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May 1991

## The Probe, Issue 110 - May 1991

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# NADCA News From Great Plains Wildlife Damage Control Workshop

## STUDENT AWARDS PRESENTED

President Terry Salmon presented a plaque and a copy of the book *Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage* to Kimberly Kessler, whose paper "Lines to Selectively Repel House Sparrows from Backyard Feeders" was judged to be the best student presentation at the Great Plains Workshop. Kim is completing her M.S. at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Criteria used in evaluating student presentations included content, delivery, and creativity.

Second and third-place winners also received a copy of the book. They were Bruce Jasch (University of Nebraska: "A Cultural Method of Reducing Pocket Gopher Impact on Alfalfa Yields") and John Koprowski (University of Kansas: "Damage Due to Scent Marking by Eastern Gray and Fox Squirrels"), respectively. Jasch is completing his M.S., while Koprowski is finishing a Ph.D.

Other student presentors were Patricia Pochop, Dale Hafer, and Martha Desmond, all of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Each of the six students were presented a year's membership in NADCA, which sponsored the awards program. Our congratulations to the winners!

## BILL FITZWATER RECOGNIZED AT NADCA MEETING

Bill Fitzwater, past Secretary/Treasurer of NADCA and Editor of *The Probe* from its inception until 1990, was recognized at the NADCA membership meeting held Wednesday, April 17, in conjunction with the Great Plains Wildlife Damage Control Workshop in Lincoln, Nebraska. President Terry Salmon lauded Fitz's dedication and tireless efforts toward nurturing NADCA through its founding and years of growth, and displayed a plaque to honor his accomplishments. (Unfortunately, Fitz was unable to be present at the meeting.)

## BY-LAWS AMENDED, APPROVED

The NADCA's By-Laws have been amended and updated and the new version was approved by the Executive Committee at their meeting on April 16. Any member interested in receiving a copy of the amended By-Laws can obtain one by writing to Wes Jones, Treasurer (Rt. 1, Box 37, Shell Lake, WI 54871).

## LOGO CONTEST TO BEGIN

The Executive Board has approved the initiation of a contest among all members to design an appropriate logo for NADCA. The winning logo will be used on NADCA publications, as well as utilized on patches, hats, lapel pins, or such items as the Board may authorize to promote the organization. Artistic talent isn't required—a simple sketch of your idea is all that needs to be submitted. Get out your pen and paper and start doodling! Further details of the contest (and the prize to be awarded to the winner) will appear in a future issue of *The Probe*.

## MEMBERSHIP CONTEST TO BEGIN

A contest to recruit new members into NADCA has been approved by the Executive Board, utilizing a gift from Reed-Joseph International as an incentive for recruitment efforts. Prizes will be awarded from a drawing conducted from all new member applications received over a period of time, and the recruiting member(s) will be awarded prizes. This means you only need to recruit one member to be eligible...but the more members you recruit, the better your chances of winning! Details of the membership drive will appear in the June issue of *The Probe*.



The Probe

The United States General Accounting Office (GAO), in response to a request from Senator Alan Cranston (D-CA), issued a report on August 9, 1990, discussing the effects of ADC programs on several predator species. This report specifically discussed whether (1) a comprehensive federal policy exists for managing predator species, (2) individual state animal damage control programs are consistent with such a policy if it does exist, and (3) the policy and practices are threatening predator populations. The review focused on bears, wolves, foxes, bobcats, mountain lions, and coyotes in the 17 western states. In this issue, *The Probe* reprints Appendix II of the report.

## ADC Practices Are Generally Consistent With Legislation and Guidance

The Animal Damage Control Act of 1931 and implementing guidance provide broad direction on the manner in which ADC programs in the states should operate. ADC programs in the states visited appeared to be operating in a manner generally consistent with both by providing assistance in resolving conflicts between wildlife and humans to alleviate damage and minimize economic losses as required by the law and ADC guidance. However, although the ADC policy manual states that non-lethal methods will be given first consideration when practical as a predator damage control technique, little evidence exists of state ADC program personnel employing such methods. Rather, in the six states we visited, killing offending animals was used predominantly to control predation on livestock. According to ADC personnel, selective killing of predators to control their damage is used most frequently because it is the fastest and most cost-effective way to solve livestock predation problems. They also believe that most of the practical, non-lethal methods such as predator-proof fencing, guard dogs, and night confinement are most appropriately used by the livestock owner rather than ADC personnel.

ADC programs operate on a request-for-services basis. After receiving a request for assistance, ADC guidance requires field specialists to verify that damage or loss has occurred, determine that the damage or loss was due to predators, choose and implement a control strategy, and record the action taken. Damage control strategies can be preventive to thwart animal damage before it occurs or corrective to address losses that have already occurred. Although some states' ADC programs provide that predators may be killed as a preventive measure, we found that the majority of ADC killing of predators is corrective in nature.

Although all states that we visited emphasized killing predators, the killing techniques varied among the states depending on the terrain, vegetation, and climate. For example, North Dakota's

open flat terrain makes aerial hunting effective in killing coyotes. In contrast, in Texas, which has areas of dense vegetation, ADC field specialists commonly poison predators with the use of M-44 capsules. In Colorado, few leg-hold traps are used during winter months because of heavy snowfall, but traps are readily used in California and New Mexico to kill predators. Appendix V contains a description of these and other predator control techniques.

In those states where preventive control techniques are used, different restrictions on the use of the methods may exist. For example, in Colorado, preventive killing is allowed only in areas that experienced losses during the past year. In Utah, however, ADC kills coyotes in preventive situations if loss or damage is anticipated. For example, on national forest lands in Utah, ADC shoots coyotes from helicopters during winter months when the ground is snow-covered and the animals are more easily seen. This activity is undertaken to reduce local coyote populations before moving sheep onto the land the next summer regardless of whether livestock losses have occurred on the lands during the previous summer grazing season. Although ADC headquarters officials told us that such preventive control measures are used only in areas where there has been some historic coyote predation, which tends to reoccur in many areas, we found that this was not true for the majority of cases in Utah during the 1989 aerial shooting season. ADC reported no sheep killed by coyotes in 1988 on 60 percent of the Forest Service grazing allotments in Utah that were subject to aerial shooting from January through March 1989. Also, in Texas and New Mexico, ADC tries to kill all coyotes in and around specific livestock producing areas in order to prevent future losses.

Although non-lethal techniques are not used extensively, in the Forest Service's Mt. Naomi Wilderness Area in Utah, the ADC program began an experimental non-lethal control program in the summer of 1988. This program, an agreement between ADC and the Forest Service, requires that ranchers use guard dogs to protect their sheep from coyotes instead of ADC using aerial hunting. This 3-year program requires that increasing sheep loss thresholds be met before aerial gunning can be used. In the summers of 1988 and 1989, sheep losses did not exceed the established loss thresholds so aerial hunting was not allowed during the following winters.

*The Probe* is the newsletter of the National Animal Damage Control Association, published 10 times per year.

Editors: Robert H. Schmidt and Robert M. Timm  
Editorial Assistant: Pamela J. Tinnin

Your contributions to *The Probe* are welcome. Please send news clippings, new techniques, publications, and meeting notices to *The Probe*, c/o Hopland Field Station, 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.

# — *Animal Damage Control in the News* —

## **MOUNTAIN LIONS KILL 10 SHEEP IN NEVADA**

According to an April 3 *Weekly Activity Report* received from Jeffrey S. Green of ADC, three mountain lions recently killed 10 sheep in Nevada. The sheep were valued at \$1,050. ADC lion hunters were called in to remove the lions before further losses occurred. The Las Vegas office of the Nevada Department of Wildlife reported that a mountain lion killed a dog and a domestic goose on a ranch near Pahrump, Nevada. NDOW investigated and determined the lion left the area of the attack and returned to nearby Mt. Charleston. They will continue to monitor the situation and will request ADC assistance if the lion should return.

## **COYOTES TROUBLING TO IDAHO HOMEOWNERS**

The April 3 *Report* also stated that recent daily coyote sightings had alarmed homeowners whose property bordered a park in the heart of Boise, Idaho. After several coyotes confronted a man in his driveway and numerous pets were missing or killed, the residents asked ADC for help. ADC officials captured a pair of coyotes from under a tennis court. No further incidents have occurred. Damage caused by the coyotes was estimated at \$3,500.

## **NUTRIA CAUSE MAJOR DAMAGE IN SUGAR CANE**

The Louisiana State Office of ADC has been asked to provide nutria-control recommendations to a major sugar producer in Lafource Parish, Louisiana. According to the April 3 Eastern Region *Weekly Activity Report* received from Tennessee State Director Kenneth M. Garner, nutria damaged 100 acres of sugar cane so severely in 1990 that harvesting equipment could not be used. Additionally, nutria are digging up seed cane that was planted late in 1990. Southco Sugar, Inc., has estimated a financial loss of \$504,000 on their 2,200 acre plantation. ADC officials will meet with the producers, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries fur biologists, and county agents to provide additional control recommendations.

## **WLFA WANTS TO PROTECT “YOUR RIGHT TO HUNT, TRAP AND FISH”**

In an April 2 letter to Ronald A. Thompson of ADC-Sacramento, California, T. Allan Wolter of The Wildlife Legislative Fund of America stated that WLFA's "...single purpose is the protection of your right to hunt, trap and fish." Wolter further stated that "The leading organizations on both sides of the animal rights question recognize WLFA as the leading defender of the rights of hunters, trappers, and fishermen." The WLFA is headquartered in Columbus, Ohio.

## **SNOW GEESE DEVASTATE OKLAHOMA SPINACH CROP**

Since January, farmers on the Arkansas River bottom in LeFlore County, Oklahoma, have sustained heavy snow goose damage to their winter spinach crop. The March 27 ADC *Weekly Activity Report* detailed that although in the past wintering geese have not been a problem, having shown no interest in grazing on sprouting spinach, things have changed. A total of six farmers reported losing 460 acres of spinach worth an estimated \$294,000 (based on local production averages). ADC provided propane exploders in an attempt to alleviate any additional damages.

## **PREDATOR PLATFORMS DETER HONEY-SEEKING BEARS**

In an article in the November 1989 *American Bee Journal*, a unique solution to discourage bear damage to bee hives was described. Author T.C. Flanigan stated that the idea of "predator platforms" with short straight legs and a two and a half foot overhang was proposed by John Sellers of Bedford, Pennsylvania. Frustrated with trying to maintain an electric fence in working order, Sellers came up with the idea of the platform and he feels it has been an inexpensive and simple way to prevent bear depredation of bee hives. The article concluded with, "...similar platforms have been established around the state with notable success in eliminating bear damage to beekeeping equipment."

## **MOUNTAIN LION APPEARS IN IRVINE, CALIFORNIA, BACK YARD**

An article in the February 17 *Orange County Reporter* warned residents in Orange County, California, about increased mountain lion sightings in the area. On February 8, a 110-pound mountain lion leaped into the backyard of Gary and Deborah Goldman's home in Irvine. In 1990, there were 35 lion sightings reported by regional-park visitors in California; officials verified 13 of them, including an increasing number in Irvine Region Park. According to the article, many of the recent sightings occur because "...young lions are willing to experiment to survive. Squeezed by competition, the young predators are forced to the fringe of their habitat." The article stated that in Orange County, 79,000 acres of former mountain lion habitat have been developed since 1945. California is one of many states where mountain lion-human encounters have been on the rise. Todd Malmsbury, Colorado Division of Wildlife, said that "People have taken actions—moving into habitat and feeding wildlife—that create a situation where they are more likely to see lions. If people choose to live in wildlife habitats, they're the ones that are going to have to adapt."

*The editors of The Probe thank contributors to this issue: Jeffrey S. Green, Kenneth M. Garner, Ron Thompson and Terrell P. Salmon. Send your contributions to The Probe, 4070 University Road, Hopland, CA 95449.*

# PREVENTION AND CONTROL TIPS

This month's information is revised from *Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage (1983)*, published by Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service, Lincoln, Nebraska.

