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The NADCA Probe, Issue 224

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The Probe NADCA
ISSUE 224
September/October 2002

Position Statement: Development of Training Curricula for the Private Wildlife Control Industry

This position statement has been officially adopted by NADCA.

The National Animal Damage Control Association (NADCA) has represented individuals concerned with human/wildlife conflicts since 1979. NADCA is the voice of the professional wildlife damage management community, and has supported the improvement of wildlife damage management practices using scientifically based methods. By means of this letter, NADCA shares its concerns and encourages a well-thought-out and unbiased development of regulations for the Private Nuisance Wildlife Industry based on logical reasoning and science-based facts. The regulations issue affects urban/suburban wildlife resources, various public health aspects, the economic livelihood of private control operators, the concerns of animal welfare groups, and the operating ability of state wildlife management agencies.

Increasing human populations, combined with a desire for living in rural and semi- rural areas over the last 40-50 years, have caused human/wildlife conflicts to steadily increase. Although at first human/wildlife conflicts were addressed by the individual homeowner, the continued increase in conflicts reduced the effectiveness of this approach.

Increasing human populations, combined with a desire for living in rural and semi-rural areas over the last 40-50 years, have caused human/wildlife conflicts to steadily increase. Although at first human/wildlife conflicts were addressed by the individual homeowner, the continued increase in conflicts reduced the effectiveness of this approach. Consequently, some individuals took this opportunity to develop businesses to meet this demand by becoming private Wildlife Control Operators (WCOs). Techniques currently used by WCOs have been derived from trapping, traditional wildlife management, reproductive biology, animal behavior, biochemistry, the social sciences, and trial-and-error.

Because many private citizens cannot safely solve their own conflicts with wildlife, WCOs provide a needed service.

Great advancements in the management of wildlife damage have been made recently due to on-going research programs. Hence, WCOs must stay on top of recent advances and also draw upon many different areas of expertise to successfully address human/wildlife conflicts. Most WCOs rely on self education, trade magazines and the internet to evaluate new developments or effectively solve unfamiliar problems. WCO training is needed to help provide a minimum standard of consumer protection, humane treatment of animals, and effective wildlife damage management. However, because of the variation in wildlife damage situations, efficacy of specific techniques, and animal responses to techniques, it is impossible to mandate carte blanche wildlife damage techniques that provide safe, practical, and humane control.

As the number of human/wildlife conflicts has increased, so has the diversity of interests that seek to influence the direction of the WCO industry. We suggest that adopting ideas supported by "Best Management Practices" (BMPs) can provide a needed framework to develop WCO training curricula. BMPs start by collecting existing information, scientifically evaluating the available techniques, and publishing the results so that they will be available to all interested parties. Development of

Continued on page 4, Col. 1

Ever Wonder?

What is catnip and are all cats attracted to it?

The catnip plant (*Nepta cataria*) is an herb belonging to the mint family. The plant contains an oil that is the source of the characteristic odor that attracts cats. Although cats are attracted to the catnip plant itself, the pure catnip oil extracted from the plants is a much stronger attractant. A large quantity of catnip plants is required to produce a small quantity of catnip oil. The odor of pure catnip oil is very strong and volatile. Commercial catnip oil is generally the pure oil diluted with a neutral agent to produce a larger supply of diluted oil which will retain the desired odor for a longer period of time when exposed to open air.

The biochemical mechanisms of the attraction of catnip are not known. It is believed that catnip produces sexual excitement in cats and a soothing effect on the nervous system similar to the effect of mild opiates on humans.

All species of cats (*Felidae*) are attracted to catnip, but not all individuals within the species are attracted — there appears to be a genetic link. Catnip has long been successfully used as a lure when trapping bobcats and mountain lions. — *Ref.* ***The Bobcat of North America****, by Stanley P. Young and catsinternational.org*

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Your contributions to *The Probe* are welcome and encouraged. The deadline for submitting materials is the 15th of the month prior to publication. Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of NADCA.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

March 19-21, 2003 - The International Canada Goose Symposium, Madison, WI. A Symposium website is available at http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/conferences.

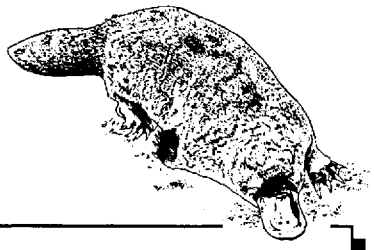
April 3-6, 2003 - 10th Extension Wildlife Specialists' Conference, State 4-H Education Center, AR. For information e-mail James Parkhurst at jparkhur@vt.edu

April 6-9, 2003 - 10th Wildlife Damage Management Conference, Clarion Resort on the Lake, Hot Springs, AR. Sponsored by The Wildlife Society, Wildlife Damage Working Group. This conference is the continuation of the former Eastern and Great Plains Wildlife Damage Conferences. Abstracts due July 1, 2002. For information contact Co- chairs, Robert Timm (rmtimm@ucdavis.edu) and Kathleen Fagerstone (kathleen.a.fagerstone@aphis.usda.gov)

April 8-10, 2003 - Fourth National Integrated Pest Management Symposium/Workshop, Building Alliances for the Future of IPM, The Westin, Indianapolis, Indiana. All disciplines relating to IPM are encouraged to participate. One of the Symposium's topics will be session(s) on Vertebrate/Wildlife IPM including possible subtopics on urban and agricultural problems; NWCO industry/education; new wildlife damage problems. For more information go to, http://www.conted.uiuc.edu/ipm.

