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The Probe NADCA
ISSUE 137
OCTOBER 1993

Beavers, Deer, and Predators: what surveys tell us

*Robert H. Schmidt, Editor, **The Probe***

Surveys are our window to the attitudes of the American people. When they are used for wildlife damage-related topics, they give administrators, biologists, and managers insight toward the public's needs, reactions, and concerns. When surveys are misused or ignored, the opportunity to make operational mistakes or policy errors is increased. Surveys give us bits of information, and the information still has to be interpreted correctly.

Three recent surveys on wildlife damage-related topics demonstrate the usefulness of survey information. The first, conducted by researchers in the Human Dimensions Research Unit (HDRU) at Cornel University and the New York Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), concerned public attitudes toward beaver and beaver management in New York.[1] Because of recent low fur prices, recreational trapping was considered ineffective in managing the beaver population in the St. Lawrence Valley area (Wildlife Management Unit 21). The inability to manage this population led to an increase in the number of damage complaints. On the other hand, the higher beaver population also provided more aesthetic and wetland resources for the public to enjoy. DEC managers commissioned the survey to get a better understanding of what the public wanted to do about the beaver population. The HDRU surveyed the following stakeholder groups: town highway superintendents, landowners, residents of villages and cities, beaver trappers, nature center members, and waterfowl hunters.

The survey indicated that, except for trappers, most stakeholders had limited knowledge of beavers and beaver management, especially damage management. Four of the six stakeholder groups felt that trappers should be subsidized to reduce the overall beaver population. All of the groups except trappers felt that new technologies needed to be developed for managing beaver damage. All stakeholder groups felt that they should be provided with more DEC-provided material and labor for reducing the damage caused by beavers. In general, people wanted a decrease in the beaver population. Trappers and community residents preferred a stable population.

The researchers concluded that current beaver management strategies needed refinement because stakeholders wanted a decrease in beaver populations (and damage), even at the expense of beaver-related benefits. They recommended that DEC beaver managers target their limited financial and personnel resources at 1) helping to alleviate damage as soon as possible after it occurs, 2) expanding stakeholders' awareness of the benefits derived from beavers, and 3) enhancing stakeholders' knowledge and understanding of the legal and feasible methods of managing damage situations. Community residents, nature center members, and hunters had limited interest in beaver management decisions. Superintendents and landowners were the most intolerant of beavers, probably because they experienced the greatest number and most expensive

Continued on page 4

[1]Enck, J.W., P.G. Bishop, T.L. Brown, and J.E. Lamendola. 1992. Beaver-related attitudes, experiences, and knowledge of key stakeholders in Wildlife Management Unit 21. Human Dimensions Research Unit Series No. 92-7, Cornell University, New York. 90 pp.

Reed-Joseph Donates $1,000 to NADCA

The NADCA Board gratefully acknowledges a donation of $1,000 to NADCA by Reed-Joseph International, a manufacturer and distributor of scare devices to reduce wildlife damage. The donation was presented by Mr. Barthel Joseph at the recent Great Plains Wildlife Damage Control Workshop, in honor of the company's 40th anniversary. During the Board's September 20 conference call, officers and directors praised Reed-Joseph for this contribution, which is intended to promote the work of our association.

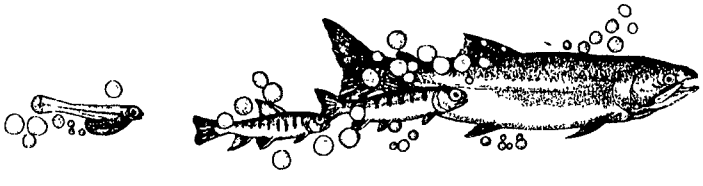
CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

November 4-5, 1993: North America Research Workshop on the Ecology and Management of Cowbirds, Austin, Texas. For more information please contact Terry Cook, The Nature Conservancy, P.O. Box 164255, Austin, Texas 78716.

December 8-9, 1993: Ground Squirrel/Pocket Gopher Symposium, Reno, NV. Deals with current and future technology for control, especially rodenticides. Contact: Kathleen Fagerstone, USDA Denver Wildl. Res. Ctr., P.O. Box 25266, Denver, CO 80225-0266, (303) 236-2089.

December 11-15, 1993: 55th Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference, St. Louis, Missouri. The theme is *New Agendas in Fish and Wildlife Management: Approaching the Next Millenium.* Features include an *Urban Deer Management Symposium.* For more information, contact: Wayne Porath, 1110 S. College Ave., Columbia, MO 65201, (314) 882-9880.

December, 1993: 2nd International Symposium on Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*) And On Order Suiformes, Torino, Italy. For more information, contact: Secretariat, 2nd International Symposium on Wild Boar and on order Suiformes, c/o Prof. P. Durio, Dipartimento Produzioni Animali, Epidemiologia ed Ecologia, Via Nizza 52, 10126 Torino (Italy), Telephone 39.11 . 6503734 - FAX 39.11 . 655455.



The Probe is the newsletter of the National Animal Damage Control Association, published 11 times per year.

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Your contributions to *The Probe* are welcome. Please send news clippings, new techniques, publications, and meeting notices to *The Probe*, c/o Hopland Research & Extension Center, 4070 University Road, Hopland, CA 95449. 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.

February 21-23, 1994: 1st Eastern Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators Short Course, Lexington, Kentucky. For more information, contact Tom Barnes, Extension Wildlife Specialist, Department of Forestry, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40546-0073.

May 1-4, 1994: Northeast Association of Wildlife Damage Biologists Annual Meeting, Sheraton-Burlington Hotel and Conference Center, Burlington, Vermont. Contact: Rich Chipman, P.O. Box 1436, Montpelier, VT 05601.

NADCA Election

The NADCA election will be held this fall to elect officers and directors for the period 1994-1995. The Nominating Committee has done an excellent job of recruiting candidates—many offices have multiple candidates. A ballot, plus a short biography of the two candidates for President (James Forbes, Gary Simmons) will be included in the November **PROBE**. Ballots will be due by December 15. Make a difference—VOTE!

Position Available with EPA

Rodenticide specialist/vertebrate biologist position available with the United States Environmental Protection Agency in Arlington, Virginia. Position involves registration of vertebrate pesticides (rodenticides, animal repellents, predacides, avicides, etc.). While much of the work is administrative, appropriate technical expertise is essential for the position to be fully effective.

Applicants are required to have a bachelor's degree or higher in biological or physical sciences, including studies in animal behavior; skill in both written and oral communications; experience analyzing and evaluating scientific data; and some knowledge of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and the Federal Food Drug and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA).

For more information, contact Robert Forrest, Product Manager 14, Insecticide-Rodenticide Branch, USEPA, phone (703) 305-6600.

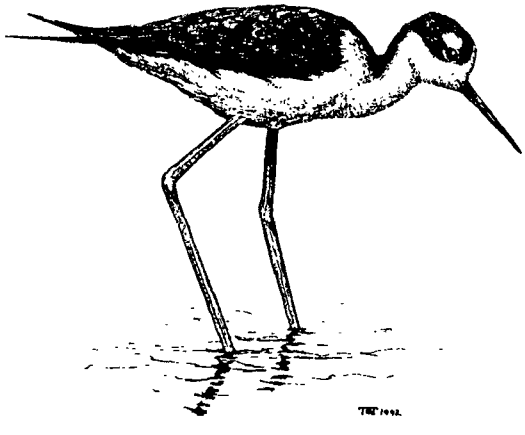
ADC News, Tips, Ideas, Publications...

PETA Angers Columnist

After PETA activists sued to stop a goose roundup in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota, Minneapolis *Star Tribune* Outdoors/Recreation columnist Ron Schara responded with an angry column, saying the PETA people "made outlandish charges, sent unqualified witnesses,wasted the time of a Hennepin County judge." Schara went on to say that as a result of the lawsuit, "the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources was forced to hold 1,000 geese for two weeks requiring costly food and care."

The roundup is held each year to thin the goose population in the urban area, so they would have less-crowded living conditions. The geese are captured each year and transported to places like Kansas, Oklahoma, and Mississippi to establish new flocks. Goslings are transplanted to suitable lakes in nothern Minnesota. Jim Cooper of the University of Minnesota has led the goose roundup for eleven years. Cooper testified that the roundup has successfully relocated 23,000 geese. "We lose about one bird for every 1,000 birds," Cooper said. He added that no bird fatalities have been directly connected to the roundup or transport. "The dead birds all died from pre-existing injuries, hit by golf carts and so forth."

The judge ordered a PETA observer be allowed to watch the goose roundup. At the roundup, Cooper and DNR representatives requested the PETA member demonstrate the proper way to hold a goose. She declined, saying she had never held a goose.