## STARLINGS

### EXCLUSION

Close all openings larger than one inch.  
Boards or metal covering at 45° angle on ledges.  
Metal prongs or sticky repellents on ledges or rafters.  
Netting to prevent roosting on building rafters or to protect fruit crops.  
PVC strips to cover door openings.

### HABITAT MODIFICATION

Reduce availability of food and water at livestock facilities: remove spilled grain and standing water; use bird-proof feeders and storage facilities; feed livestock in open sheds; where appropriate, feed in late afternoon; lower water level in waterers.  
Modify roost sites by closing building roosts or frightening.

### FRIGHTENING

Use with fruit crops and starling roosts. Also useful at livestock facilities in warm weather and at facilities located near a major roost.  
Frightening devices include recorded distress or alarm calls, various sound producing devices, chemical frightening agents (Avitrol®), lights and bright objects.

### REPELLENTS

To protect ripening cherries or blueberries (Mesuro® 75% Wettable Powder)  
To discourage roosting on ledges (soft sticky materials).

### TOXICANTS

Starlicide® — poison bait for use around livestock facilities.

### TOXIC PERCHES

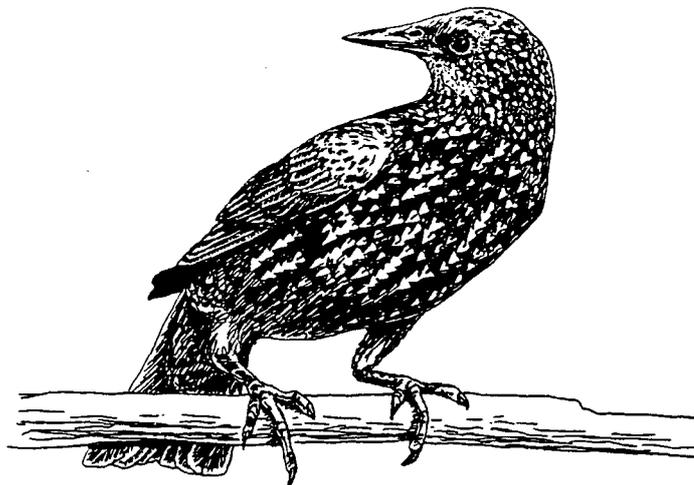
Generally not recommended for starling control.

### WETTING (DETERGENT) AGENTS

Generally not recommended for starling control but may be useful for roost control in some situations; only by or under supervision of government agencies trained in bird control.

### FUMIGANTS

None registered. Engine exhaust (containing carbon monoxide) may be useful in some farm buildings, but is not registered.



Adult European starling, *Sturnus vulgaris*

### TRAPPING

Nest-box traps, for use during nesting season.  
Decoy traps may be useful around orchards or livestock facilities.  
Proper care for trap and decoy birds is necessary

### SHOOTING

Helpful as a dispersal or frightening technique. Not effective in reducing starling numbers.

### OTHER METHODS

The use of starlings as a protein source for livestock or pet food may warrant investigation.

### LEGAL STATUS

European starlings are not protected by federal law and in most cases not by state law. However, laws vary among states, so check with state wildlife officials before beginning a control program. In addition, state or local laws may regulate or prohibit certain control techniques such as shooting or the use of toxicants.

Author: Ron J. Johnson and James F. Glahn

Readers are reminded that the status of registrations for pesticides differ among states and are constantly changing.

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# CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

**May 16-June 20, 1991: International Course on Vertebrate Pest Management**, Bowling Green, Ohio. Course topics include Major Vertebrate Pests; History of Disease and Population Outbreaks, Famine, Drought, Human Ecology; Crop Losses, Damage, and Contamination; Control/Management Methods; and Sustainable Agriculture. Registration deadline is March 15, 1991. Contact Dr. Reginald D. Noble, Chair, Department of Biological Sciences, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH 43403-0212. Telephone (419) 372-2332. (The Denver Wildlife Research Center in conjunction with Colorado State University has decided not to offer the **3rd International Short Course on Vertebrate Pest Problems and Solutions in Developing Countries**, scheduled for August 4-22, 1991. DWRC encourages those participants who had enrolled or planned to enroll, to consider participating in the International Course on Vertebrate Pest Management listed above. DWRC scientists will be involved in this BGSU course.)

**July 29-31, 1991: "Wildlife 2001: Populations"**, Oakland, California. For researchers and agency personnel interested in the science, conservation, and management of vertebrate animal populations. For further information or to submit an abstract to give a paper, contact: Dale McCullough or Reg Barrett, Dept. of Forestry and Resource Mgmt., 145 Mulford Hall, UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA 94720.

**October 6-9, 1991: 5th Eastern Wildlife Damage Control Conference**, Ithaca, New York. Contact: Carol Rundle, Cornell Coop. Extension, Dept. of Nat. Resources, Rm. 108 Fernow Hall, Cornell Univ., Ithaca, NY 14853-3001.

**March 2-5, 1992: 15th Vertebrate Pest Conference**, Newport Beach, California. Contact: John Borrecco, USDA/Forest Service, 630 Sansome Street, San Francisco, CA 94111.

**March 27-April 1, 1992: 57th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference**, Radisson Plaza Hotel Charlotte and Charlotte Convention Center, Charlotte, North Carolina. Contact: L.L. Williamson, Wildlife Management Institute, 1101 14th Street NW, Suite 725, Washington, D.C. 20005.

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## *Bill Fitzwater Receives Special Award from NADCA*

April 17, 1991

Dear Bill:

We, the Executive Committee, Officers, and members of the National Animal Damage Control Association (NADCA), extend our sincere congratulations to you on being named the recipient of the First National Animal Damage Control Association Special Contribution Award.

This award is given in recognition of your truly exceptional contributions to NADCA and its membership, and for your development and editorship of *The Probe* from 1979 to 1990. Your personal commitment, time, and expertise devoted to NADCA over the years is an example for all. You have certainly earned the respect of our membership, the present and past officers, and regional directors, and ADC professionals worldwide.

Thanks again, Bill, for your many excellent contributions over the years to the ADC profession and to the establishment and sustainability of NADCA. As a Charter member and valued contributor, we are delighted to honor you with this Award, the first of its kind for NADCA.

Sincerely,

*Terrell P. Salmon, President; Jim E. Miller, Vice President-East; Derrell Gretz, Vice President-West; Robert Willging, Secretary; Wes R. Jones, Treasurer; Tom R. Hoffman, Regional Director-I; Franklin W. Anderson, Regional Director-II; Craig L. Maycock, Regional Director-III; Albert V. Bivings, Regional Director-IV; Ron J. Johnson, Regional Director-V; Tom M. Hauge, Regional Director-VI; James E. Forbes, Regional Director-VII; Wm. Philip Eggborn, Regional Director-VIII; Ken M. Garner, Regional Director-IX; Clarence E. Faulkner, Regional Director-X; George S. Rost, Director-at-Large; Robert M. Timm, Editor, *The Probe*; and Robert H. Schmidt, Editor, *The Probe**

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## THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

We've just completed a very successful NADCA Business Meeting in conjunction with the 10th Great Plains Wildlife Damage Control Conference in Lincoln, Nebraska. Over 50 people attended and participated in our business meeting.

I would like to report that NADCA is alive and well. The enthusiasm of the Executive Board, Regional Directors, and members was evident throughout the entire Great Plains Workshop. Our information booth received a lot of activity and many new wildlife professionals joined NADCA at this meeting. The Outstanding Student Award we presented to the three students presenting their research was very successful in demonstrating NADCA's commitment to the development of new wildlife damage professionals.

We can all be proud of our Association. Keep up the good work!

*Terrell P. Salmon,  
NADCA President*

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### Membership Application

#### NATIONAL ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL ASSOCIATION

Mail to: Wes Jones, Treasurer, Route 1 Box 37, Shell Lake, WI 54871

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Dues \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Donation \$: \_\_\_\_\_ Total \$: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Underline: Student \$7.50, Active \$15, Sponsor \$30, Patron \$100)

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         | <input type="checkbox"/> Retired               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Federal - other than APHIS | <input type="checkbox"/> State Agency          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Trapper               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ADC Equipment/Supplies     | <input type="checkbox"/> University            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe) _____     |  |

*The Probe*