

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

The Probe: Newsletter of the National Animal  
Damage Control Association

Wildlife Damage Management, Internet Center for

---

March 1985

## The Probe, Issue 51 - March 1985

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/icwdmprobe>



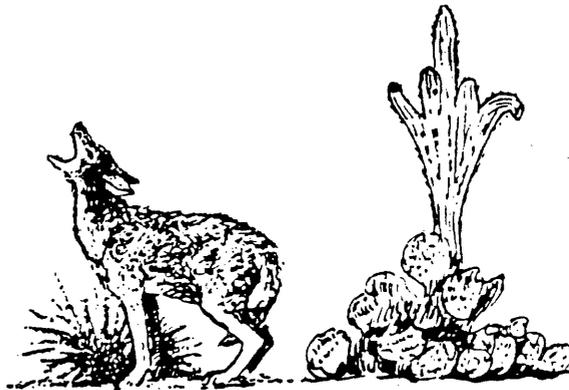
Part of the [Environmental Sciences Commons](#)

---

"The Probe, Issue 51 - March 1985" (1985). *The Probe: Newsletter of the National Animal Damage Control Association*. 124.  
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/icwdmprobe/124>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Wildlife Damage Management, Internet Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Probe: Newsletter of the National Animal Damage Control Association by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

# THE PROBE



## National Animal Damage Control Association

No. 51

March, 1985

### HOW DELICATE IS THE BALANCE OF NATURE ?

That's the title of an article by David Mech in the February-March issue of NATIONAL WILDLIFE (1985). The tone of the article is set in the caption on the first picture (a striking scene of two wolves fighting over a deer carcass) - "Seemingly unaffected by a swarm of blackflies, two wolves compete for a deer carcass in northern Minnesota. Wolves often live in equilibrium with their prey. But when outside influences disrupt that balance, both wolves and prey suffer."

Mech is a recognized authority on wolves and as he is working on the wolf recovery team is respected by the anti-ADC crowd. Thus his message - "...far from always being 'balanced', ratios of wolves and prey animals can fluctuate wildly - and sometimes catastrophically. Wolves may actually starve after killing off almost all the moose and deer in an area. This explains why wolf-control programs may sometimes ensure greater and more stable numbers of both wolves and the animals they hunt."

This is what we've been trying to tell the public. There is hope that we may someday get the message across when objective presentations of wildlife management made by qualified biologists are printed in media read by John Q. Public and believed with as much fervor as the garbage put out by the DEFENDERS and their ilk.

### SPEAKING OF THE DEFENDERS

In contrast, Dick Wetzel went to the trouble of sending me a copy of CHANGING U.S. TRAPPING POLICY - A HANDBOOK FOR ACTIVISTS published by the above outfit. Dick wanted to make it clear that he didn't buy the book, but only borrowed it. It is an impressive book illustrated by Leonard Lee Rue III who despite the stilted name is my favorite wildlife photographer. Furthermore it is very persuasively written with an impressive bibliography and authoritative statistics.

I haven't had time to give it the detailed scrutiny it deserves, but will print their "Suggestions for Activists" as being something of which you should be aware:

(1) Write to your State game department, governor, and state legislators detailing the following changes you think should be made: prohibition of bait sets, harvest limitations, increase penalties for violations of regulations, increase enforcement of same, limitations on number of traps per trapper, and placement of conspicuous signs in the area.

(2) Attend the department's public meetings to vocalize your concerns and carefully record the responses of department representatives.

- (3) Request information from the department to build a sound data base: population studies done in past 20 years on species to be trapped, classification and status of trapped species, number of man-hours spent in enforcement of trapping laws, amount of money department spending on trapping program, revenue generated by state from trapping program, the agencies receiving these monies and how they are spent, the number and species of non-targets trapped in the last 10 years, agencies that monitor interstate pelt traffic, record of government agency to which trapper pays taxes on his pelts, and actions taken against trappers who violate trapping regulations. (that should drive the information officer right up the wall)
- (4) Locate and walk traplines with a good camera. Document illegally placed or set traps, animals trapped out of season or left too long in traps, and non-target captures. Invite the press on such walks.
- (5) Demand the department enforce the law when illegal trapping incidents occur.
- (6) Theft of traps, etc. have frustrated many part-time trappers who may become an important ally in obtaining "better trapping regulations" (read that as 'outlawing all trapping').
- (7) Obtain testimony of citizens who have had trouble with trappers.

