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TWS Wildlife Damage Management Working Group Newsletter: Late Summer 2001 – Volume 8(2)

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INTERACTIONS

The Wildlife Society Wildlife Damage Management Working Group Newsletter, Late Summer 2001 – Volume 8(2)

FORWARD

Our Working Group's annual meeting will be held during the TWS Conference in Reno/Tahoe. **The time and place of our meeting was changed after the final conference program went to press**; it is now as follows:

Thursday, September 27
12 noon – 2 p.m.
Sierra Room, Reno Hilton

If you are able to attend this year's TWS Conference, be sure to come to this session, where we'll discuss our Working Group's progress on current projects as well as entertain open discussion on other topics of interest.

Congratulations to our new Board members recently elected to 2-year terms that will begin at the time of the Reno conference: Frank Boyd, Mark Conner, and Dale Nolte. I greatly appreciate the willingness of all 8 candidates who allowed their names to be submitted for the three Board positions. Thanks also are expressed to outgoing Board members Dale Rollins, Gary San Julian, and Robert Schmidt for their term of service. Gary did the legwork for enlisting candidates for this recent election, and our newsletter editor Art Smith coordinated the balloting and election. Thanks, everyone—including all who voted!

We now have definite dates and a location for the upcoming Wildlife Damage Management Conference (the successor to the Gt. Plains and Eastern Conferences): April 6-9, 2003, in Hot Springs, Arkansas. We'll be at the Clarion Resort on the Lake, where room rates will be a reasonable $66 single/double. Becky McPeake, Extension Wildlife Specialist at the University of Arkansas, assisted with site selection and will be coordinating local arrangements, as well as working with Jim Miller on planning a great field trip to be held April 9. Put the dates on your calendar—it's going to be a great conference! A number of Working Group members have already volunteered to help with conference planning. We can use additional assistance to coordinate commercial and educational exhibits, continuing ed. credits, and publicity. Ideas on the conference program are being solicited, and we'll discuss details of the conference during our session in Reno.

Believe it or not, it's not too early to be thinking about a site for the spring 2005 Wildlife Damage Management Conference. Many hotels book their meeting space 3+ years in advance, so one topic at our Working Group meeting will be to solicit ideas for the next conference site. One consideration is a site that affords relatively easy travel from both the Eastern and Great Plains states—perhaps somewhere in the Great Lakes region would be appropriate for 2005. Do you have an idea?

We also need to be thinking about submitting proposals for wildlife damage-related sessions to the Program Committee for the September 2002 TWS Annual Conference (to be held in Bismarck, ND). These proposals are due October 31, 2001—not far away. I trust some specific proposals will emerge during our Reno meeting, and that several of you will take leadership in developing and submitting these to TWS.

I hope to see you in Reno.

Bob Timm
<rmtimm@ucdavis.edu>

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Thanks to the following individuals for contributing to this issue: Paul Castelli, Kathy Converse, Joan Lowy, John Myers, Kirk La Pierre, Bob Timm, and Yanin Walker.

NEW JERSEY POLICS CHIEF PREVENTS 15MM LAUNCHER USE

This submission comes from Kirk La Pierre, owner/operator of the animal control business A1 Saver Services (www.goosecontrol.com). With his permission, I am forwarding a relatively unedited version of his recent email on WDAMAGE regarding his recent experience in trying to legally use a 15mm launcher for some goose hazing work. This report is especially relevant to all persons involved with human/animal interactions, particularly in N.J. Mr. La Pierre's company provides goose control services on a large scale, and at the 1999 WCT seminar presented their video and handbook "The Definitive Guide to Non Lethal Canada Goose Control".

- Editor

A major development has taken place recently in New Jersey regarding the use of the 15 mm launchers and other devices that launch the pyrotechnics commonly used for wildlife and bird control that I wish to inform you all of. Although this currently only affects N.J. the implications are national and may be coming to a state near you soon.

A major aspect of "The Definitive Guide to Non Lethal Canada Goose Control" program was the inclusion of pyrotechnics designed for bird control. These are launched from a 15 MM starter type pistol and 12 gage shotgun. For several years we have used these devices with great success. Our program has its foundation built upon the usage of these pyrotechnics which in turn compliment our other tools.

Recently, a police chief in one our contracted townships was asked by his township administration to consider having his officers deploy the pyrotechnics in the evening hours and weekends when his officers spotted geese in the parks (the township Department of Parks and Water personnel were using them during the day time hours).

The chief, instead of cooperating, instead issued a notice to the township that the 15 mm launcher was considered in NJ to be a firearm (as discussed on WDAMAGE a couple of weeks ago) and its use was illegal unless the person using it had a carry permit for firearms (nearly impossible to obtain in this state). Secondly, the firing or the tool also constituted a criminal act in accordance with township ordinance, and the carrying of and deployment of pyrotechnics was also a criminal act.

The township responded to this situation by stating that it would simply amend it's local ordinances to allow the carrying of and use of these 15 mm launchers and shotguns and the deployment of "fireworks" for the specific purpose of chasing nuisance waterfowl (Canada Geese) by authorized personal and contractors.

The chief in response to this contacted our state department of labor. The state department of labor contacted our supplier of these tools and supplies and notified them that effective immediately they could no longer sell or ship these tools or supplies to this state as our state law prohibits the shipping of "fireworks" to New Jersey.

In effect, these actions have totally disabled our current programs and will put an immediate halt to a contract which was being signed this week by a new township client (costing us several thousand dollars). This leaves us with no alternative program other than providing our service of rounding up geese and dispatching them.

I have heard that there is a possibility that every chief of police in this state is being informed about the legalities of these tools and supplies. Should any of the readers of this list be using these devices here in NJ you run the risk of being arrested on several charges and I am informing you that you should stop using them immediately.

- Kirk La Pierre

AND THIS JUST IN . . .

Kirk just spoke with the NJ explosives compliance expert/public employee safety person for the State Department Of Labor (DOL).

This chief of police in this N.J. town opened a can of worms that can not be closed now that the department of labor is involved. In a nut shell, the DOL person said that there is no way that the usage if these pyrotechnic devices is going to be allowed in NJ and their office would take immediate actions against anyone supplying, in possession of or using them. This includes the use of propane cannons.

There are regulations that would allow them, however, they are so restrictive in scope that no one is going to go through the trouble to comply. In order for any government body in N.J. to purchase and or possess these pyrotechnics, they must (the short list here)

Have a letter of authorization from the fire inspector in every single town

A resolution must be passed by the townships to allow the usage of these devices

Have an explosion proof OSHA approved storage cabinet

The operator must attend a state run HAZMAT training course and be certified

[Continued on Page 7]

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF PREDATOR KIND RISING

It has been a year of jaws and claws: Sharks biting surfers, alligators dragging away toddlers, bears mauling campers and cougars attacking skiers and bicyclists. Actually, 2001 is not much different from last year despite several high-profile incidents, but the trend over the past decade is strikingly clear — close encounters of the predator kind are on a definite upswing and so are injuries and deaths.

The 1990s was the worst decade ever for shark, bear, alligator and cougar attacks in North America. Deaths and injuries to people from all four of these large predators are still extremely rare — but not as rare as they once were. While there are several factors behind the phenomenon, wildlife experts say the overriding reason for the increase is that there are simply a lot more people than there used to be and they are encroaching on wildlife habitat everywhere. From urban sprawl along Colorado's Front Range to luxury retreats near Yellowstone National Park to surfing along Florida's shores, people are increasingly living, working and playing in close proximity to predators.

Another factor is that some predators are increasing their numbers once again, recovering from earlier decades in which they were widely persecuted. "Considering the large populations of humans and predators co-existing in the same areas, it is not surprising that large predators injure some people," said Michael Conover, director of the Jack Berryman Institute at Utah State University, which researches people-wildlife conflicts. "What is really amazing is that so few people are attacked," Conover writes in a forthcoming wildlife biology textbook. "Why don't hungry cougars and bears commonly prey upon humans, especially children? People are much easier to catch and kill than deer or elk and are more abundant."

Sharks have been the focus of the greatest attention this year, with highly publicized attacks in Florida and the Bahamas. There were 536 shark attacks worldwide in the 1990s, continuing an upward trend exhibited throughout the 20th century, according to the International Shark Attack File at the University of Florida. "There are simply more humans in the water," said George Burgess, director of the shark attack file. "We can count on this trend to continue in this century unless shark populations decline even greater than they already have or people stop going in the water or we solve the world population problem." Florida is the shark bite capital of the world with 220 unprovoked attacks between 1990 and 2000, but only two fatalities. It's also the home of more alligators, and the site of more alligator attacks, than anywhere else. Alligators attacked 78 people in the United States during the 1980s and 110 people between 1990 and 1995. By comparison, there are only five recorded alligator attacks between 1830 and 1969.

The 1990s was the worst decade ever for shark, bear, alligator and cougar attacks in North America. Deaths and injuries to people from all four of these large predators are still extremely rare — but not as rare as they once were.

Hunting and commercial harvesting once threatened to wipe out alligators, but the ancient reptiles began to recover after interstate shipment of illegal alligator hides was banned. Gators have now moved from remote swamps into suburban and urban lakes and canals where they come into contact with people daily. "You literally have people's back doors facing alligator habitat," said Harry Dutton, alligator management leader for the Florida Fish and Conservation Commission. "You have to expect that occasionally alligators are going to wander into people's yards." There have been two alligator-related deaths this year in Florida — a 2-year-old girl who wandered away from her backyard in Winter Haven, and a 70-year-old man whose body was found floating in a Venice pond with an 8-foot gator circling nearby.

Cougars — also known as mountain lions, pumas, catamounts and panthers — once roamed most of North America, but are now reduced to 13 Western states, Florida and southwestern Canada. The Florida panther, a subspecies of cougar, is one of the most endangered animals in the world. Half of the 20th century's 14 known deaths from cougar attacks in North America occurred in the 1990s. Colorado's only two fatal cougar attacks both occurred in the 1990s. Of the 10 known nonfatal cougar attacks in Washington state, eight have occurred since 1990. Last year, three cougar attacks were reported, including one against a 4-year-old girl who was seriously injured near her parent's campsite at Bartlett Lake in Arizona. In January, a cougar near Banff in Alberta, Canada, killed a 30-year-old skier — the first cougar killing in the province. A month later, a 52-year-old bicyclist was attacked on Vancouver Island in British Columbia and might have been killed had a passing tugboat crewman not stopped his truck and pried the cougar off the bicyclist's neck.

"It's an important thing to keep in mind that this is a very small risk," said cougar expert Paul Beier, a wildlife ecology professor at Northern Arizona University. "You are much safer taking a walk in the woods than walking down the street in any neighborhood in any city in the United States."

There were 128 deaths from grizzly and black bears in North America during the 20th century, with 56 deaths — nearly half — occurring in the last two decades, according to Stephen Herrero, an environmental science professor at the University of Calgary. By comparison, there were six fatal bear attacks in all of the 1940s and

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FECAL CANADA GOOSE STUDY RESULTS AVAILABLE

Earlier this year a couple of Canada goose fecal study results were made available. The abstract of each of those studies are reproduced below. For those who are interested in obtaining the complete papers, please contact the listed principle authors.

A Survey to Estimate the Prevalence of *Salmonella* sp., *Yersinia* sp. Bacteria and *Cryptosporidia* sp., Protozoa in Resident Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) in New Jersey.

Principle Biologist: Paul Castelli, Bureau of Wildlife Management, NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife, Nacote Creek Research Station, PO Box 418, Port Republic, NJ 08241.

Five hundred flightless Canada geese were captured at 16 locations in New Jersey between 6/25/99 and 7/9/99. No *Salmonella* sp., *Shigella* sp., or *Yersinia* sp. bacteria were isolated from cloacal swab cultures which suggests Canada geese do not pose a significant source of environmental contamination and transport of these pathogens in New Jersey. *Cryptosporidia* sp. And *Giardia* sp. were relatively common occurring in 10% and 15% of the Canada geese, respectively. They also occurred with approximately twice the frequency in juveniles as in adult birds. This was thought to be due to acquired resistance. These protozoa are widespread in New Jersey with Cryptosporidium and Giardia occurring at 88% of the sites. Due to sample limitations no mouse bioassay or genotyping through PCR was performed and the zoonotic nature of these organisms is not known. Future research should focus on identifying the genotypes of the protozoa as well as sources in the habitat at selected NJ locations.

Screening for Potential Human Pathogens in Fecal Material Deposited by Resident Canada Geese on Areas of Public Utility.

First Author: Kathryn Converse, report available at: http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/pub/canada_goose_report.html.

This study was done to determine the presence of some selected organisms that could cause disease in humans exposed to fecal material of Canada geese collected at sites with a history of high public use and daily use by Canada geese in northeastern United States. The methods used for transect delineation, site preparation, and sample collection, preservation, and transportation were very successful. Attempts to isolate four bacterial organisms resulted in no isolates of *Campylobacter* spp. or *Escherichia coli* O157:H7; two isolates of *Salmonella*, one *S.* Typhimurium and one *S*. Hartford; and forty-seven isolates of *Listeria* spp., including 13 isolates of *Listeria monocytogenes*. Attempts to detect two viruses and chlamydia resulted in no isolation of paramyxovirus; one detection of a rotavirus, and 13 samples that are suspected to contain *Chlamydia* spp. Parasitological examinations resulted in detection of four samples with *Giardia* spp. and three samples with *Cryptosporidium* spp. Bacteria and viruses were successfully isolated in 24 hour and 5 day samples. There were decreasing numbers of samples positive for bacteria in five day samples, particularly in the second and third sample periods as drought conditions continued. A rotovirus was detected in a 24 hour sample and a total of 13 *Chlamydia psittaci* positive samples were detected in both 24 hour and 5 day samples. Eleven *Chlamydia psittaci* positive samples were detected in those collected after 24 hours while only two were detected after 5 hours. The detection methods used in this study did not differentiate between infectious and noninfectious *Chlamydia psittaci* or rotoviruses. Both of these agents, in an infectious state, pose a serious human health threat. As soon as possible further field and laboratory studies should be carried out to determine whether the fecal material, found where urban Canada geese congregate, contains infectious *Chlamydia psittaci* or rotoviruses.

There was no consistent distribution of positive samples over time, within sample periods, or geographic locations. Low frequency of positive cultures indicate that risk of humans to disease through contact with Canada goose feces appears to be minimal at the four sites in Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Virginia during the summer and early fall of 1999. We suggest further studies be conducted in other areas with resident Canada geese during different seasons to detect differences in prevalence and survival of the organisms.

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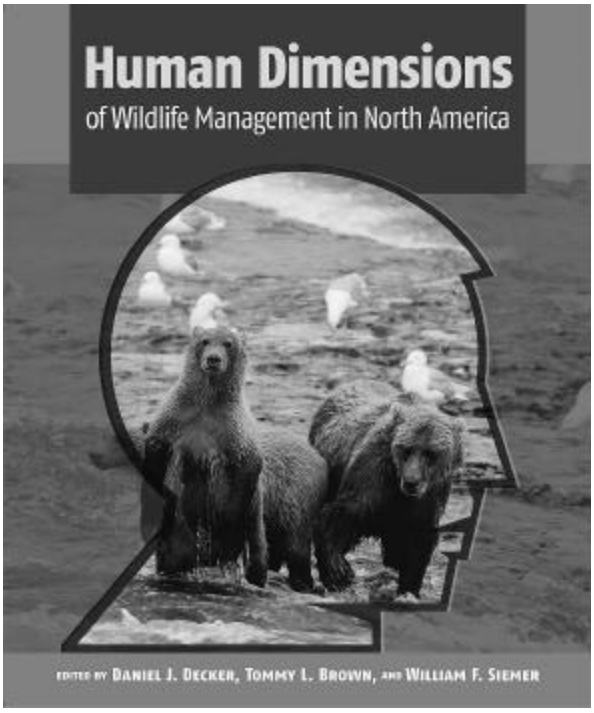
Special Prepublication Offer on New Human Dimensions Book

Human Dimensions of Wildlife Management in North America

Edited by Daniel J. Decker, Tommy L. Brown, and William F. Siemer



The Wildlife Society is pleased to announce the availability of its new book, ***Human Dimensions of Wildlife Management in North America***, edited by Daniel J. Decker, Tommy L. Brown, and William F. Siemer, in early August 2001.

Human Dimensions of Wildlife Management in North America is a text carefully organized to appeal to three audiences: wildlife management courses that desire a human dimensions text to supplement traditional biological material, an upper division stand-alone human dimensions course, and a text for practicing professionals. The text consists of 20 chapters and is divided into four major parts: (1) social and community values; history and contemporary context for wildlife management; (2) human dimensions and the essential processes of wildlife management; (3) applying human dimensions insight to issues in wildlife management; and (4) practical human dimensions considerations.

Human Dimensions of Wildlife Management in North America contains 464 pages of text, literature citations, glossary, and index. It has a soft cover with a special OTA binding suitable for hard use as a textbook.

At this time, the anticipated price of this book will be in the $35.00 - $40.00 range. HOWEVER, as a TWS member you can purchase one (1) copy at the special prepublication price of $30.00 US ($36.00 U.S. for addresses outside the US) by using the coupon below. This offer expires on 30 September 2001.

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TWS Reno/Tahoe 2001

8th Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society
Reno/Tahoe, Nevada, September 25–29, 2001

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

Plenary: The Endangered Species Act -- How do we make it work? Some new approaches.

Symposia

- Remote Photography in Wildlife Research and Management: Detection, Inventory, and Beyond
- What We Have Here Is a Failure to Communicate! Symptoms and Solutions·Methods and Applications for Monitoring Wildlife in National Parks – *sponsor: Biometrics Working Group*
- Restoration and Maintenance of Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem Health
- Conservation Management of Bison in Northern Landscapes: Advances in Ecology and Epidemiology – *sponsor: International Wildlife Management Working Group*
- Avian Interactions with Utility Structures
- Research and Management Concerns for Alpine Ecosystems: Conflicts, Connectivity, and Climate Change
- **Using Community-Based Conservation Approaches to Better Manage Human-Wildlife Conflicts in the West – *sponsor: Wildlife Damage Management Working Group and Public Conservation Education and Extension Working Group***
- Understanding and Conserving Black-Tailed Prairie Dogs
- Conservation of Bats and their Habitats: Contemporary Research and Management
- Toxicological Effects of Mining on Wildlife Species – *sponsor: Wildlife Toxicology Working Group*
- Bayesian Analysis: a New Frontier for Wildlife – *sponsor: Biometrics Working Group*
- Sage Grouse Management and Habitat Relationships

Workshops

- Adaptive Wildlife Management: Concepts, Optimization Tools, and Case Studies – *sponsor: Biometrics Working Group, TWS*
- Landscape Level Wildlife Habitat Planning and Management in the Urban Environment – *sponsor: Urban Wildlife Working Group, TWS*
- Developing Tomorrow's Professionals: Teaching the Skills They Will Need – *sponsor: College and University Wildlife Education Working Group, TWS*

Special Poster Session

- Wildlife Toxicology: Contaminant Issues in the Western U.S. – *sponsor: Wildlife Toxicology Working Group, TWS*

Contributed Papers & Posters

- Ecology and Conservation of Birds
- Ecology and Conservation of Mammals & Other Wildlife
- Conservation of Communities, Ecosystems & Landscapes
- Wildlife-Habitat Relationships
- Wildlife Population Dynamics, Estimation, & Modeling
- Human Dimensions, Conservation Education, & Conservation Policy
- Wildlife Damage Management
- Environmental Contaminants & Wildlife Diseases

Launcher Ban - *Continued from Page 2:*

The vehicle he uses to transport the devices must have an explosion proof cabinet and the driver must be separated from the cargo area
The vehicle must be inspected by OSHA
The vehicle must have explosives placards
The driver must have a CDL license
The vehicle must be commercially registered and insured and the insurance carrier must be informed that it will carry explosives (town owned vehicles are considered commercial)
The driver of the vehicle/operator for these devices must under go a doctors physical exam to be proved to be in good health.

Furthermore, all town employees fall under the states protection via the Public Employees Safety act and the state would advise all public employees to refuse to be required as a duty of their job to use propane cannons or pyrotechnics and would back up these employees. They would also advise any mayor considering using employees or currently using employees for these devices to not do so and cease and desist immediately. Now, this is all for public employees, there is no allowance whatsoever anywhere for a private citizen, contractor to be allowed to purchase, carry or use these devices. Only government employees would be allowed as long as they complied with the above regulations (and others not listed).

This has particular implications as well for the wildlife and agricultural agencies within New Jersey. Not only are they also affected by these regulations, they will I assume, have to stop issuing and change all literatures that they send to citizens and government bodies in this state which recommend these types of products for wildlife and bird damage. The implications for public safety are also a concern now for airports, large amusement parks (we were the on site consultants for the "Fabio" incident) etc. An interesting note this man stated to me, geese are not a public hazard in his official opinion and pyrotechnics and cannons are not needed anyways, use dogs, he uses his Yorkshire terrier by his house and there is nothing better.

- Kirk La Pierre

Predators Rising - *Continued from Page 3:*

only one in the 1930s, said Herrero, an expert on bear attacks. “There is a definite upward trend in bear-inflicted injuries,” Herrero said. “It really began taking off in the 1980s.”

Grizzly bears are fewer in number than black bears, but more dangerous. Grizzlies killed 18 people during the last decade compared to 11 people killed by black bears. This year there have been two fatal bear attacks — a 93-year-old woman killed at her home in northern New Mexico and an 18-year-old camper killed near Yellowknife in Canada.

A drought in the lower Rocky Mountains has also led black bears to range wider in search of food, bringing them into close contact with people. In Colorado, bears have been seen this year at fast-food restaurants and strolling down suburban Denver streets. Tennis star Chris Evert and former Olympic ski racer Andy Mill returned to their home in Aspen one day to find a black bear foraging in the kitchen. Sixteen bear sightings were reported in one night this month in Trinidad.

Last year, a woman hiking in Great Smoky Mountains National Park was killed by a black bear, the first fatal attack in the southeastern United States. Florida has never had a bear attack, but nuisance black bear calls to the state Fish and Conservation commission skyrocketed from less than 100 a year in the early 1990s to 1,136 calls last year. “People tell us, ’I don’t know why these bears are tearing down the screens on my porch every day, and they’ve got six bowls of pet food sitting out there,” said Tom Eason, Florida state bear management leader. “It’s pretty obvious to us why it’s happening.”

- Joan Lowy, Scripps Howard News Service

HOMEOWNER SHOOTS UNRULY COUGAR

A cougar was shot and killed by a homeowner in a remote area north of Big Sandy Lake near McGregor, Minnesota late Monday in what wildlife officials are saying is an unusually aggressive case of wild cat behavior. The big cat apparently came onto Jim Bennett's front porch three times, wrestled with the family dog and tried to take some of the dog's bedding, said conservation officer Tony Arhart, who is investigating the case. It's one of few reports of cougars coming close to people or pets. The cat wrestled with Bennett's 78-pound chocolate lab, Shadow, who suffered minor scratches.

"I had just got home about 11:30 (p.m.) and let the dog out of the kennel. I looked up and the cougar was coming down the porch steps as I was going to walk up," Bennett said. "The dog got in between us and protected me." Bennett told DNR officials that he kicked at the 54-pound female cat and scared it away once, but that it returned. "The dog and I went into the house and about two hours later the dog barked. I looked out and the damn thing was back tearing up the dog's bedding on the front porch," Bennett said. Bennett slammed the door and the cat left, but it returned a third time just 10 minutes later. That's when Bennett shot the cat at close range with a pistol through the front door.

So far, no charges are pending. But cougars are protected in Minnesota and authorities warn people that shooting such an animal should only be a last resort. It was the first verified cougar shooting in northern Minnesota in 30 years or more. Cougars are spotted fairly regularly across much of northern Minnesota. DNR officials say they get more than 50 reports each year of cougar sightings.

Some cougars spotted in Minnesota are likely escaped or released pets that can thrive long after they are released. But some cougars clearly are wild, as there have been some reports of cougar kittens in the wild. "All the front claws were still there with this cougar, which indicates it's probably a wild cat. Pets are usually de-clawed," Berg said. There also were no signs of ear tags, tattoos or collars. "It's in a belt where there have been a bunch of observations in the last several years, around (Minnesota) Highway 200," Berg said. Bennett also said he had seen a cougar in the area before.

- John Myers, News Tribune staff writer

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WITH YOUR PAID MEMBERSHIP you may subscribe to the *Wildlife Society Bulletin* for an additional $23.00. *The Journal of Wildlife Management* with *Wildlife Monographs* for an additional $26.00, or ALL publications for an additional $48.00. Members may also join a section, chapter, and/or working groups.

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04 - Biometrics
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12 - Wildlife Damage Management
13 - Wildlife Toxicology ($7.00)
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