-2536, FAX 801-797-1871; e-mail
rschmidt@cc.usu.edu

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

July 14-16, 1996: 6th Annual Bird Strike Committee-USA (BAC-USA) Meeting, Phoenix, Arizona: Held in conjunction with the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) at the Wigwam Hotel, Phoenix, AZ. Contact: Ms. Holly Ackenman, phone (703) 824-0504.

October 1-6, 1996: 3rd Annual Conference, The Wildlife Society, Cincinnati, Ohio. Conference will include a Symposium, "Social, Economic and Environmental Benefits of Wildlife Damage Management," to be coordinated by Dr. Kathleen Fagerstone (contact at 303-236-2098). For general information on the Conference, contact TWS at (301) 530-2471.

The Probe is the newsletter of the National Animal Damage Control Association, published 11 times per year. Copyright © 1996 NADCA. No part of this newsletter may be reproduced in any form without the written permission of the Editors.

Editor: Robert M. Timm, *Hopland Research & Extension Center, 4070 University Road, Hopland, CA 95449*

Editorial Assistant:

Pamela J. Timmin, *163 Mulford Hall, UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA 94720*

Your contributions to *The Probe* are welcome. Please send newsclippings, new techniques, publications, and meeting notices to *The Probe*, c/o Hopland Research & Extension Center, 4070 University Road, Hopland, CA 95449. Articles and notes can also be sent by e-mail to rmtimm@ucdavis.edu. 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 . . .

ADC "News on the Net" - Computer Talk on Animal Damage Control

Editor's Note: The following items were posted recently to the computer listserv WDAMAGE, and are of interest to PROBE readers:

Susan Greene writes (Feb. 28, 1996):

Has anyone else noticed that eastern "anti-ADC" folk tend to overlook the correlation between eastern intolerance of small critters in the garden/home and western intolerance of larger critters that kill livestock?

I recently was contacted by a very "environmentally conscious" young couple whose cat had been bitten badly on the tail by an unknown animal. They wanted to borrow cage-traps and relocate any wildlife they caught, and take any strays to a shelter. This was in January, in below zero temps. They seemed very unconvinced when I talked about how relocation was very inhumane at this time of year; that relocation by private landowners was in fact illegal; that perhaps they should just keep their cat in...etc. It would not have been so jarring an experience had this young, professional couple not been such vocal "environmentalists" (in our area, this usually means anti-management). They simply did not see any connection of their own desire to sweep their backyard clean of wild danger to their beloved pet, with the ranchers desire to protect his livelihood by removing coyotes.

I finally convinced them to pre-bait for a week. Nothing ate the food, and they decided trapping was "unnecessary." (Note: I do not "lend" traps, but I do try to talk to people who call about lending/renting because I don't want them to just run out and buy a trap at the local garden center and do something stupid with it).

I am constantly surprised how many homes I arrive at, with stickers proclaiming association with anti-ADC organizations stuck on the glass, where the landowner chooses to have an animal removed rather than use the other exclusion/prevention options I offer. I have regular customers that would rather have me come by every few months and trap a raccoon when they discover dirt in the cat's kitchen waterbowl, rather than just CLOSING THE CAT DOOR. I usually wear these people into submission over time, but it is frustrating to hear these same people talk about coyote murder when they are contracting for "raccoon murder."

Is this a common experience for other easterners? Has anyone ever had to point out these inconsistencies to a stubborn customer? I stopped just short of that with the above couple, although I did make some comments how they now should have a better understanding of how a rancher feels...

Mike Dwyer replies as follows:

Susan, I don't mix politics and business. I can't believe that my customers are interested in hearing how my environmental views differ from theirs. Similarly, I would not be interested in having a plumber, electrician or any other residential service provider I have hired preach to me about their anti-

hunting views. Now don't get me wrong, it would be unethical for a NWCO not to mention that the source of the problem is, for example, the cat door. But to go beyond that into the realm of an eco-political discussion is a mistake.

I run a business; I am hired to provide a service not win converts to my eco-political positions. My family, my employees and their families depend on me to run my business profitably and I take that responsibility very seriously. Service business profitability is directly related to customer satisfaction and it would be difficult to consistently satisfy customers while constantly challenging their personal values and beliefs.

I agree with you that many of these folks have peculiar views and these views are often dependent on whether the conflict is in their own backyard or someone else's; no one ever said life was fair. But the interaction of a commercial relationship is not the appropriate forum to seek to alter their views. I feel so strongly about this that if one of my technicians insisted on "point(ing) out these inconsistencies to a stubborn customer" I would fire him/her. On the other hand, I would encourage all of my direct competitors to engage every single one of their customers in intense discussions concerning animal rights beliefs, anti-trapping sentiments, trophy hunting, vegetarianism, etc.....