"Citizen activists must combine discretion, creativity and persistence to achieve trapping reforms of any kind." So there -

#### **TEN-EIGHTY REGISTRATION**

Don't get your hopes up that this will happen soon, according to Wyoming's Lyle Crosby . Commenting on Steve Schatzow's (who replaced Ed Johnson in the EPA Office of Pesticides Program) talk to the National Woolgrower's convention in Reno, Lyle pointed out that EPA still has to accept the new data it requested from USFWS. If it accepts these data then it has to go through the Section 7 consultation process in the Endangered Species Act plus a period of public comment. Furthermore, EPA has stated that registration cannot occur until a special training program is in place for certification of applicators. Don't hold your breath.

#### **I ONLY KNOW WHAT I READ IN THE PAPERS**

"A biologist has the responsibility to stick to professional standards - that is what professionalism is about. Scientific data and valid research should never be withheld, distorted or suppressed..." I believe in that philosophy but not in the place I read it - DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE, Jul/Aug '84, p.40 in an article by Michael Frome. That organization is certainly not hesitant about distorting biological data to its own purposes.

It's always the silly season for legislators. Representative Mae Schmidle (Connecticut State) has proposed a ban on the traditional showering of uncooked rice at weddings because it poses a threat to the health of birds. "When birds eat the raw rice, they cannot digest it, it expands and causes them to have violent deaths. I've heard from several ministers who say that the next morning after a wedding, they see all these birds toppled over because they got poisoned by the rice." While Schmidle quoted the Audubon Society as thinking the idea was "wonderful", a check with Roland Clement (Connecticut Audubon Society) said, "It sounds crazy...I've never heard of such a thing before." I'm sure the rice growers in the world are happy to learn that the birds eating their field rice are all going to die but unfortunately they don't know when. ALBUQUERQUE (NM) TRIBUNE, 13 Feb. 85, p. 1

**LETTERS TO YE ED**

The January issue of THE PROBE arrived yesterday and I was sorry to read that the NADCA may have to close down at the end of this year because of lack of support from potential members. If I were not a foreigner (go ahead and say it anyway, Bunny) I would say that is a sad commentary on the professionalism, or perhaps lack of it, of those working in ADC. The very low cost of membership is well repaid through various items in THE PROBE that help provide basic background information to ADC workers about the total environment - sociological, political and practical - in which they have to work. Without that background information it is difficult to operate in a really intelligent fashion. But since I'm a foreigner I must not say that !

I think you should not have doubts about the quality of the package you presented in THE PROBE. It's an outstandingly good publication - hard data presented in a most readable way. I have found it extremely useful.

You asked for ideas. How many of the potential membership know of the existence of NADCA and THE PROBE ? What about sending them a "flyer" and/or a gratis copy of THE PROBE ? Maybe that would bankrupt the NADCA before it closes down !

Terry Salmon stopped in last week. He is on a sabbatical with the Agriculture Board in Western Australia. Heard from Malcolm/Jennie Allison at Christmas. Malcolm had a heart attack in mid-84 but is recovering well. B. V. "Bunny" Fennessy CSIRO, Canberra, Australia.

I am extremely upset to hear of your plans to discontinue NADCA after 1985. While I agree the percentage of FWS-ADC employees who are participating in NADCA is disgustingly low, those of us supporting the the organization do it 101%. If you cease operation you will prove nothing to the "2 percenters" who never bothered to join and will hurt those of us who are actively involved in ADC work. I believe in what you are doing and want to strongly encourage you to continue. A lot of the blame for the low membership numbers needs to be placed on members like myself who have not actively recruited new members. I intend to do better on my end. Please continue with yours. Charles S. Brown, FWS, Oklahoma City, OK.

I think it is unfortunate that you are considering dissolving NADCA. I have enjoyed and been educated by THE PROBE and would hate to lose it. I think the lack of ADC personnel participation reflects their changing roles. However, their former responsibilities are being picked up by private industry and we need the type of information available in THE PROBE. I also think your newsletter would be of considerable interest to hunters and trappers. I think, with the proper promotion, you could generate considerable interest in your newsletter, even though it might differ somewhat from your original concept. Dr. Terry L. Whitworth, PCO Tacoma, WA.

