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WILDLIFE DAMAGE EDUCATION AT WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY

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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 Extension 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 Society.

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

several lectures. In addition, a County Cooperative Extension Agent and a representative of a private animal damage control company, Capture Systems, Inc., each presented one lecture.

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