Wildlife Population Control Strategy Publication Available

For those interested in contraception and immunocontraception as a wildlife population control strategy, the following publication is now available:

McIvor, D.E., and R.H. Schmidt. 1996. Annotated Bibliography for Wildlife Contraception: Methods, Approaches, & Policy. Berryman Institute, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Utah State University, Logan. 112 pages.

The publication can be obtained free by contacting:

Don McIvor
Department of Fisheries & Wildlife
Utah State University
Logan UT 84322-5210

The editor of The PROBE thanks contributors to this issue: Robert H. Schmidt, Mike Dwyer, and Stephen Vantassel. Send your contributions to The PROBE, 4070 University Road, Hopland, CA 95449.

Book Review

Stephen Vantassel, Special Correspondent, The PROBE

Review of "Eastern Coyote: The Story of Its Success." By Gerry Parker. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Nimbus Press 1995 251 pp. with Index and B+W photos.

Gerry Parker has written a book for the professional and lay biologists who are keenly interested in this highly adaptable animal known as the eastern coyote. Mr. Parker presents the reader with a thoroughly researched and comprehensive look at the life history of the eastern coyote. Perhaps more importantly for many readers, however, is Mr. Parker's recounting of the coyote's relationship with mankind. His stated purpose for writing this book is to fill the informational gap on the eastern coyote's taxonomy, colonization, natural history and management (p.ix).

Mr. Parker painstakingly overviews the controversial discussion about the eastern coyote's taxonomy. Technical skull and genetic studies have been wonderfully synopsisized to provide the reader with the relevant findings. Interested readers will appreciate his even-handed approach to the evidence on both sides, an approach he uses with other controversial issues.

One of this best chapters is Parker's overview of coyote colonization in the eastern part of the USA and the Atlantic provinces of Canada. His inclusion of photographs and anecdotes regarding early contact with the coyote make for some interesting reading. Professors will appreciate the excellent diagrams graphically depicting the eastern coyote's march east.

The next few chapters center on the data-gathering side of biology. Mr. Parker sifts through the available research to provide important information regarding the coyote's physical characteristics and eating habits. I marvel at the man-hours it took to measure all those coyotes and the stamina needed to evaluate their stomach and fecal contents. Readers should be interested in knowing that the average male eastern coyote weighs between 35-40 pounds, which is several pounds more than his western counterpart (p.42). The studies on coyote food habits reveal that the coyote eats what is available. Like the bobcat, the Northern eastern coyote relies heavily upon the snowshoe hare. However, unlike the bobcat, the coyote can readily readjust its diet to other animals when the snowshoe hare is less abundant. It is this ability to adapt to menu changes that has allowed the coyote to flourish in the East.

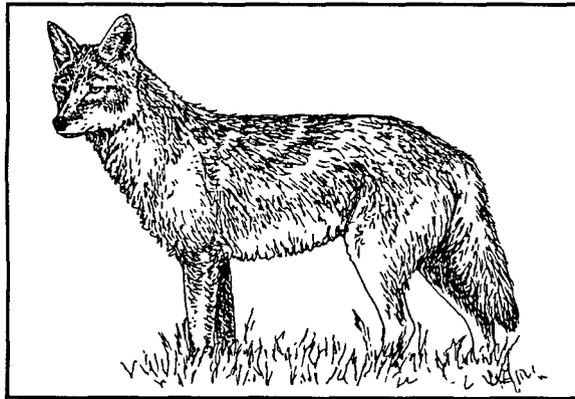
Chapters on "Reproduction", "Population Dynamics" and "Home Range and Movements" respectively detail studies on litter sizes and population densities. But it is in these chapters

that Mr. Parker begins to more deeply address the concern over the management of the eastern coyote. For example, there is evidence that during periods of high mortality that coyote bear more females than males (p.86). While Parker believes the majority of this evidence results from sampling bias, he still holds out the possibility that gender ratios could be influenced due to food availability and population densities (p.89). Another interesting finding was that to properly reduce resident coyote populations, control should be administered between March and May. Traditional winter trapping and hunting of coyote generally only removes the younger coyotes who are more vulnerable due to their dispersing to find their own territories (p.90).

The last few chapters, except for chapters entitled "Interspecific Interactions" and "Diseases and Parasites", wrestle with issues regarding coyotes' conflicts with man. Specifically, these conflicts center around white-tail deer population, domesticated animal predation, and management. Although providing a great deal of information, the findings are essentially simple. First, coyotes eat healthy deer so that their predation is additive not just compensatory (pp.140-145, 152). Second, bounties as an incentive to control coyote are not successful (p.158). Third, prevention of coyote predation on domestic livestock is dependent on the particular situation of the farmer. One prevention technique will not work in all predation circumstances. Finally, the predator-prey relationship between coyote and deer and humans and deer are still in dynamic flux. Perhaps, sometime in the not-too-distant future a model will be implemented that will permit the coyote his place in the equation.