The editors of **The PROBE** *thank contributors to this issue: Sherm Blom, Frank W. Forbes, Eugene A. LeBoeuf, James E. Forbes, and Wes Jones. Send your contributions to* **The PROBE**, *4070 University Road, Hopland, CA 95449.*

EPA Demands Pepper Spray Sales Halted

Outdoors people who use cayenne pepper spray as bear protection may have to find something else. According to a report in the August issue of *Field & Stream*, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has demanded that sales of the aerosol canisters be halted because they have not been formally registered as pesticides.

The sprays are used by a variety of outdoors enthusiasts and professionals, including park rangers in Alaska and the Lower 48, game biologists who use the spray to deter bears from visiting urban areas, and bowhunters who hunt in grizzly country. In 1992, a bowhunter near Glacier National Park apparently held off a grizzly attack with one spray of the pepper mixture.

Officials fear that in response to the pepper spray ban, people may end up arming themselves with handguns instead—legal or not—which doesn't bode well for the grizzlies.

Montana Senator Max Baucus is asking EPA to "cut through the red tape" and speed up registration of the sprays for the good of both humans and bear. Until then, sportsmen and women may have to resort to the distinctly unappealing, but sometimes effective, ploy of playing dead.

Rabies Death First in New York Since 1954

The cause of death of an 11-year-old New York girl in July has been confirmed as rabies. This is the first rabies-related death in New York since 1954 and health officials have issued warnings against contact with wild animals.

According to an August 9 article in the Fredericksburg, Virginia *Free Lance-Star*, Mark Chassin, New York State Health commissioner, states that despite warnings, people continue to "befriend and try to aid animals that turn out to be rabid."

The girl, Kelly Ahrendt of Walker Valley, became ill on a camping trip July 13. Although she was treated at three hospitals, she died July 14 from viral encephalitis. Her death was later attributed to rabies.

Continued from page 1

Beavers, Deer, and Predators...

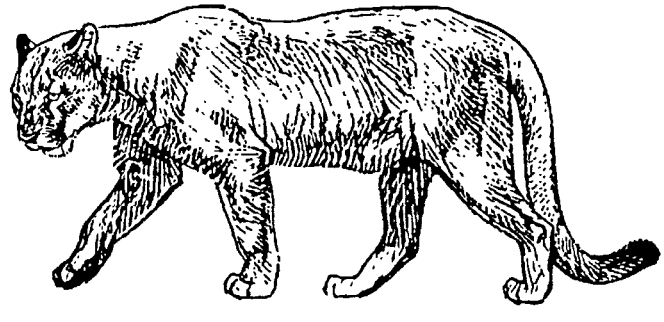
beaver-related damage. However, because of their interest and expertise, trappers needed to be reincorporated into beaver management programs.

The second survey looked at attitudes of Illinois farmers regarding deer damage and deer hunters, and was conducted by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the Illinois Natural History Survey, and the Illinois Department of Conservation[2]. It consisted of a mailed questionnaire sent to 2,512 randomly selected farm operators owning at least 40 acres. The final sample included 1,609 respondents. White-tailed deer occurred on 92% of the farms. Fifty-one percent of respondents said they enjoyed having deer on the farm compared to 34% being worried about potential crop damage. Only 5% of the farmers statewide considered deer a nuisance. The remaining 10% indicated no particular feeling about deer on their farm. Seventy-five percent of respondents reported no damage or only light damage; the remaining reported moderate (19%) or severe (6%) damage. However, 36% reported over $300 worth of damage. Interestingly, reported deer damage was not a function of estimated deer density in the various deer management regions.

Statewide, 32% of the farmers reported using some type of deer damage management strategy. Exploders, repellents, depredation tags, and dogs were rarely used. The researchers indicated that fencing was used by about one-third of the farmers attempting to control damage but was deemed ineffective by more than four-fifths of those who used it. They speculated that most fencing was installed too low (less than 6 feet) or not properly installed (electric fencing). Although archery hunting was considered ineffective by many farmers, firearm hunting, used by 91% of those attempting deer control, was accepted as most effective. The researchers concluded that most farmers felt deer were enjoyable to have on their farms, that deer damage was a growing but manageable problem, and that hunting with firearms was the most effective method for controlling deer damage.

