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Human/Wildlife Conflicts in Ethiopia

Jeff Petersen, Berryman Institute, Utah State University

Editor's note: This article is the second in a series of articles dealing with human-wildlife conflicts in various countries around the world.

These papers were written by students at the Berryman Institute and sent to THE PROBE by NADCA President and Berryman Institute Director, Dr. Mike Conover.

Ethiopia is located in eastern Africa, just south of the Red Sea. It covers an area of about 1.1 million square kilometers and has a human population of about 67 million. Ethiopia is closely linked to the earliest records of human life, and has a long history of human and wildlife interactions.

Ethiopia is a land of geological and biological diversity. The unique ecosystems that are created have led to over 1,500 wildlife species and more than 7,000 species of plants that make it their home. The long history of human activity in Ethiopia has had a lasting impact on the land, as well as the wildlife. It is also a land of crushing poverty and famine, where natural resources are overexploited and its increasing human populations have led to a variety of human/wildlife conflicts.

Bird damage is a major problem, especially to grain growers. Around some wildlife refuges, elephants, baboons, warthogs, and a variety of antelope cause major crop damage when these animals venture out of the park looking for food. Hybridization of domestic animals and wildlife and disease transmission (e.g., rabies and anthrax) are other problems faced in this area where livestock and wildlife share the land. The methods used to deal with wildlife damage include regular monitoring and controlling the populations of problem species. Historically, there was compensation for crop and livestock losses, but the problem of estimating the damage and lack of funds for compensation programs has led the government to rely heavily on culling problem species. Many farmers solve the problem on their own and simply shoot depredating animals.

Overuse of intense agriculture, as well as land being overrun by sheep, goats, and cattle, have led to the overexploitation of range lands and pastures in of many regions. The abundance of people has also led to the overhunting of many wildlife species. Animals are often shot for food, cultural ceremonies, or to reduce livestock losses or competition with livestock. During a month long trip to Ethiopia, Fred Duckworth continually refers to tribal groups in which the majority of the men carry AK47's. These may be used to protect their property or life, but they are also used to take wildlife. In some areas, any and all wildlife is shot on sight, either for food or to reduce the competition with domesticated livestock.

One problem has been the encroachment of human populations into many of Ethiopia's parks and wildlife refuges. In such areas, most wildlife conservation wardens find it nearly impossible to remove the people and/or the livestock. This has resulted in a reduction in wild populations of grazing animals. In response, many carnivores have become dependent for survival upon domesticated sheep, goats, and cattle. A more crucial threat from carnivores comes from the potential of predation on people. The main depredating carnivores include lions, leopards, hyena, jackals, and African wild dogs. In some areas, all predators are routinely shot on sight to reduce the threat of predation of both livestock and humans.

Although Africa is recognized for its hunting safaris, Ethiopia's commercial hunting market has suffered from bouts of war, drought, famine, and low wildlife numbers. Many Ethiopians feel that the activities of the professional hunter are one of "blatant disregard" for wildlife laws and hunting ethics. This view sees professional hunters as having led the way in the decimation of wildlife and setting a poor example for local villagers to follow. Although wildlife tourism is increasingly popular throughout Africa, Ethiopia has benefited little from it. There re-

Continued on page 4, col. 2

NADCA 2004 Election

Enclosed with this issue of **The PROBE** are a ballot and a self-addressed, postage-paid envelope to return the ballot to NADCA President, Mike Conover. The officers and directors to be elected will serve through 2004. Please mail your ballot in time to reach Mike Conover by September 15, 2003.

Support our Association by exercising your vote. The newly elected officers and directors will face the challenges of determining new directions that will carry us forward as wildlife damage management professionals, clearly define our role and revitalize our Association.

The current NADCA officers and regional directors extend their appreciation to all those who agreed to be candidates for this election and to fulfil the duties and responsibilities of their respective offices.