I for one would feel a deep sense of loss if NADCA is disbanded. This organization represents the only source of inspiration, contact and hope that many of the members have with each other. I certainly appreciate the efforts of the officers of this organization and empathize with the feelings expressed by George Rost, Richard Wetzel, USFWS, Minneapolis, MN. (In response to our telephone conversation, Dick sent in a questionnaire to help arouse interest in NADCA. This has been revised slightly and included in this issue. Please fill it out and send it back. Thank you.)

**ISN'T THIS A PRETTY KETTLE OF FISH ?**

A recent ruling by the 8th U.S. circuit Court of Appeals states Indians may kill endangered species and any other wildlife they choose on reservation lands. The USFWS arrested a number of Indians last year for killing more than 200 bald eagles in

South Dakota and Nebraska and selling parts of the birds as native American artifacts. By a 5-3 vote, the appeals court said that the Indians have treaty rights to hunt on reservations as they please, even if this means killing endangered species. They did uphold the conviction of the Indians on the right to sell any parts of animals. The appeals court indicated the only way to stop Indians from killing endangered or any other species of wildlife is to abrogate the treaties in this respect. What say you to this, DEFENDERS ? OUTDOOR NEWS BULLETIN, 39:1:1 (1985).

**FROM THE SUBLIME...**

From one who can't add a column of figures and get the same answer twice, this is the best I can do on the financial status of NADCA:

	<u>1984</u>	<u>1983</u>
Revenues	\$10,091.34	\$9,890.46
Previous balance	4,089.24	3,903.82
Current income	6,002.10	5,986.64
Expenditures	3,462.01	5,801.22
Printing	2,044.70	2,321.94
Postage	773.89	661.02
Travel	247.23	2,273.97
Miscellaneous	396.19	491.93
Balance	6,629.33	4,089.24

**...TO THE RIDICULOUS.**

The DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE have reported their finances as follows:

	<u>1983</u>	<u>1982</u>
Revenues	\$2,493,624	\$2,599,633
Expenditures	\$2,471,402	\$2,695,189
Salaries/benefits, etc.	888,588	790,178
Printing	503,722	430,634
Postage	418,588	664,153
Other expenses	660,504	810,224

And that's the way it is -- The DW lists as its achievements for 1983:

(1) Lobbied successfully for increased FY84 funding to endangered species listing, law enforcement, and grants to states with cooperative programs. Sued to prevent USFWS plan to allow wolf trapping in Minnesota (decision under appeal); tried for a ban on importation of kangaroo products (government refused ban); reject Australian request to delist 3 kangaroo species from endangered list (government agreed to await further kangaroo census data before deciding issue); opposed lifting curbs on bobcat, lynx, wolf, and grizzly bear furs (USFWS dropped proposals when other nations did not support them, but stated they would reclassify the bobcat unilaterally. "Defenders unsuccessfully opposed this move, but we set the stage for future action." - Can't come out and admit defeat can they ?

(2) Took the deer hunt on Florida's Loxahatchee NWR to court. While their restraining order was overturned, they prevented hunting on two out of the three weekends proposed. That weekend hunt took only 2 deer and cost the... "taxpayers several hundred thousand dollars." (They don't mention that it was their action that cost the taxpayers.)

- (3) Filed notice to appeal EPA decision to reregister Compound 1080 with the result of stopping the process by throwing it into litigation.
- (4) Got special funding from Interior budget for pilot livestock guarding-dog projects in Oregon & Texas to reduce pressure for reinstatement of 1080.
- (5) Sued to stop New Mexico ADC personnel from entering Guadalupe Mts. and Carlsbad Caverns National Parks to control mountain lion sheep depredation on adjoining ranches.
- (6) Testified against Alaska's wolf control policy.
- (7) Disclosed a Watt proposal to permit feds to kill golden eagles resulting in a withdrawal of the plan.
- (8) Helped enact the New Jersey ban on leghold trapping.

#### **USDI TO USDA**

Scuttlebutt has it that the change might actually occur. Letters written by some influential congressmen apparently got a letter of approval to the move from USDI Secretary Clark before he left and a similar agreement from USDA Secretary Block. There has been a lot of movement on the part of agencies with a stake in ADC like the National Association of State Agricultural Departments and the Wool Growers to shape up the transfer. This also includes a USDI move to take as much money and ceilings from ADC as they can possibly cover up before a freeze is put on.

