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January 1997

## The Probe, Issue 173 – January/February 1997

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## From The President...

It is hard to believe that a year has gone by and I am halfway through my term as President of NADCA. Although it seems our progress toward attaining some goals has been slow, it remains a fact that some things simply should not be rushed.

For example, NADCA has formed a committee to look in to an acceptable process for certifying NWCOs. Most professionals would agree that such certification is long overdue. The difficulty in providing sound certification guidelines lies in the details. Successful guidelines should provide the proper credentials without becoming an excessive burden to the agency tasked with oversight. I believe it is better to take the time to think this through rather than produce a "half-baked" product. As always, we welcome membership participation in this effort as well as any other area of concern.

The past year has proven to be very positive for the wildlife damage profession as a whole. As usual, I read a number of newspaper articles covering the subject of wildlife control; however, I was surprised to read several that were more positive in nature than they had been in the past. Instead of the greater coverage going to who is protesting an action, some articles actually provided more information on the problem and possible solutions. Hopefully, this may be a signal that the public is beginning to expect more informative reporting from the media; and I believe that accurate reporting can only benefit our work.

Another real surprise came while attending The Wildlife Society's annual meeting in Cincinnati last October. Wildlife damage control professionals finally had their day in the sun. The number and quality of presentations on wildlife control were simply outstanding. It did my heart good to see so many wildlife control professionals not only showing their faces at such a meeting, but giving presentations that had conference rooms filled

## Berryman Instit. Awards Announced

The Jack H. Berryman Institute announced the 1996 winners of its annual recognition program in wildlife damage management. The Berryman Institute is a national organization, centered in the Dept of Fisheries & Wildlife at Utah State University, Logan, Utah. The awards were presented in conjunction with The Wildlife Society's recent annual conference in Cincinnati.

The *Research Award* went to **Richard Dolbeer**, leader of the USDA-APHIS-ADC Ohio Field Station, in recognition of superior achievement in innovative research protecting grain crops from bird damage, reducing the risk of bird-aircraft collisions, and solving Canada goose problems.

The *Communication Award* was given to **Scott Hygnstrom** (Univ. of Nebraska), **Robert Timm** (Univ. of Calif.), and **Gary Larson** (USDA-APHIS-ADC, Eastern Region) for their work in editing the two-volume 1994 revision of *Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage*, the only comprehensive reference work on North American vertebrate species that cause economic damage.

The *Program Achievement Award* was jointly awarded to the **Cornell University Human Dimensions Research Unit**, its **Coop. Extension County Assoc. Educators**, the **Cornell Dept. of Natural Resources**, and the **New York Dept. of Environmental Conservation** for their development of the citizen task force approach to resolving suburban deer management issues. This approach involves community stakeholders in addressing concerns and providing solutions.

A *Lifetime Achievement Award* was presented to **Alan Sargeant**, retired USF&WS biologist at the Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center, Jamestown, No. Dakota. He was cited for his outstanding career in studying waterfowl predation and predator ecology, during which he authored more than 50 scientific publications including 5 monographs. His work has shaped modern predation theory and has led to improved management strategies for reducing impacts of predation on ground-nesting birds.

beyond capacity. I went away with a large amount of updated and useful information. I sure hope these trends continue.

**Gene LeBoeuf**, President, NADCA  
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# CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

## March 17, 19, & 21, 1997: Vertebrate Pest Control Workshops, Escondido, Fresno, and Chico, California.

Techniques, regulations, and discussions on problems of regional interest including rodents, birds, and predators. Contact: Sydni Gillette, No. Region-DANR, UC Davis, (916) 754-8491, E-mail skgillette@ucdavis.edu, or visit <http://www.davis.com/~vpc/welcome.html>.

## April 16-19, 1997: 13th Great Plains Wildlife Damage Control Workshop, Lied Conference Center, Nebraska City, Nebraska.

Sessions on Predator Management, Urban Wildlife Control, Trapping & Capture Techniques, Media & Communications Skills. Will include Annual NADCA Membership Meeting. Contact Charles Lee, Kansas St Univ., (913) 532-5734 or E-mail clec@oz.oznet.ksu.edu, or Scott Hygnstrom, Univ of Nebraska, (402) 472-6822

## May 22-23, 1997: 9th Northern Furbearer Conference, Yellowknife Inn, Northwest Territories, Canada.

Tentative topics include ecology and management of wolverine, marten, lynx, beaver, otter, arctic fox, humane trapping and the fur industry, and First Nation (aboriginal) perspectives. Participants wishing to present a paper or poster must submit an abstract by 3/15 to the address below (E-mail submissions encouraged). Registration CDN\$30 plus banquet; rooms CDN\$85-155/night. Contact Kim Poole, Wildlife & Fisheries Division, NWT Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, 5102 50th Ave., Yellowknife NT X1A 3S8 Canada, (403) 920-6315, Fax (403) 873-0293, E-mail. kpoole@gov.nt.ca

## August 12-14, 1997: 7th Annual Meeting, Bird Strike Committee--USA, Ramada Inn, Logan Int'l. Airport, Boston, Mass.

Paper and posters for presentation are solicited, and abstracts due June 23. For details on abstract format, contact Richard Dolbeer at (419) 625-0242, FAX (419) 625-8465. Pre-registration fee \$35 by July 14, room rate \$89. For information regarding meeting, contact James E. Forbes or Mark Carey, USDA/APHIS/ADC, 1930 Route 9, Castleton, NY 12033-9635, (518) 477-4837, FAX (518) 477-4899

## August 17-20, 1997: Symposium on Mammal Trapping, Univ. of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Sessions to include History, Economic, and Socio-Cultural Status of Trapping, Trapping Technology, and Trapline Management and Data Analyses. Registration CDN\$275 includes refereed proceedings. Univ. of Alberta dorm rooms available for CDN\$26.88/night (single) or \$35.84/night (double); other nearby hotels are reasonable. Contact: Dr. Gilbert Proulx, Alpha Wildlife Res & Mgmt Ltd, 9 Garnet Crescent, Sherwood Park, Alberta, Canada 8A 2R7, (403) 464-5228, FAX (403) 417-0255, E-mail alpha@xpress.ab.ca

## September 21-27, 1997: 4th Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society, Snowmass Village, Colo.

Includes wildlife damage symposium and annual meeting of Wildlife Damage Management Working Group. Contact: Scott Hygnstrom, chairperson, TWS WDM Working Group, (402) 472-6822; or TWS, 5410 Grosvenor Ln., Bethesda, MD 20814, (301) 897-9770, FAX (301) 530-2471

## October 19-24, 1997: Second International Congress of Vector Ecology, Holiday Inn Int'l. Drive Resort, Orlando, Florida.

Sponsored by Society for Vector Ecology. For registration information, contact Gilbert L. Challet, Sec-Treas., P.O. Box 87, Santa Ana, CA 92702, (714) 971-2421 ext 148, FAX (714) 971-3940



## To The Editor:

I have been intending to drop you a note for some time now. Last academic year, when my daughter was taking high school biology, the students in her class were required to write a summary of a biology-related article from a newspaper or other periodical, weekly. Her teacher complimented her on having the *most interesting* articles, because at least one a month was from *The Probe*.

Just wanted to let you know that *The Probe* perhaps has a bigger readership than you think! Keep up the good work!

Barbara Kermeen  
AVM Instrument Co. Ltd.  
Livermore, Calif.

## ADC Personnel

### Hawthorne Returns to Oklahoma

Donald Hawthorne returned to the state of Oklahoma as State Director of USDA-APHIS-ADC, effective December 8. Don is a long-time employee of ADC, who for the past four years has been Associate Deputy Administrator in the ADC office in Washington D.C.

### Forbes Retires

James E. (Jim) Forbes retired on December 31 as ADC State Director in New York. He completes 34 years of federal service, including 30 years in his current position. During this time, he has worked on many species, particularly Canada geese, gulls, pine voles, and eastern coyotes. He is the founder and for 7 years has been chairperson of the Bird Strike Committee --USA. He is also Past President and Treasurer of the Northeastern Association of Wildlife Damage Biologists. Following four years of service as NADCA Regional Director (Reg. 7), during which time he spearheaded a significant increase NADCA membership within his region, he served as NADCA President from 1994 to 1996. Best wishes, Jim!

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Your contributions of articles to *The Probe* are welcome and encouraged. The deadline for submitting materials is the 15th of the month prior to publication. *Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of NADCA.*

## More Abstracts... from the 3rd Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society (October 1996)

### Economics of bird strikes to commercial aircraft in the United States

Richard A. Dolbeer

Bird and other wildlife strikes to civilian aircraft are a serious, but largely unquantified, economic and safety problem in the U.S. We analyzed all wildlife strike reports received for 1994 by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) after editing the reports and entering the information into a Wildlife Strike Database. Of the 2,220 nonduplicating strike reports, 2,150 (97%) involved birds of which about 50% identified the type of bird. Gulls (*Larus* spp.) were involved in 30% of the identified bird strikes followed by waterfowl, blackbirds/starlings, pigeons/doves, and birds of prey (each 10-13%).

The 70 nonbird wildlife strikes involved 57 (81%) ungulates and 9 (13%) coyotes/dogs (*Canis* spp.). Of the 2,220 reports, 517 (22% of bird, 71% of other wildlife) indicated some type of damage or other cost. Gulls were the most frequently reported bird type causing damage; however, waterfowl (primarily geese) had the greatest proportion of strikes causing damage. About 81% of reported deer strikes caused damage. Engines were the aircraft component most frequently reported damaged by birds (118, 29% of total damage reports). For other wildlife (primarily deer), the landing gear was the component most frequently reported damaged (17, 22%). Total reported costs associated with strikes were \$6,870,170; total reported down time to aircraft was 40,280 hours. However, only 16% of the 517 reports noting damage reported costs, suggesting these numbers are severe underestimates of actual costs. In addition, based on an analysis of independent strike records for a major U.S. airport, we estimate <20% of all 1994 wildlife strikes were included in the FAA Wildlife Strike Database. Thus, total losses annually to civilian aircraft from wildlife strikes probably exceed the \$112 million estimated for military aircraft in the U.S.

### Famous Damaging Wolves and the Credibility of Wildlife Literature

Philip S. Gipson, W. B. Ballard, and R. M. Nowak

Literature about famous damaging wolves (*Canis lupus*) killed during the late 1800s and early 1900s provides the basis for most arguments against restoration of wolves. Yet, the credibility of early wildlife literature about damaging wolves has not been rigorously examined. We used three approaches to evaluate the credibility of early wolf literature: 1) compared ages of famous wolves at the time of their deaths with the length of time the wolves reportedly damaged livestock and big game, 2) compared depredation rates reported for famous wolves with recently reported kill rates for wolves, and 3) compared the skulls of famous wolves with skulls of other wolves taken in the same areas and during the same time periods and with known dogs and dog x wolf hybrids. This allowed us to determine if famous wolves were actually wolves, and if they were from the areas where they were reportedly taken. Ages of famous damaging wolves were reported to be 2-3 times greater than they actually were. Only one famous wolf examined was within 1 year of being as old as it was reported

to be. Most famous wolves did not live long enough to have caused the damage attributed to them. Kill rates reported for famous wolves were 2-10 times higher than kill rates reported for wolves since 1975. At least one famous wolf did not appear to have originated in the area where it was reportedly taken.

### White-tailed Deer Conflict Resolution in a Georgia Coastal Community

Douglas I. Hall, J. W. Bueifiloski, and D. M. Hoffman

An overpopulation of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) was creating problems involving landscape and property damage, auto collisions, Lyme disease, reduced herd health, and browsing impacts on native flora and fauna for a 2,492-ha residential community located on Skidaway Island near Savannah, Georgia. At the recommendation of the Georgia Dept. of Nat. Resources, the landowners association contracted with USDA-APHIS-ADC to jointly develop a plan to reduce human-wildlife conflicts and strike a balance between residents' interests and the needs of wildlife. A stakeholder committee consisting of state and federal biologists, community officials, and concerned citizens was forged to develop an integrated management program by thoroughly investigating different control options. As a result of committee recommendations and an environmental assessment prepared by following NEPA guidelines, field assistance began in the spring of 1994. A total of 615 deer (297 by night spotlighting, 318 by stand collecting) were safely and humanely dispatched during the first years of operation through sharpshooting by professional biologists. Spotlight survey estimates indicated 36 deer/km<sup>2</sup> (92/mi<sup>2</sup>) prior to deer removal and 11 deer/km<sup>2</sup> (28/mi<sup>2</sup>) in June of 1995. During this time we have significantly reduced deer-human conflicts and concerns, and as an added benefit, over 9 metric tons of edible venison was donated to the needy. This project represents the biological and sociocultural benefits of wildlife damage management practices developed and implemented through interagency coordination and community involvement.

### Feral Pig Eradication, Santa Rosa Island, Calif.

Carmen A. Lombardo

A feral pig eradication program was conducted on Santa Rosa Island, Channel Islands Nat'l. Park, California, from July 1990 to March 1993. The program was implemented in three separate phases. Phase I included planning, a feasibility study, and design of a monitoring strategy. Monitoring included recording the frequency and distribution of pig sign on 82 belt transects stratified by habitat critical to pig behavior. During Phase II, the monitoring design was tested through active eradication efforts to assess shifts in distribution and changes in relative abundance associated with management activities. Phase III included a contracted eradication effort with professional hunters. Prior to implementation of Phase III, aerial surveys estimated the population at 1,400 (SE = ±400) pigs. A total of 1,176 pigs was removed during the eradication effort. Eradication strategies employed included systematic ground searches (n=798), systematic searches with dogs (n=105), road observations (n=4), aerial searches (n=261) including forward looking infrared technology (n=2), and trapping (n=6). National Park Service personnel expended 700 hours in search of pigs during Phase II of the program. Contractors expended a total of 7,000 hours in search of pigs during Phase III. Since March 1993, no pigs or fresh pig sign have been found on the island.

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## **Wildlife Damage In The News...**

### **Raccoon Rabies Spreads**

A strain of rabies carried primarily by raccoons has spread to the Midwest from the mid-Atlantic states, according to a recent report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It was found for the first time in Ohio during 1996, after emerging in Rhode Island, Vermont, and Maine in 1994. It was first reported in West Virginia in 1997. "It will move progressively westward through raccoon populations in the same way that it moved through the East Coast," noted the CDC's Jean Smith.

The CDC noted that vaccination of domestic pets and prompt treatment of people bitten by raccoons has prevented any human rabies cases from the strain. Domestic animals can potentially transmit rabies from wildlife to humans. The virus can be acquired through a cut or scratch, or through contact with the moist tissues of the mouth, nose, or eyes.

--from Reuter News Service

### **Wolf-Dogs Kill Woman**

A Colorado woman was killed by two wolf hybrids in December, according to the El Paso Co. sheriff's office. The 39-year-old woman was caring for the animals, which were housed on her property, and apparently was attacked when she was trying to get them back into their pen. It is believed to be the first fatality involving wolf-dog hybrids in Colorado, although several previous attacks have been reported. There are 50,000 such hybrid animals in Colorado alone, according to one estimate.

--Rocky Mountain News

### **Coyotes Dine on Ferrets**

According to *Range* magazine, half of the 40 endangered black-footed ferrets transplanted into Montana to establish a new colony have been killed by coyotes. The introduced ferrets were equipped, at great taxpayer expense, with radio-collars, which also were frequently consumed. The publication *ProRodeo Sports News* comments, "It just goes to show, one minute you're an expensive government-protected ferret, and the next minute just a pile of coyote poop on the plains."

### **Wolves Threaten, Kill Villagers in India**

It has become more than a century since India faced the threat of wolves on the scale now terrorizing the state of Uttar Pradesh, 350 miles from New Delhi. Since the first killing in mid-1996, 33 children have been reportedly carried off and killed by wolves, and 20 more have been mauled. In August, a wolf attacked three children who were in a grassy clearing at the edge of a village, carrying off and killing the smallest, a 4-year-old. Pathologists later confirmed the child had been killed and eaten by a wolf. Local authorities have no explanation why Indian wolves, which normally avoid humans, have become killers. A hunt by thousands of villagers and police has killed only 10 wolves so far. With new attacks each week, hysteria is sweeping the region, a terrain of lush fields interlaced with rivers and ravines approximately 40 miles wide and 60 miles long, where more than 9 million people reside.

--from the New York Times

### **Flying Chickens**

A recent publication of the California Poultry Industry Federation related the story of a unique device used by the FAA to test the strength of windshields on airplanes -- an air gun that launches a dead chicken at a plane's windshield at approximately the same speed the plane flies. Seems the British were interested in using the gun to test windshields on a new locomotive they're developing, so they borrowed the chicken gun and fired the bird at a windshield. The results were astonishing: the high-flying bird shattered the windshield, went through the engineer's chair, broke an instrument panel, and imbedded itself in the back wall of the engine cab. The stunned British asked the FAA to recheck the test. The FAA reviewed the test and recommended, "Use a thawed chicken."

--from the Denver Post



The Editor thanks the following contributors to this issue: Guy Connolly, Mike Fall, Jim Forbes, Wes Jones, Gene LeBoeuf, and Don Stoker