EDITOR'S NOTE: I have recently retired from my position as Extension Wildlife Damage Management Specialist at the University of Arizona. I plan to continue my involvement in wildlife damage management in the private sector. I retired with emeritus status and will continue to teach one wildlife damage management course and will have shared office space on campus. However, since I will not be on campus regularly, mail should be sent to my home address which is now included in **The PROBE** masthead. For now, my e-mail address will remain the same (sullivan@ag.arizona.edu).

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Your contributions 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.

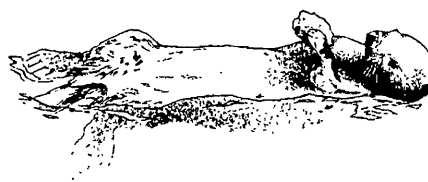
CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

September 6-10, 2003 - 10th Annual Conference of the Wildlife Society, Burlington, VT. E-mail tws@wildlife.org. On the web at www.wildlife.org

September 9-12, 2003 - 4th European Vertebrate Pest Management Conference, University of Parma, Parma Italy. See website <http://www.biol.unipr.europest>

October 14-16, 2003 - Invasive Species Symposium, Radisson Hotel, Sacramento, CA. Sponsored by the Western Section of The Wildlife Society. See www.tws-west.org

December 1-5, 2003 - 3rd International Wildlife Management Congress, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand. For information see www.conference.canterbury.ac.nz/wildlife3003 or e-mail wildlife@cont.canterbury.ac.nz



December 6-10, 2003 - 64th Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference, The Westin Crown Center, Kansas City, MO. See conference website <http://www.midwest2003.com>.

February 8-13, 2004 - 15th International Conference on Bear Research and Management, Bahia Resort Hotel, San Diego. Preliminary topics include: Bear/Human Conflicts; Field/Lab/Statistical Techniques, Habitat Assessment/Relationships; Genetics/Physiology; Conservation Biology. For more information go to: <http://www.ursusjournal.com>.

March 1-4, 2004 - 21st Vertebrate Pest Conference, Visalia Convention Center, Visalia, CA. See conference website at: <http://www.vpconference.org>

EVER WONDER?

*If the Norway rat (*Rattus norvegicus*) originated in Asia, why is this rat commonly called a Norway rat?*

The Norway rat originated in Asia in the region surrounding the Caspian Sea. A few were carried to Norway by Russian ships early in the 1700's. In 1714 the royal dynasty in Norway and Holland, the House of Hanover, gained control of the German states. In 1728, England became overrun by these rats. Since the House of Hanover was extremely unpopular with the English, they claimed that the rats were the scourge of Norway. So they were unjustly but permanently named the "Hanoverian" or "Norway" rat.

Source — Excerpted from "The World of House Rats and Mice, Supplemental Information." Author unknown.

Book Review: by Stephen Vantassel, CWCP, Wildlife Damage Control, Springfield, Massachusetts (<http://www.wildlifedamagecontrol.com>)

“When Raccoons Fall through Your Ceiling: The Handbook for Coexisting with Wildlife” by Andrea Dawn Lopez. University of North Texas Press, 2002.

Andrea Dawn Lopez is a freelance writer who spent some time as a wildlife rehabilitator for Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Inc. in San Antonio, Texas. She eventually achieved the position of manager which she held for 2 years. In light of her background, it should be of little surprise that the book contains many stories of human/animal encounters. Lopez, rather than concentrating on a couple of species, broadens her discussion to many different species. The animals she writes about include, raccoons, baby birds, deer, birds, deer fawns, major predators, ducklings, rabbits, opossums, bats and snakes. The saying, “Jack of All trades but master of none”, applies to this book. It isn’t designed for in-depth discussion of any individual species.

The book’s title speaks of coexisting with wildlife, but readers will be very disappointed if they are looking for a comprehensive guide to controlling animal damage. Information on damage control essentially consists of repellents, habitat modification, exclusion, harassment and toleration which are discussed in the first chapter. Apparently Ms. Lopez doesn’t believe that trapping can be an important and responsible part of coexisting with wildlife, as she refers to the practice of trapping and relocating as a “Bandaid solution”.

The lion’s share of the book tells readers how to prevent and handle animal injuries. Frequent refrains include reminders about the problem of assuming the baby animal has been abandoned and the need to help animals cross the road. By in large, the information is generic and appropriately vague. I think this book will frequently leave the reader wishing that more information was provided. Occasionally, Ms. Lopez provides some insight that makes the work of reading the book worthwhile. For example, I didn’t know that opossums eat rattlesnakes. Readers will find other often unknown tidbits like that throughout the book. I thought her chapters on baby birds and deer fawns were particularly good and would make for excellent background reading even for a NWCO who gets calls concerning them. Finally, Lopez ends with a chapter on building a basic first re-

sponder rehabilitator kit. The tips on capturing an animal would be valuable for NWCOs who have to capture that occasional exotic species or at least want to know how just in case.

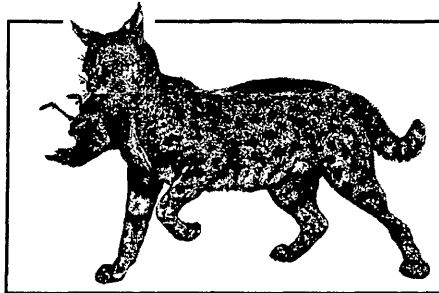
Unfortunately, I can give only tepid praise of this text. I think the minimal treatment of topics could lead readers to make some serious mistakes. For example, when dealing with chimney dwelling animals she neglects to mention the dangers of soot, parasites etc. Her suggestion that ammonia can be used to drive out a chimney dwelling animal overlooks the issue as to whether any infant young are present. On page 22, she talks about the possibility of babies who are too small to climb out. But then at the top of the next page,

she mentions using ammonia to drive out chimney nesting animals. While I am sure she wouldn’t recommend ammonia (she said not to use smoke) when young are present, she forgets that the unenlightened public may not connect the dots. She also seems to be unaware of the rabies protocols some states have established regarding bats found where people have been sleep-

ing. She is quite right that the risks of bat rabies are rare and that the fear of bat rabies maybe out of proportion to the risk. But then again, don’t we owe the reader the full story?

Finally, the book is well written and an easy read. Ms. Lopez avoids technical jargon. She also ends each chapter with a brief listing of important facts and ideas discussed in the chapter. There are very few illustrations, only a few halftones and line drawings. None provide anything more than decoration. A diagram of a chimney, etc. would have been helpful for a book claiming to be a “handbook”. Nevertheless, if you want to learn more about rehabilitating wildlife, this text would be a good introduction.

Perhaps it is a worthwhile book for public agency dispatchers that will receive a number of these “concerned citizen” calls. I would think the information on baby animals would save city’s and towns a great deal of money and time. You can find the book at Amazon.com or contact your local bookstore.



Wildlife Damage Management in the News

Antarctic Scientist Dies in Seal Attack

Research scientist, Kirsty Brown was snorkelling in waters close to the Rothera Research Station as part of her studies when a Leopard seal pulled her under.

Colleagues who witnessed the attack immediately launched a rescue boat to try to save her. Although they managed to retrieve her body and begin resuscitation, the 28-year-old marine biologist could not be revived. Leopard seals are often inquisitive when they encounter humans. However, they are not generally known to attack humans unless provoked. The Cambridge-based British Antarctic Survey (BAS), which runs Rothera, said everyone connected with the organization was shocked by what had happened. BAS, which has launched an investigation into the incident, has been carrying out research involving snorkelling and diving for the last 30 years.

Source — *BBC News*

Giant Lizards Spreading Through the Gulf Coast

Cape Coral, Florida has become a haven for Nile monitor lizards, and their population, which continues to grow, has possibly reached the thousands in the Gulf Coast city. The first official report of a monitor lizard in Cape Coral was in 1990. Since then, Cape Coral has received 145 reports. This carnivorous lizard, native to Africa, can easily grow to 5 feet in length. The lizards are considered a potential threat to native species. These animals can hunt prey in the water, in trees and even underground.

"They likely eat anything they can fit in their mouths," said Gregg Klowden, a University of Florida biologist working on a project to monitor the monitors. "In my opinion, burrowing owls are like popcorn snacks for them." Options being studied include relocating or killing the lizards. It has been speculated that these lizards may have been established by the release of pet lizards into the wild.

Source — *Excerpted from an Associated Press release July 18, 2003.*

NADCA Meets at TWS Conference

NADCA members who will be attending TWS Conference in Burlington should check the message board for an announcement of an informal NADCA get-together. NADCA President, Mike Conover, is in the process of arranging a time and place for a meeting but no details were available at the time this issue of **THE PROBE** was completed.

Monkeypox Outbreak: An Alert

A recent article by Bobby Corrigan, RMC Consulting, in *PCT* magazine, warns that although there is no evidence that common, structural rodent pests can harbor Monkeypox, pest managers should be aware of the variety of bacteria, mold, fungi, and viruses that can be harbored by rodent pests.

WCO's and PCO's who perform rodent management, especially in structures, and especially in the Midwest, need to be alerted to the potential for the transmission of a variety of diseases from commensal and other rodents.

Corrigan provides the following precautions to be taken when controlling structural rodent pests:

- Wear an approved respirator or dust mask. This will ensure that no particulates enter the body.
- Dermal protection is a must. Long sleeves, trousers and gloves should always be worn whenever conducting any type of rodent work.
- Feces and dead rodent removal is a necessary part of rodent control. Prior to removal of any rodent feces or dead rodent bodies, wet down the area with Lysol or a similar product, then sweep up the feces and remove the traps.
- Old live-capture traps should be immersed in a bleach-and-water bath for at least five minutes and then rinsed with water. Before they are cleaned, these traps should be stored in a sealed plastic bag.
- If possible, PCOs should ventilate the structure for 30 minutes, by opening doors or windows.

Source — *pctonline.com, June 13, 2003*

Continued from page 1, col. 2

Wildlife Conflicts in Ethiopia

mains a rural belief that conservation efforts are misguided because the needs of wildlife are put above the needs of the people. Many rural Ethiopians are more worried about crop and livestock losses, prohibited land access, and personal safety.

More information on this subject can be found at www.geocities.com/akababi/wildlife.htm or at www.cia.gov/cia/pulications/factbook/geos/et.html

Many thanks to Layne Coppock and Almaz Tadesse Kebede for their time and willingness to share their knowledge. Almez is from Ethiopia, and is currently a Ph.D student in Range Science at Utah State University. She has worked for the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Organization for about 8 years, contributing to research activities in many parts of Ethiopia.

The editor of The PROBE thanks contributors to this issue: Jeff Petersen and Stephen Vantassel.

NADCA 2004 Ballot

Return completed ballot, by September 15, 2003, to:

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Jack Berryman Institute
5210 Old Main Hill, NR 206
Utah State University
Logan, Utah 843225210

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— TIME VALUED MATERIAL — DO NOT DELAY

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Membership Renewal and Application Form

NATIONAL ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL ASSOCIATION

Mail to: Art E. Smith, South Dakota Department of Game, Fish & Parks, 523 E. Capitol Avenue, Pierre, SD 57501

Name: _____ Phone: (____) _____ - _____ Home

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

Additional Address Info: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP _____

Please use 9-digit Zip Code

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

Membership Class: Student \$10.00 Active \$20.00 Sponsor \$40.00 Patron \$100 (Circle one)

Check or Money Order payable to NADCA

Select one type of occupation or principal interest:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Pest Control Operator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> USDA - APHIS - ADC or SAT | <input type="checkbox"/> Retired |
| <input type="checkbox"/> USDA - Extension Service | <input type="checkbox"/> ADC Equipment/Supplies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Federal - not APHIS or Extension | <input type="checkbox"/> State Agency |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign | <input type="checkbox"/> Trapper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nuisance Wildlife Control Operator | <input type="checkbox"/> University |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe) _____ | |