#### **I THOT I SAW A PUTTY CAT**

Some recent data that the DEFENDERS will do their best to distort indicates that mountain lions have not quite disappeared. Researchers of the deer herds on the west slope of the California Sierra Nevada range have been upset by a drop in the herd from 17,000 in 1950 to the 2,600 estimated today. "Habitat degradation" (overgrazing by livestock with fire control and silvicultural practices as minor contributors) was blamed for the decrease.

Studies of habitat improvement on a 15,000 acre plot the situation showed out of an average annual fawn crop of 162% only 27% of the fawns survived to become yearlings. Over 60% lasted only as long as 140 days. There was no conclusive evidence obtained showing specifically how the habitat was degraded, what was causing the degradation, or how it was causing fawns to die.

As the herd had continued to decrease despite habitat improvement studies, they radio-tagged some fawns. Out of 33 marked animals, 21 (64%) were killed by predators - bobcat (2), bear (4), coyotes (6) and the rest to mountain lion. Computer modeling indicates that the number of fawns lost to mountain lions is large enough to prevent the herd from increasing about the current level. That the lions were this hungry was surprising as a study in the 1970s indicated only 4 lions using this range. However, when they started to look at the lion population they estimated there were over 30. The lion:deer ratio had dropped from 1:700-900 in the 50s to 1:75 at present.

The reason behind this is found in California's mountain lion policy. Their predator control program ended in 1959. Mountain lions were reclassified to big-game animals in 1969. In 1971-2 the take was restricted to 118 head for the entire state. Since then California mountain lions have been protected completely.

The Forest Service researchers concluded that a temporary reduction in mountain lions

is necessary to allow the deer herd to rebuild to the range carrying capacity and withstand lion depredation. Progress Report by D. L. Neal to 2nd Mountain Lion Workshop, Zion National Park, Utah, Nov. 27-9, 84, mimeo.

#### RACCOON ROUNDWORM

The raccoon roundworm (Baylisascaris procyonis) is common throughout much of the raccoon's range. Recent studies report that 30-40% of the raccoons in Indiana, Illinois, and New York are infected. As the raccoon is its normal host, individual raccoons do not suffer adversely except with severe infestations which may block the gut. Concentrations of up to 25,000 eggs may occur per gram of raccoon feces.

Problems arise when these are picked up by other species such as humans, mice, squirrels, woodchucks, rabbits, partridges, bobwhite, etc. When the eggs reach the gut of the abnormal host, they develop into large larval forms which destroy tissue as they migrate from the gut to the eye or brain regions where they cause massive tissue destruction sometimes resulting in death of the host. Infection in humans is most apt to happen in areas of high raccoon concentrations or where these animals are kept as pets. Fresh feces are not considered dangerous as the eggs do not become infective for about 30 days, but they may remain infective for more than 9 years. Presently there seems to be no danger of contracting the roundworm by handling the carcass or eating the meat of an infected animal as long as the eggs are not ingested. CONNECTICUT DEPT. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (THE TRAPPER, Dec. 84, p.10)

#### PRESERVATIONIST LOGIC ?

Rick Jamison attempted to find what makes preservationists tick in a recent editorial (THE TRAPPER, Dec. 84, p.3). He admitted classifying them originally as "tongue-in-check scam artists" who were out for the bucks that could be made through the emotions aroused by the animal protection philosophy.

That there is a good point here can be seen in the figures about the DEFENDERS budget for 1984 (see page 4). Of their \$2,471,402 spent, 36% went for salaries, 37% went for printing/postage costs, leaving 27% for "miscellaneous". A detailed account of miscellaneous expenses showed they were all "administrative costs" such as "legal fees, office supplies, telephone, building maintenance, etc." including \$93,957 for "travel and meetings". In other words, not one cent was spent in the interest of the animals these "Defenders" are protecting. Oh! Pardon me. The printing/postage item is classed as "information and education". I'll never forget the sarcasm of the late T. H. Parks, Extension Entomologist at Ohio State University, when I proudly showed him a series of one-page leaflets I had written that was going to solve Ohio's rural rat problems. "How many of those will it take to stuff a rat hole or are you planning to kill them by dropping the pile on the rat's head?"

Jamison goes on to admit that many of the protectionist people are really serious about what they say though it is hard to believe it of supposedly rational beings. In checking through their writings, Jamison finally found what he thinks is the difference between 'them and us':

"The scientific wildlife community (hunters and trappers included) is concerned with the survival and continuing health of a wildlife population as a whole. Wildlife is viewed as a renewable resource to be utilized by man, and the surplus harvested, as long as it does not endanger not only the survival of the species, but its continued high numbers. Indeed, biologists recognize a controlled harvest as a valuable wildlife management tool in maintaining stable, healthy populations of wildlife.

