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The Probe, Issue 119 - March 1992

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The Probe
ISSUE 119
MARCH 1992

The "Padded" Trap Is Not the Answer

Christine Stevens, President, Animal Welfare Institute, Washington, D.C.

The Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) opposes the use of all painful methods of animal capture, including the "Soft-Catch"-style traps. Traps must close quickly to catch fast-reacting animals. AWI recognizes that "Soft-Catch" is still very painful. A simple test for painfulness is to place one's fingers in this trap and, with someone assisting, slowly close it. Despite this restrained and conservative method of closure in the human finger test, adapted to make sure that fingers are not broken and skin is not torn, the pressure of the so-called "Soft-Catch" trap becomes intolerable to the human captive in a very short period of time. *Pain*, not simply torn flesh and broken bones, is the primary negative factor of conventional trapping devices.

Alternatives to conventional leg-hold traps and the "Soft-Catch" (simply a modified version of conventional traps) include cage and box traps, coated-cable leg-snares, and instant-kill traps. Three monographs describing the various devices available in these categories have been published by the AWI, and are available upon request.

Although "Soft-Catch" traps generally cause less visible damage to an animal than do conventional traps, Dr. Mark Pokras states "This in no way proves that 'Soft-Catch' traps are more humane." He writes further that "Animals have all the equipment to feel pain just as you or I do." The following statement appears in the report of the Federal Provincial Committee on Humane Trapping: "On external examination, trapped limbs often seem to sustain only minor injuries. Yet on further examination, X-ray for example, many of these apparently uninjured or minimally-injured limbs prove to have broken bones or badly torn muscles and tendons..."

STUDIES SHOW SEVERE DAMAGE FROM "PADDED" TRAPS

The Canadian Fish and Wildlife Service report entitled "Comparison of Standard Leghold Trap to 'Cushion' Leghold Trap" included the following statements regarding injury from padded traps:

- "hemorrhaging in fascia of muscles from left shoulder to paw, muscles pale, nails of right forepaw worn from scratching, edema, dirt in mouth. G.I. tract empty, lungs congested and collasped (mink)."
- "Fresh breaks on teeth..."
- "Found dead, stomach empty, blood and some vegetation in intestines and colon, disolocation at carpal/radial joint, bruised tissue in carpal area, slight edema (fox)."
- "Broken legs on opossum, rabbit and skunk, and chewing of feet by raccoons, were docu mented."

A study in Georgia by Dr. Frank Hayes showed the following types of injuries caused by padded traps for 20 raccoons, 16 coyotes, 19 foxes, and 31 skunks: bone fractures (22), foot removal by chewing (12), dislocated joints (19), hemorrhaging and swelling (28), and severed ligaments and tendons (4).

Most North American studies pay little or no attention to broken teeth and other mouth injuries. A Michigan study of otters, however, showed that 73% of females and 60% of males had severe tooth damage. There is nothing about the padded trap which would lessen such injuries, since bare steel is available to an animal to bite and fight against. A Swedish study of tooth injury caused by conventional leg-hold traps by Dr. Jan Englund of the University of Stockholm showed that 64 percent of mature foxes broke their teeth, with severe erosion of the lower mandibles occurring in some instances.

ALTERNATIVES ARE AVAILABLE AND INCREASINGLY USED

When New York State sought to bring lynx from Canada back into the state, they tried capture with "Soft-Catch" traps. Because of the injury these traps caused, they changed to the use of coated-cable leg-snares. For smaller animals, cage traps may be used. These traps are widely accepted by the general public. They are used by animal shelters when it is necessary to capture an elusive stray dog or cat.

When it is not necesary to capture an animal alive, there are also a limited number of instant-kill traps which are highly effective, causing instant unconsciousness and death (euthanasia). Traps used for martens in Canada, the Gabry Challenger and the Kania, avoid danger to non-target animals because they are placed on tree trunks and used with a cubby to accurately direct the killing blow.

AWI will be glad to answer inquiries concerning alternatives to leg-hold traps. It is important for all Americans using this trap, padded or unpadded, to prepare for its elimination. The Council of the Euro-

Continued column 2, page 2

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

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. Two of the sessions at the conference will be "Wildlife Damage Management" and "Biological Diversity in Wildlife Management". For more information about the "Wildlife Damage Management" session, contact co-chair John P. Weigand, Fish, Wildlife and Parks Bldg., Montana State University, Bozeman, MT 59717-0322.

April 1-3, 1992: 11th Eastern Black Bear Workshop, Waterville Valley Conf. Ctr., Waterville Valley, NH. Contact: Eric P. Orff, NH Fish & Game Dept., 37 Concord Rd., Durham, NH 03824, phone (603) 868-1095.

May 3-6, 1992: 48th Northeast Fish & Wildlife Conference, Norfolk Waterside Marriott Hotel, Norfolk, VA. Contact: Charlie Sledd, 4010 W. Broad St., P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104.

May 3-6, 1992: Northeastern Association of Wildlife Damage Biologists, Norfolk, Virginia. If you wish to submit a paper or poster please submit a 150-word (double-spaced) abstract by 1 April 1992. Contact: James E. Forbes, USDA/APHIS/ADC, P.O. Box 97, Albany, NY 12201.

May 17-20, 1992: The 4th North American Symposium on Society and Resource Management will be held on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. The Symposium theme, *Integrated Resource Management*, includes many general themes such as: Managing Agricultural Production Systems and Environmental Quality; Aquatic Systems; Conservation and Sustainable Resource Development; Cultural Resource Management; Environmental Ethics; etc. For mure information contact: Donald R. Field, Program Chair, School of Natural Resources, 146 Agriculture Hall, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706.

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

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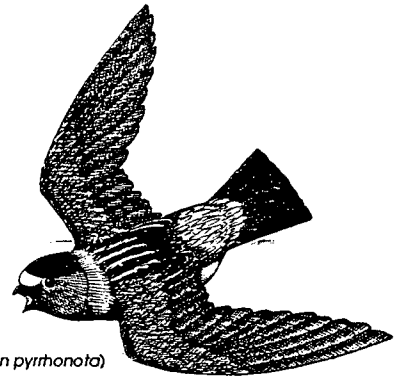
Your contributions to *The Probe* are welcome. Please send news clippings, new techniques, publications, and meeting notices to *The Probe*, c/o Hopland Field Station, 4070 University Road, Hopland, CA 95449. If you prefer to FAX material, our FAX number is (707) 744-1040. The deadline for submitting material is the 15th of each month.

August 25-27, 1992: 2nd North American Wolf Symposium. Contact: L.N. Carbyn, University of Alberta, Canadian Circumpolar Institute, 215 Central Academic Bldg., Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 2G1.

September 13-16, 1992: International Conference on Avian Interactions with Utility Structures, Hotel International, Miami, Florida. Will focus on avian interactions with powerlines, towers, buildings, and aircraft. Contact: Ed Colson, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, 3400 Crow Canyon Road, San Ramon, CA 94853, (415) 866-5461; FAX (415) 866-5318.

July 4-10, 1993: Sixth International Theriological Congress, Sydney, Australia. This is an international meeting of scientists interested in mammalogy, and will include symposia and workshops including such topics as population biology of mammals, the role of disease in population regulation, and wildlife management. For further information, write: The Secretariat, 6th Int'l Theriological Congress, School of Biological Science, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia 2033.



Cliff swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*)

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"Padded" Trap Not the Answer

pean Community (EC) approved a Regulation in November, 1991, whose provisions include a ban on importation of fur from 13 species of wildlife captured in countries which have not banned the leg-hold trap or met international humane trapping standards. These standards have not yet been promulgated. Over 60 countries have already banned leg-hold traps, and the EC Regulation mandates that all member nations prohibit its use.

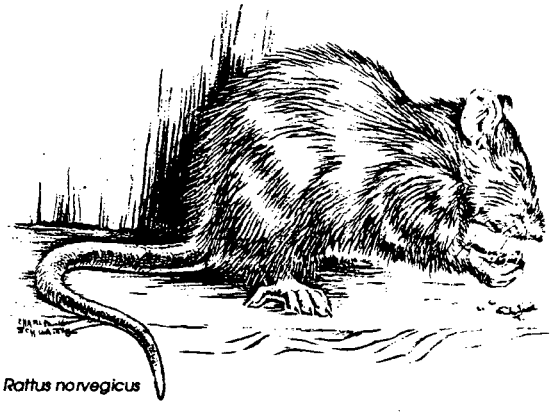
The Animal Welfare Institute (*P.O. Box 3650, Washington DC 20007*) is an influential national animal welfare organization currently focusing on the welfare of laboratory amimals, trapping, whales and dolphins, the wild bird trade, and elephants.

Editors' Note: This article was solicited by the editors. We welcome differing views on subjects pertinent to animal damage control.

—Animal Damage Control in the News—

MAN WINS AWARD FOR PRO-FUR LETTER

A Reno, Nevada, man recently won an award for the best letter published in the *Reno Gazette Journal*. A December 29, 1991, article in the *Gazette-Journal* stated that Tony Mudd won the Silver Pen award for reinvigorating the fur coat debate with a "different sort of argument." According to the article, Mudd argued that synthetic fur is bad for the environment, that it takes "100 million years to produce the materials (crude oil) your plastic or synthetic coats, shoes and purses are made of!" Mudd's letter took the stance that "A fur coat is made from an almost instantly renewable resource, that will be handed down for four generations and if it is thrown in the landfill it will disappear within months. It will return back to nature as a part of a plant, which will be eaten by an animal and the whole cycle starts over again." Stressing that this is "not Disneyland—this is the real world", Mudd also stated that his "family and friends will continue to wear and purchase fur coasts for many years to come!"



Norway Rat, *Rattus norvegicus*

MONTANA RANCHERS WIN SUPPORT FOR AERIAL COYOTE CONTROL PROGRAM

Ranchers in Montana joined state officials in November to defend an aerial hunting program that shoots coyotes which prey on livestock. According to a November 17, 1991, article in *The Billings Gazette*, the defense of the hunting program was initiated after a report by the Montana legislative fiscal analyst's office suggested the program was too expensive and that sheep ranchers didn't pay their fair share. Dr. Hal Sheets, head of the Department of Livestock's predator control program, said the report was mistaken in stating that private aircraft could be hired cheaper than operating the state-owned helicopter currently used. Bob Gilbert, secretary of the Montana Wool Growers' Association, refuted the charge that sheep producers weren't paying their fair share. While the tax on sheep is much less than the levy on cattle, Gilbert said, "Let's not compare sheep to cows when it comes to value." Gilbert also rejected the suggestion for a return to the old bounty system, where people are paid for turning in coyote hides. Gilbert stated that bounty systems have been abandoned in most other states and it would cause a huge public outcry in Montana.The ranchers won their point when the Legislative Finance Committee agreed to leave the program alone.

STARLING CONTROL BECOMES A LABOR ISSUE

Pressure from labor unions to improve working conditions at the NIPSCO RM Schahfer Generating Station in northern Indiana led to a cooperatively funded ADC starling control project to reduce human health and safety hazards at the facility. Over the past few years, according to the ADC Eastern Region, a winter starling roost on the station has increased in size to 240,000 birds in 1991. Indiana ADC, with assistance from Purdue University wildlife students, successfully treated the roost with DRC-1339 and is providing technical assistance to NIPSCO's contracted pest control company for follow-up measures. The project will save the power station approximately $20,000 in clean-up costs this winter.

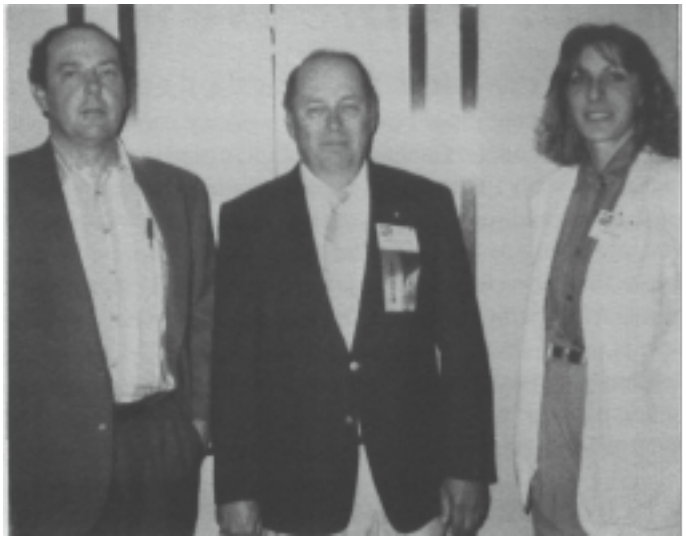
RATS INVADE PENTAGON

It may not be Desert Storm, but the U.S. military has a new fight on its hands—an onslaught of rats in the Pentagon. A December 16, 1991, article in the *Denver Post*, stated that three to five rats are caught weekly in the food service area of the Pentagon. John Rebstock, general manager of ARA Food Services Inc. which operates the buildings cafeterias, wrote a May 1 memo to Pentagon health officers saying, "My message is simple, help is needed and requested. The level of infestation has become unacceptable." And to emphasize the urgency of his memo, he included a dead Norway rat sealed in a plastic bag. Although rodents are nothing new at the Pentagon, officials say the population has exploded in the last two mild winters. "I came here in 1987, and I never saw a rat until 1991," said Andrew Jones, executive director of the Department of Defense Concessions Committee. Jones says that the rats are now seen even during daytime hours. At the present time, there is a conflict between the Department of Defense and ARA. The Defense Department maintains rodent control over most of the complex, but claims that the food service areas are the sole responsibility of ARA.

MOUSE CREATES HAVOC AT CAIRO AIRPORT

One small mouse recently created havoc at the Cairo Airport when the animal boarded an Egypt Air aircraft bound for London. In a November 17 article in the *Bangladesh Observer*, the tale of the wayward mouse included a description of the "frightened passengers" who "jumped out of their seats and ran to one end of the aircraft." Airport personnel attempted some animal damage control, but tried in vain to catch the mouse. Finally, passengers disembarked and were transferred to another aircraft. The plane's departure was delayed by three hours.

The editors of The Probe *thank contributors to this issue: Ron Thompson, Ken Garner, Mike Fall, James E. Forbes, Grant Birmingham, Everett R. Whiteaker, Rex Marsh, and Wes Jones. Send your contributions to* The Probe, *4070 University Road, Hopland, CA 95449.*



Northeastern Association of Wildlife Damage Biologists Officers. left to right: President-Elect, Dennis Slate; President, James E. Forbes; Secretary, Laura Henze; and not pictured, Treasurer, Maury Bedford. (Photograph courtesy of James E. Forbes)

NORTHEAST ASSOCIATION OF WILDLIFE DAMAGE BIOLOGISTS FOUNDED

The Northeast Association of Wildlife Damage Biologists was founded on February 27, 1991, at a meeting in Leominster, Massachusetts. This new organization fills a long-awaited need to provide a technical development and inservice training to biologists.

The purpose of this organization is to provide a support base and advocacy group for all state and federal professional biologists specializing in the area of wildlife damage control. The organization's jurisdictional area is the thirteen northeastern states and seven eastern Canadian provinces. The group hopes to work closely with The Wildlife Society and the National Animal Damage Control Association. The Northeast Association of Wildlife Damage Biologists will meet once a year, hold technical sessions, provide animal damage control technical training, and conduct animal damage control field trips. The main purpose of this organization is to enhance the professional image of wildlife biologists.

The organization officers are: President: James E. Forbes, Albany, New York; President-Elect: Dennis Slate, Concord, NH; Secretary: Laura Henze, Amherst, MA; and Treasurer: Maury Bedford, Albany, New York.

All eligible biologists from the northeast are invited to join and new chapters are encouraged to organize. For more information, contact:

James E. Forbes, State Director
USDA, APHIS, Animal Damage Control
P.O. Box 97, Albany, New York 12001 (518-472-6492)

New Urban Wildlife Control Association Formed

The Urban Wildlife Control Association (UWCA) was recently formed by Rob Erickson (On-Target), a trapping instructor from Glen Elyn, IL; Bill Bridgeland, a wildlife biologist (M.S.) from Sparks, MD; Bill Gompers (Capture Company) of Pittsburgh, PA; Mike Dwyer (a wildlife biologist formerly with the Ohio DNR) of Columbus, OH; Lynn Braband, a wildlife biologist (M.S.) from Rochester, NY; Robert Boone (Bio-Tech) of Sherman, CT; Todd Hardwick (Pesky Critters) of Miami, FL; and Kevin Clark (Critter Control) of Plymouth, MI.

The association was formed to share information, provide group insurance, sponsor certification and continuing education programs, interact with government agencies and rehabilitators, promote responsible urban wildlife management, and maintain a positive public image for Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators (NWCOs). The UWCA plans to publish a bi-monthly newsletter called *Urban Wildlife News*, with clippings on current newsworthy articles, trapping tips, health and safety, rules and regulations, etc.

The group is just getting started and they are looking for NWCOs and other related industry professionals. If you are interested, please call (313) 453-8274 between 8 am and 4 pm EDT. During the NADCA Executive Committee's conference call on February 18, President Terry Salmon indicated he will write to the UWCA to encourage their cooperation with NADCA and to avoid duplication of effort.

Employment Opportunity

Ecologist: experience in wildlife management, especially vertebrate pest control. Should be fluent in Spanish and English. Two-year renewable contract. Applicants should be available to start in June 1992. Send letters of application and curriculum vitae, or requests for further information, to: Director, Charles Darwin Research Station, Casilla 17-01-3891, Quito, Ecuador.

IN MEMORIAM

Joseph Albert Schmidt
January 6, 1932 - February 4, 1992

Joe Schmidt was a state and federal trapper who worked primarily in the San Juan Basin and San Luis Valley, Colorado. He was a real outdoorsman and an excellent trapper, and was well known to many ADC personnel and ranchers in the Intermountain region. A veteran of World War II, he was awarded a Bronze Star and Silver Star for his action during the landing on Omaha Beach.

He died of a heart attack on February 4, while fishing. He is survived by his wife, Marie, of Monte Vista, Colorado, and three children: Ernest, Candy, and Dorothy.

Critter Control Calls for Licensing of NWCOs

Excerpted from Volume I, No. 7, Fall 1991 Critter Chatter, published by Critter Control

Increased urbanization and decreased government funding, plus large numbers of certain wildlife species, have combined to provide a greater need for wildlife management amongst the private sector, especially in the urban areas. There is a need for environmentally sound management techniques in animal damage prevention and control. The question is, "just who is providing this control?"

Many of the calls for assistance with wildlife related problems go to state or federal wildlife agencies, humane society, animal shelters, police departments, animal control officers, and pest control operators. Most public agencies just do not have the funding to handle the large number of calls relating to urban wildlife.

The vast majority of local or county animal control agencies are already overwhelmed by a staggering number of unwanted domestic dogs and cats, and many lack the training and equipment to handle wild animals. Police departments and animal shelters often loan traps or give trapping tips, but advice offered over the phone seldom meets the needs of a public that has neither the time nor the inclination to handle wild animals themselves, especially if the animal is causing structural damage or poses a health risk.

In years past, it might have been the responsibility of various government agencies to respond directly to nuisance wildlife complaints, however this is not possible today. The USDA APHIS Animal Damage Control program places their emphasis on agricultural pest management, airport safety, natural resource protection, and human health and safety rather than urban wildlife problems.

As local, state, and federal government agencies are faced with tighter budgets, the ability of government to respond will continue to decline. The increased demand for nuisance wildlife control is evidenced by the formation and continued growth of numerous individuals and firms such as Critter Control specializing as "nuisance wildlife control operators" (NWCOs).

Interactions between NWCOs and government agencies will continue to develop and mature, and with this growth will come the addressing of concerns such as liability insurance, training, and continuing education. Most states have a permit system intended for dealing with wildlife depredation or crop damage control, but not one that addresses the growing numbers of urban wildlife.

As was pointed out by Patrick Martin of the New York DECs special licenses unit, the industry needs to regulate itself. Martin indicated that there are currently 1,100 individuals with the DEC nuisance Wildlife Control License in New York State, up from only 150 five or six years ago. There has been a steady increase in the number of complaints his office receives about NWCOs and one bad apple can spoil the whole bunch.

Currently the industry is made up of either good, bad, or indifferent individuals and companies, without by-laws or a code of ethics. Sooner or later an accident will happen, resulting in a knee-jerk reaction and restrictive regulations.

Now it is time for nuisance wildlife control operators to form a trade association. There is no better way for an industry to share information, regulate itself, promote responsible wildlife management, interact with government agencies, and maintain a positive public image.

The industry needs an Urban Wildlife Control Association made up of industry professionals from leading wildlife control companies throughout the United States. Let's be pro-active, now, instead of having to be re-active later.

"Probe" Co-editor Chides Animal Welfare Groups

The following is excerpted from a letter to Kim Bartlett, Editor of The Animals' Agenda, written by Probe *co-editor Robert H. Schmidt.*

"An observation that I would like to share with you is the lack of involvement of the animal utilization community in the membership education programs (meetings, articles) of animal welfare groups. For example, how often do you see a person involved in wildlife damage management invited to the annual meeting of an animal welfare group to give a presentation on philosophy, techniques, and future visions and trends? Instead, members hear a rehash or reincarnation of the diatribe condemning lethal livestock predation management, traps of all types, killing animals instead of relocating them, and toxicant utilization. I do not for a moment insinuate that these techniques should avoid close and critical scrutiny. However, it is a grave disservice to members of these groups when they are not exposed to "the big picture." As an educator, my reputation is tarnished if I develop an educational program on, say, coyote management without including a sincere attempt to tell students the full range of techniques and philosophies toward the issue. Yet animal welfare groups do not attempt to make the same effort. Interestingly, wildlife utilization groups around the country increasingly invite representatives from animal welfare groups to educate their members (granted, the speakers are moderates). I am especially familiar with animal welfare representatives giving presentations to groups of professional wildlife biologists, indicating an attempt to educate. But this process is not happening from the other end."

Terrell P. Salmon
DANR-North Region
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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

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

Additional Address Info: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP _____

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

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(underline one)

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