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August 1992

The Probe, Issue 124 - August 1992

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"The Probe, Issue 124 - August 1992" (1992). *The Probe: Newsletter of the National Animal Damage Control Association*. 188.
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The Public, Coyotes, and Wildlife Damage Management

Robert H. Schmidt, Editor, *The Probe*

Why is it, when the vast majority of wildlife damage management practitioners believe what they do is in the best interests of humans and wildlife, there is a sense within the profession of general displeasure and uneasiness from the public and other wildlife professionals about the tools and strategies involved in the management of wildlife damage? Shooting coyotes from aircraft, the use of leghold traps, and killing gulls and fish-eating birds at airports and aquaculture facilities are all actions that receive repeated criticism. These issues are constantly being addressed in the media, an indication that the public responds to these concerns.

A number of studies document this public concern. Stephen Kellert, in his seminal work on attitudes of Americans towards wildlife issues¹, interviewed 2,759 Americans on their attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors toward wildlife and natural habitats. Included in this survey were a number of questions relevant to the wildlife damage management profession. Twenty-three percent of his respondents indicated that they were very or moderately knowledgeable about coyotes killing livestock, 25% were slightly knowledgeable, and 52% knew very little about the subject or had never heard of it. Thirty-eight percent of respondents indicated that they were very or moderately knowledgeable about using leghold traps to trap wild animals, while 25% were slightly knowledgeable and 37% had very little or no knowledge of the subject.

For the informed public, 71% approved of hunting individual coyotes known to have killed livestock, while 29% disapproved of this strategy. Results were similar with the uninformed public (77% versus 23%). This pattern was consistent throughout the major regions of the United States and Alaska, although there was less support for selective hunting in the Rocky Mountain (66%) and Pacific regions (68%). Forty-three percent of

sheep producers and 52% of cattle producers also approved of hunting only individual coyotes known to have killed livestock.

All groups (informed and uninformed public, sheep and cattle producers) overwhelmingly disapproved (>75%) of the strategy of not killing coyotes but compensating ranchers for their sheep losses out of general tax revenues. The general public was not in favor of shooting or trapping as many coyotes as possible (40% approved versus 60% disapproved), or poisoning coyotes (9% approved versus 91% disapproved), but was in favor of a capture and release program (68% approved versus 32% disapproved).

Kellert estimated that 9% of the general population experienced some type of "significant" property damage caused by a wild animal, with the most common damage experienced being agricultural loss to gardens and crops (63% of those suffering damage) and 22% reporting damage to their grounds and trees. Rabbits accounted for 25% of the damage, various small rodents were responsible for 14%, and raccoons caused 12% of the damage. Only 10% of the respondents reporting damage indicated that an animal had been killed by wildlife.

It is significant that while only 9% of the general public has experienced wildlife damage firsthand, and only 10% of those experiencing predation of an animal (0.9% of the population), there is general support for selective lethal control of coyotes killing livestock. The issues are how and why it is done, not whether it is done. Kellert speculated that the following eight variables affected public attitudes toward wildlife damage management:

1. *Species preference*
2. *Ethics of management method*
3. *Cost of management method*
4. *Economic impact*
5. *Specificity of management*
6. *Ecological and environmental impacts*

Continued on page 4

¹Kellert, S.R. 1979. Public attitudes toward critical wildlife and natural habitat issues. Phase J. U.S.D.I., Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office # 024-010-00-623-4. 138 pp.

The Probe

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

September 11-16, 1992: International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Meeting, Portside Marriott, Toledo, OH. Contact: Richard Pierce, Chief, Ohio Division of Wildlife, 1840 Belcher Dr., Columbus, OH 43224-1339. (614) 265-6300.

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, (510) 866-5461; FAX (510) 866-5318.

September 13-19, 1991: Furtakers of America, Professional Trappers College, Limberlost Camp, LaGrange, Indiana. Contact Charles Parke, 410 S. Poplar, LaGrange, IN 46761.

September 17-19, 1992: 5th U.S./Mexico Border States Conference on Recreation, Parks, and Wildlife, Hilton Hotel, Las Cruces, NM. Contact: Border Research Institute, New Mexico State University, Box 30001, Dept. 3BRI, 1200 University Avenue, Las Cruces, NM 88003-0001.



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.

March 19-24, 1993: North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, Washington, D.C. Sponsored by The Wildlife Society. **CALL FOR PAPERS:** Session chairs eagerly solicit preliminary abstracts of proposed papers. Topics may include, but are not limited to: Biological and Ecological Studies As Bases for Management; Habitat Fragmentation and Wildlife Populations; Wildlife Use of Habitat Corridors; Management Case Studies; Deer Ecology and Management; Waterfowl Ecology and Management; Ecology and Management of Remnant Habitats; and Restoration and Management of Disturbed Sites. *Original and five copies must be received by September 1, 1992.* For more information, contact Dr. Lowell W. Adams, Chair, National Institute for Urban Wildlife, 10921 Trotting Ridge Way, Columbia, MD 21044, Phone: (301) 596-3311, or Dr. John M. Hadidian, Cochair, Center For Urban Ecology, National Park Service, 1100 Ohio Drive, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20242, Phone: (202) 342-1443.

April 26-29, 1993: 11th Great Plains Wildlife Damage Control Workshop, Hyatt Regency, Kansas City, MO. For further information, contact: F. Robert Henderson, Ext. Wildlife Specialist, Kansas State University, (913) 532-5654, or Robert A. Pierce II, Ext. Wildlife Specialist, University of Missouri, (314) 882-7242.

May 25-26, 1993: The Wild Pig in California Oak Woodland: Ecology and Economics. Embassy Suites Hotel, San Luis Obispo, CA. Contact: Dr. William Tietje, Forestry & Resource Management, 2156 Sierra Way, Suite C, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401. (805) 549-5940.

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. Will include sessions on *Management of Problem Wildlife and Predation As a Regulator of Mammal Populations*. For further information, write: The Secretariat, 6th Int'l Theriological Congress, School of Biological Science, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia 2033.

October 1993: 6th Eastern Wildlife Damage Control Conference, Asheville, NC. For further information, contact: Peter R. Bromley, Ext. Wildlife Specialist, NC State University, (919) 515-7587.

Proceedings Available

Tenth Great Plains Wildlife Damage Control Workshop Proceedings. Includes 43 papers. Sessions included: Wildlife Damage Management and the Public, Predators, Rodents, Birds, Programs and Projects, USDA-APHIS-ADC Activities, and Professionalism. 180 pages. Send \$15 per copy (check, purchase order or money order) to: GPWDCW Proceedings, 202 Natural Resources Hall, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68583-0819.

Animal Damage Control in the News

Pickups Seized in Federal Raid

Richard Smith lost his pickup in a raid by Federal Authorities on his Texas ranch in March. According to Smith's recollections in a May 21, 1992 article in *Livestock Weekly*, a team of federal and state game agents approached him when he was shearing goats, accused him of poisoning eagles, and confiscated his pickup. Apparently the agents also seized the truck belonging to W.B. Smith, the younger Smith's father.

Jim Stinebaugh, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service lead agent in the case, stated that the vehicles were seized as part of a pending investigation. Stinebaugh offered little other information in the Smith case other than it concerns alleged violations of the Bald Eagle and Migratory Bird Treaty acts, as well as the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act. Both Stinebaugh and Smith indicated that the current case stems from charges dating back to the 1970s. The government tried and convicted a group of Real County defendants of killing eagles from helicopters and Smith says that "most ranchers were told they'd also be tried." An appeal of the earlier case was prepared, but the judge in that case was gunned down outside his home before the case could be filed. Any discrepancies between Smith's version and the government's may eventually be settled; Smith says the agents videotaped the incidents.

WLFA Works to Defeat Proposed Arizona Hunting/Trapping Ban

The campaign to defeat Proposition 200 in Arizona continues to gain momentum according to the May, 1992, *WLFA-gram*, newsletter of The Wildlife Legislative Fund of America. Prop 200, to be decided by the voters in November, bans all hunting, fishing, and trapping in the state. Jim Goodrich, WLFA's senior vice president, said, "The management committee for our VOTE NO committee, Arizonans for Wildlife Conservation (AWC) is doing yeoman work having just hired an advertising firm to begin development of campaign messages." "Also," Goodrich said, "a community relations specialist has been added to the staff to coordinate various campaign activities throughout the state." He said the AWC outreach program continues to attract additional sportsmen's groups, civic and community organizations and government agencies which are strenuously opposed to Prop 200. Goodrich, who developed WLFA's campaign plan against Prop 200 for AWC said, "All that is lacking now is funding for the plan. We can't afford to lose in Arizona."

Colorado Phases Out Spring Bear Hunt

Feeling pressure from animal-protection organizations, Colorado wildlife officials have begun to phase out spring bear hunting in favor of a later-summer and fall hunt.

An article in the June issue of *Field & Stream* stated that members of the Fund for Animals, other animal-rights organizations, and some members of the general, non-hunting public had expressed concern that sows with cubs were being killed in the spring by hunters. It is illegal to take a sow with cubs, but officials acknowledged that six lactating sows were killed in a recent spring hunt.

"It is not a major biological impact on our bear population, which we estimate at 9,000 to 12,000 animals," said Len Carpenter, terrestrial wildlife manager for the Colorado Division of Wildlife. "But our surveys have shown that the non-hunting public, while it doesn't oppose bear hunting in general, is strongly opposed to spring bear hunting."

This year's spring bear season was set to run April 1 through May 31. The fall season will be September 1 to 30. The number of permits were to be evenly divided in 1992 between the two seasons. In 1993, only 30 percent of the available permits will be issued for the spring season, and in 1994, only 10 percent.

The Fund for Animals, claiming 200,000 members, had threatened to take the spring hunt issue to a public referendum.

DWRC Attempting to Develop Deer Baits

Dr. Russ Mason, Denver Wildlife Research Center, in collaboration with scientists at Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY, and the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania, are attempting to develop white-tailed deer baits for delivering various control agents to deer. A variety of food extracts have been evaluated including acorn, apple, geranium, poplar bud, sweet corn, and peanut butter. Apple and peanut butter were significantly more attractive than the other extracts, but effects were habitat specific, i.e., apple was the best lure in open fields while peanut butter was the best lure in wetlands.

The editors of The Probe thank contributors to this issue: Allison Beal, Ron Thompson, Mike Fall, James E. Forbes, and Wes Jones. Send your contributions to The Probe, 4070 University Road, Hopland, CA 95449.

Canadian Trappers' Delegation Attends ISO Meeting

Delegations from eight countries met in Brussels in June to discuss the first draft of the new international standard for trapping devices. This was the first meeting of ISO Technical Committee 191 since the draft was circulated to member countries in January, 1992.

"The draft standard deals with killing, holding and submersion devices. At the conclusion of this meeting all sections were agreed to in principle," noted Bruce Williams, chairman of the Fur Institute of Canada. The Institute has been a driving force in the development of a fair and practicable standard.

The standards process was started in 1987 when the international organization for standardization, ISO, formed a technical committee to study standards for trap performance. At that time, Canada agreed to provide the secretariat for the committee, TC 191, and Neal Jotham

was asked to chair. In 1992 the European Community passed a regulation requiring that the first of 13 species must have been taken according to the ISO standard if they were to be imported into EEC member countries.

"The process of setting an international standard for traps was not driven by the EEC," notes Bruce Williams, "rather the EEC regulation concerning fur imports has been driven by the ISO process."

Through this acceptance of the necessity of a standard for trapping devices, the European community has recognized the validity of trapping as an essential element in the wildlife management process.

Along with strong representation from the trapping community, the Canadian delegation was composed of trap manufacturer representative Don Woolnough, Provincial and Territorial government representative Harvey Jessup, Jane Vinet of the Canadian Association for Humane Trapping, Bob Gardiner of the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies and Brian Roberts of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.

"Canadian trappers can be proud of the superb manner in which their representatives expressed concerns and the commitment they share to ensuring that the new trap standard will have the least impact on the individual," says Bruce Williams.

Final drafts of a standard for each category of trap will be prepared by working groups over the next year when the Technical Committee will reconvene.

Professional Trappers College

By James E. Forbes

A year ago in September I had the real privilege of attending the Fur Takers of America Professional Trappers College at Limberlost Camp in LaGrange, Indiana. I'm glad I did. The college is co-sponsored by Purdue University.

When I took the course there were two instructors for every four students. Pete Askins of Woodstream Corp., and a wonderful gentleman named Red Edgemond from Tennessee, were my instructors. I also learned a lot about snares and snaring from Dan DeZarn from Kentucky. The college is run by Charlie Parks from Indiana DNR. Incidentally, Pete, Dan, and Charlie are all NADCA members.

Two other NADCA members were students in my class Greg Harper from Louisiana and Cara Voglewede from Indiana.

The days are long (7 a.m. to 10 p.m.), but you learn a lot. Camp Limberlost is comfortable and located on a nice lake. The food is good "home cooking" and plenty of it. You'll gain weight!

I'd recommend the Trappers College to everyone. If you would like more information, you won't be sorry. Contact Charles Parks, 410 S. Poplar, LeGrange, IN 46761.

Continued from page 1

Public, Coyotes, & Wildlife Damage Management

7. *Relative worth of competing values*
8. *Safety of management techniques to people and domestic animals*

Within the wildlife damage management profession, decision-making, policy formulation and implementation, public relations, education and extension, research, management, and field operations must be evaluated in the context of the variables listed above. The public has an important voice in the management of its wildlife resources, as does the agriculturist, the airport manager, and the health and safety official. The role of the wildlife damage management professional is to find the common ground.

News from the Northeast

By James E. Forbes

In June, the National Animal Damage Control Association (NADCA) had a booth at the Furtakers Rendezvous in Cobleskill, New York. I met a lot of interesting folks and handed out over 100 NADCA leaflets. It was nice to visit with Pete Askins of Woodstream Corp., Dan DeZarn, the Kentucky snare expert, Charlie Parks of Indiana DNR, Dale Duryea of Massachusetts, Don Siver of Pennsylvania, Dale Stockton and Earl Van Wormer from New York.

I also talked with Ed Medvetz, M-Y Enterprises, Pennsylvania. Ed makes the Paws-I-Trip II pan tension device to keep nontarget animals out of coyote traps. Tom Tomsa from Virginia told me he is presently using this device.

I met Tom at a Coyote Damage Control Workshop held in July at Brownsville, New York. This workshop covered sheep husbandry practices, electric fences, and livestock guarding dogs, as well as coyote trapping and calling. This course was conducted for New York State

Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) biologists and technicians at the request of DEC's furbearer biologist Gordon R. Batcheller. The course was conducted by USDA/APHIS/ADC biologist Jeff Green, ADC, Denver, Colorado; Alan May, ADC, Mississippi; Tom Tomsa, ADC, Virginia, and myself. I think both the students and the instructors learned a lot from each other at this course.

In June, Jerry L. Pickel from York, Pennsylvania, handed out NADCA leaflets at the NADCA booth at the Pennsylvania Trappers Association annual get-together. Thanks for a job well done, Jerry.

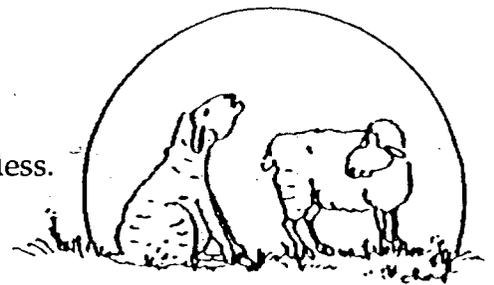
I am happy to report that NADCA Region 7 (the nine northeast states) now has 115 members. This is the first region to break 100!!!

One final word, just in case you're wondering, everyone mentioned in this article is an NADCA member.

THE COYOTE

Take him for what he's worth, nothing more, nothing less.

By Baxter Black



I think I can speak for the coyote
With more understanding than most.
Especially those who defend him
And live on the New Jersey coast.

They raise up a pitiful cry
And claim he's a mistreated critter.
Who'll soon be extinct if the ranchers out west
Don't put down their rifles and quit'er.

But like all of God's creatures around us
There's always two sides to the tale.
I think if the coyote were human
That most of 'em would be in jail.

Cause there's no doubt he preys on the weaklings
Or the youngsters too little to run.
He slits the throats of cute little lambs
And drags little calves from their mom.

So if you must describe him in terms
Such as wily, and clever and keen
You must also include homicidal,
Sadistic, demented and mean.

But I will choose to do neither
And somehow I wish you would, too.
For the coyote he has no conscience
He's just doin' the best he can do.

You can like and dislike the coyote,
Many ranchers I know do both
When he trespasses he'll get shot at
But his song in the night brings a toast.

A toast to our neighbor the coyote
Who'll outlive the earth and the sky.
And be here long after we've parted
Like the cockroach, the rat and the fly.

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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: (____) ____ - ____ Home

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

Additional Address Info: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP _____

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

Membership Class: Student \$7.50 Active \$15.00 Sponsor \$30.00 Patron \$100

Check or Money Order payable to NADCA

Select one type of occupation or principal interest:

- | | |
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| <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) _____ | |