One of the positive aspects to the book lies in the careful way that Mr. Parker evaluated the evidence. His book is not just the random accumulation of evidence. Rather, Mr. Parker carefully explains why the data may not prove what it at first appears to suggest. In this regard, the text is an excellent primer on statistical interpretation. Learning how the coyote was able to adapt to eastern forests was also appreciated. Given the likelihood that Massachusetts will lose footholds and conibears in the next election, I look forward to the coyote thriving so that the foothold will return to my state.

Parker's use of photographs and diagrams were well thought out and placed. Lastly, although a little weak on the control side of coyote damage, farmers and ADC personnel will



Continued from page 1

“The Eastern Coyote: The Story of Its Success”

find value in the principles laid out in preventing coyote predation on livestock. In particular, discussions on guarding animals is very good.

As one not trained in the field of biology, I found the book at times about as interesting as one in systematic theology. Frequently, his sentences were exceedingly long and complex, making comprehension of the material difficult at times. Another disappointing aspect to this work was the author's blind acceptance of evolutionary theories. I found it interesting that Mr. Parker rarely made definitive statements regarding contemporary evidence but he seemed to have no trouble stating matter of factly the evolutionary origins of coyotes. How could Mr. Parker be more certain about events that presumably happened millions of years ago but so uncertain about findings which occurred during his own lifetime?

I would say that if you're interested in the technical side of biology, then this book should be on your shelf. Mr. Parker has done a fine job performing the difficult task of gathering and then synthesizing the available information in a manner that makes it usable for researchers.

Since this isn't a book about controlling the coyote, I won't be giving it an animal damage control grade. I would say that if you're interested in the technical side of biology, then this book should be on your shelf. Mr. Parker has done a fine job performing the difficult task of gathering and then synthesizing the available information in a manner that makes it usable for researchers.

To get your copy of *Eastern Coyote: The Story of Its Success* call 1-800-639-4099 or send \$18.95 plus shipping and handling to Chelsea Green, 205 Gates-Briggs Blvd., White River Junction, VT 05001.

Stephen Vantassel, NWCO Correspondent
340 Cooley St. Box 102, Springfield, MA 01128
E-mail ADCTRAPPER@aol.com
©1996 Stephen Vantassel

Ohio Wildlife Control Association News

Mike Dwyer, President, OWCA

At the suggestion of the Ohio Division of Wildlife the OWCA and the Ohio State Trappers Association have formed a joint working group to develop proposals for revised nuisance trapping regulations. OWCA hopes to gain a more clear regulatory distinction between recreational fur trapping and animal damage control trapping.

OWCA has worked with an Ohio insurance company to develop a low cost liability insurance program. This \$500,000 policy is available to OWCA members in Ohio only for just \$500 per year. Unfortunately, the insurer may soon eliminate the program due to lack of member participation. Interested OWCA members are encouraged to sign up immediately.

Ohio Division of Wildlife new publication *Uninvited House Guests — Preventing and Dealing with Nuisance Wildlife Encounters* recommends the use of “mothballs” as a repellent for raccoons, opossums, and skunks. Due to concern over the illegal and potentially unsafe misuse of pesticides the OWCA has requested the Division to remove this publication from distribution and revise it. “Mothball” packaging does not include directions or appropriate safety precautions for use as an animal repellent. The use of any pesticide in a manner in-

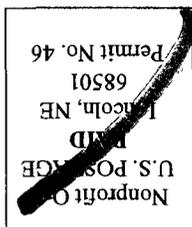
The use of any pesticide in a manner inconsistent with its labeling is a violation of state and federal pesticide laws.

consistent with its labeling is a violation of state and federal pesticide laws. The Division cites “the 1994 publication and *Prevention of Control of Wildlife Damage* produced by APHIS and the University of Nebraska as well as the 1990 *Pocket Guide to Humane Control of Wildlife in Cities and Towns* published by the Humane Society of the United States” as sources recommending “this home remedy”. OWCA members are cautioned to avoid the misuse of pesticides.

OWCA Secretary John Livingston recently spoke on behalf of the OWCA at the State Wildlife Hearing in support of the Division of Wildlife proposal to permit the use of snares as a trapping device in Ohio.

The Ohio Wildlife Control Association is proud to be the newest NADCA State Affiliate. OWCA dues are \$40.00 per year which includes NADCA membership. Correspondence can be mailed to OWCA, 1601 West Fifth Avenue, Suite 200, Columbus, Ohio 43212.

**DO NOT DELAY
- TIME VALUED MATERIAL -**



Scott Hynstrom
Forestry, Fisheries & Wildlife
202 Nat. Resources Hall
University of Nebraska
Lincoln, NE 68583-0819

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) _____ | |