The third and final example of a wildlife damage related survey has a different slant. This participant survey was conducted following a 2-day workshop on predation management in north coastal California in 1990.[3] Attendees at this workshop were asked their attitudes toward various livestock predation management issues (mainly coyotes, black bears, and mountain lions) before and after attending the workshop. Attendees identified themselves as animal damage control specialists, law enforcement personnel, livestock producers, resource management professionals, students, wildlife biologists, or other. They indicated that the two most useful topics covered were the identification of predator kills and the impact of predation on wildlife. The two topics that they noted as least useful were the use of guarding animals and animal welfare considerations. Sixty-one percent of respondents indicated that their attitude toward the need to manage predator damage was more supportive following the workshop. They also noted that the workshop should be repeated every two years (50%) and that it should focus on both lethal and non-lethal techniques (91%). When asked where they received their predation management information, 50% responded that the University of California Cooperative Extension and the USDA-APHIS Animal Damage Control Program were their chief information sources.

These surveys help wildlife damage decision-makers and managers understand the needs and concerns of the stakeholders involved in the issues at hand. We probably could use many more surveys covering a wide gauntlet of species and damage situations. The human dimensions of wildlife damage management need to be studied in greater detail, and we have to learn the best ways to make use of this emerging information.



[2]Morgan, G.W., C.M. Nixon, J.C. van Es, and J.H. Kube. 1992. Attitudes of Illinois farmers regarding deer and deer hunters, 1990. Illinois Department of Conservation, Tech. Bull. No. 6. 30 pp.

[3]Unpublished survey results, "Predator management in north coastal California workshop". University of California, Hopland Field Station. Survey conducted by R.H. Schmidt, R.M. Timm, and G.A. Giusti.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editors:

...Doing some lure limit-tests on fox and coyote, finding out what and what doesn't draw deer from 5 to 20 feet from a main trail and what will draw the targets. Liked the lure article on coyote... Some of the things I've learned on these gray fox is that they will scent post a piece of blown tire found alongside the road. I will be trying this on coyote as well as a blind set. My dog will pee on a brand new set of tires. Is there a smell that draws? I think so.

Cal Cope, Myrtle Creek, OR

Milt Caroline Buried With Military Honors

The PROBE received a note from Betty Caroline, informing us that her husband Milt Caroline (retired state supervisor-ADC, Texas) whose passing was reported in the August issue, was buried with military honors at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery. Milt had served as Lt. Commander in the Navy during World War II. During the service, Dr. Terry E. Anderson eulogized Milt for his contributions and innovations in animal damage control during his noteworthy career.

Alaska Plans Suit Against Friends of Animals

In August Alaska Governor Walter J. Hickel announced plans to sue the animal-rights group Friends of Animals (FOA). The suit will be in response to an ad FOA ran in *USA Today* and *The New York Times* in June urging readers to boycott Alaska's tourism industry, claiming "Hunters will track radio-collared wolves from the air as they are returning to their dens. Shooters will then land and stake out the dens—and kill wolves as they return to care for their pups."

Hickel stated that the Alaska Department of Fish & Game has publicly stated that they would not use radio telemetry-aided hunting or aerial hunting in its wolf management program.

Bird Strike Committee USA

Over 80 people attended the third annual meeting of Bird Strike Committee USA (BSCUSA) at SEATAC International Airport, Seattle, Washington, on August 3 - 5, 1993. Twenty-three papers were presented on topics related to the economic and safety problems caused by birds colliding with aircraft. A panel discussion was also held on land use around airports, particularly for landfills and wetlands that attract birds.

The attendees from the United States included representatives from the air transport and solid waste management industries, airports, natural resource agencies (USFWS, USEPA, APHIS/Wildlife Services), animal welfare groups, Federal Aviation Administration, and the military. Those attending also included visitors from Japan, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Canada. A field trip offered a behind-the-scenes look at bird hazard control at SEATAC and a visit to the Museum of Flight in Seattle.

Exhibitors, representing five bird control device suppliers, participated in the meeting.

Don't forget—vote in the NADCA election!

Terrell P. Salmon
DANR-North Region
University of California
Davis, CA 95616-8575

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Membership Application

NATIONAL ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL ASSOCIATION

Mail to: Wes Jones, Treasurer, Route 1 Box 37, Shell Lake, WI 54871, Phone: (715) 468-2038

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Address: _____ Phone: (____) _____ - _____ Office

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City: _____ State: _____ ZIP _____

Dues: $_____ Donation: $_____ Total: $_____ Date: _____

Membership Class:	Student $7.50	Active $15.00	Sponsor $30.00	Patron $100	(Circle one)
(After 7/31/93)	Student $10.00	Active $20.00	Sponsor $40.00	Patron $100	

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