The preservationist/protectionist people, on the other hand, seem concerned only with individual animals with complete disregard for the rest of the population. By elevating the status of an animal, in theory at least,

almost on par with a human being, it was then justifiable for them to endanger an entire population of wildlife in order to save a few individuals - for the time being at least. By not allowing a hunting or trapping season, a few individual animals would be spared, even though it means endangering not only the entire species over a period of time through disease and starvation, but endangering the habitat as well because in many instances, animal populations that reach starvation levels are capable of doing considerable damage to a habitat before the local population becomes extinct."

#### THERE ARE TWO SIDES

That there are two sides to the situation is brought out nicely in a Denis Collins column (WASHINGTON POST, 28 Nov. 84 p.C1). Talking about the Gibson Island fracas... "Facing one another across such a straight and simplistic battle line, both hunters and antihunters tend to spout foolishness. Start with hunters. When subjected to hostile questioning, many will resort to ridiculous language, using words like 'harvest' instead of kill and claiming they are shooting the deer as a favor, to save them from death by starvation or disease. It is certainly true that, in many areas, where natural predators have been eliminated by civilization, hunting is the only check on deer population.

But it's hard to swallow a hunter's claim that he spends hundreds of dollars on licenses and weaponry, then goes without sleep to shiver in a tree because he doesn't want any deer to go hungry.

The antihunters have their own specious arguments. To claim hunting is cruel while eating fish, fowl, and beef purchased from a supermarket is at best ignorant and at worst hypocritical. Meat that comes wrapped in cellophane is no less meat. And the animal died to provide it gets no consolation because someone was paid to butcher it.

Vegetarians have sturdier moral grounds on which to stand. But to assert that eating meat is an abomination is to deny a million years of human evolution. You have only to check your mouth to see proof of that. Canine teeth are not needed to chew celery.

'Whether we love hunting or hate it...hunting was the force that shaped our bodies, molded our souls, and honed our minds...Hunting is the master behavior pattern of the human species.' But what about modern America, where hunting is no longer necessary for survival? Isn't it best to leave all killing to USDA-approved butchers?... (question asked hunters is)... 'How can you shoot such a beautiful animal as a deer?' Cut off from any real connection with the land, and raised on Walt Disney's anthropomorphic characterization of wildlife, where deer and bear are reduced to woodland pets, the question is understandable.

But it is also unarguably subjective. Who cries for the life of creatures less cuddly and brown-eyed? Where are the defenders of catfish and earthworms, mosquitoes, and fire ants, animals with no less right to life than Bambi's mother?...as long as man has carnivore teeth beside vegetarian molars, the debate will never end." Thank to Jeff Horwath USFWS, Washington, DC

THIS PUBLICATION IS INTENDED AS AN INFORMAL NEWSLETTER TO MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS OF NADCA. IT IS NOT AN OFFICIAL DECLARATION OF NADCA POLICY OR A CONSENSUS OF OPINION IN ALL INSTANCES.

YE ED - William D. Fitzwater

THE PROBE, March, 1985

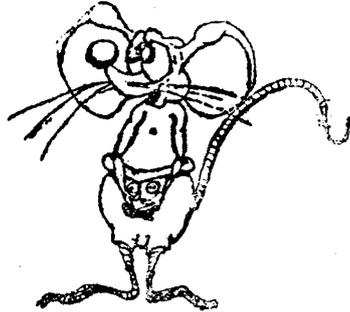
- 8 -

No. 51

I have eliminated the "humorous" asides as some have expressed the opinion they detract from the total message. It sure makes it easier on me, but I think it makes for drier reading. So you can express yourself on this in the attached questionnaire, remembering a vote "for" continuing these remarks is "disapproving" #8H.

I certainly appreciate the input I get from "a precious few" in the field. You would make my job easier and this a better publication if you would send me your thoughts and experiences.

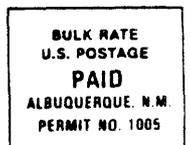
Adios,



**National  
Animal  
Damage  
Control  
Association**



3919 Alta Monte, NE  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110



**FORWARDING AND RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED**