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2-2-1991

WILDLIFE DAMAGE EDUCATION AT WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY

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WILDLIFE DAMAGE EDUCATION AT WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY

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Proc. East. Wildl. Damage Control Conf. 5:158. l

West Virginia University has offered a formal wildlife damage course in each of the last 2 years (1990 and 1991). Prior to offering the formal course in 1990, the topic of wildlife damage was presented as one section of 2 different courses: Introduction to Wildlife Management (for nonwildlife majors), and Principles of Wildlife Management (a senior-level course required for wildlife majors).

The current wildlife damage course involves 2 1-hour lectures per week and students receive 2 semester credit hours upon completion. Two class periods per semester are devoted to field exercises, involving demonstration of damage control equipment and investigation of wildlife damage. The course will be offered again in 1992 and in subsequent years. A 2-3 hour laboratory session will be added to the course in the near future, and course credit will be increased to 3 semester hours.

Fourteen students enrolled in the course the first time it was offered in 1990, and enrollment increased to 22 students in 1991. It is anticipated that enrollment will increase to at least 30 students the next time it is offered. Enrollment has included students majoring in several disciplines, including animal science, biology, forest management, parks and recreation, and wildlife management.

The required text was *Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage (R.* Timm, ed. 1983. Nebraska Cooperative Exten sion Service, University of Nebraska-Lincoln). This text supplemented by numerous publications published by the Virginia University Cooperative Extension Service, U States Fish and Wildlife Service, and The Wildlife S

The *Wildlife Society Bulletin* was especially important. key to the success of the course, as indicated by s evaluations, was the variety of guest speakers. The Virginia Wildlife Extension Specialist, and the United S Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health In tion Service, Animal Damage Control Agent, each pre

several lectures. In addition, a County Cooperative Exten Agent and a representative of a private animal damage con company, Capture Systems, Inc., each presented one lest

The Animal Damage Control course currently has required prerequisites and thus is available to all stude regardless of their major. The course is not a requirement any major, but instead is used by most students to fulfill restricted-elective requirement. If animal damage continues increase as a significant facet of the wildlife management profession, the Animal Damage Control course at West V' ginia University will probably become a required course for Wildlife Management majors within the next 5-10 years. major challenge facing colleges and universities is to prep young men and women for employment following their graduation.