May 15 -17, 2003 - The Seventh Mountain Lion Workshop, Virginian Hotel, Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Oral and poster presentation will include the following subject areas: Population monitoring/management; Livestock/mountain lion interactions; Food habits Ecology; Human/mountain lion interactions; Genetics/DNA/diseases; and State/provincial status reports

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



Send Your Articles to The PROBE

THE PROBE always welcomes contributions. If something interesting is happening in your area, if you know of an excellent product, or if you hear about new research, send an article to editor Larry Sullivan (see address and e-mail in the box at the left.)

Booklet Review: by Stephen Vantassel, Wildlife Damage Control, Springfield, Massachusetts

"Comprehensive Guide to Professional Mole Control" by Bob Jameson.

If you have been in the ADC industry for any length of time, you will recognize the name Bob Jameson. Mr. Jameson has contributed to improving the industry through his professional line of ADC baits and his lectures. He has now begun to further help in the training of the industry through publishing.

The Comprehensive Guide to Professional Mole Control is a nineteen-page (size 81/2"x11" sheets) booklet bound with a plastic term paper cover. This booklet is a no frills repository of information designed to help the NWCO make money, perhaps even big money, in mole control. Just a caveat. I don't believe Mr. Jameson wrote this booklet for the newby NWCO. My thought is Mr. Jameson wrote the booklet for the established NWCO.

This booklet is a no frills repository of information designed to help the NWCO make money, perhaps even big money, in mole control.

After talking with Mr. Jameson, I found out that my thoughts were on the money. Thus, he doesn't go into much detail that an established NWCO would consider "obvious".

Mr. Jameson starts the booklet with an outline of four questions every NWCO should get answers to. He then quickly turns to discussing the two types of traps he likes, namely the spear and the scissor mole traps. (I think there is a typo here as he includes the "Out of Site" mole trap under the spear trap heading.)

On the next page, (Remember I said Mr. Jameson is brief?) Mr. Jameson recommends which type of trap should be used for the type of damage you find. Jameson finishes the section with a point-by-point outline of how your site visit should go. He also provides a tip for trapping that I wished I had used when mole trapping was still legal in my state. He concludes the section with instructions and tips on setting his recommended traps.

The next section, (sections are my divisions, not Mr. Jameson's) goes into detail on trap setting. Tools and tips are covered with pictures. He offers some trap setting tips that I have not seen before. This information may be worthwhile for those of you having trouble with your present mole trapping skills. Tips for both recommended traps are provided.

What I call the third section deals with the business of mole control. To my mind, this is the most valuable portion of the booklet. He shows you what mole control options are available to the consumer. Although you may already know many of these mole control alternatives,

...the third section deals with the business of mole control. To my mind, this is the most valuable portion of the booklet. He shows you what mole control options are available to the consumer.

seeing them listed will help prepare you to have answers as to why your solution is best.

Pricing your job is on its own separate sheet. I was pleased that one animal damage controller was willing to get specific with actual recommendations on charging for mole control with homeowners. It is obvious to me that Mr. Jameson understands how NWCO's need to get paid while sitting in a truck. Ever the business man, Jameson gives tips for quoting a commercial mole control account. He lists important questions you must ask in order to make not only a potentially competitive bid, but a profitable one too. He concludes this economics section with marketing tips. Again, the information is listed in outline form. Mr. Jameson expects you to fill in the blanks and specifics as they would relate for your particular business. The booklet concludes with some broad information on eastern mole biology including color photos of the eastern mole.

The booklet is illustrated with line drawings and full color pictures. They tend to be clear and understandable. I just wish there were more photos and drawings to add dif-

Continued on page 4, column 2

The editor of **The PROBE** *thanks contributors to this issue: Michael Conover, Sarah G. Lupis, and Stephen Vantassel.*

Continued from page 1, col. 2

Position Statement

BMP-based guidelines is a continual process and the guidelines should be revised as needed.

Therefore, NADCA has adopted the position that:

The WCO industry is providing a valuable service for society.

WCO training curricula should promote consumer protection, humane treatment of animals, and effective and practical solutions to wildlife damage situations.

Individual WCOs need flexibility in selecting techniques so that they can provide safe, practical, and effective control under varying circumstances.

Any WCO training curriculum needs to recognize the flexible requirements of the WCO and must allow the inclusion of new techniques.

All stakeholders and interested parties should be given the opportunity to provide input into the development of WCO training curricula. However, the primary responsibility for developing the training curricula rests with governmental wildlife agencies.

The highest priority in the training materials should be given to human health and safety issues of the client, WCO, and the public.

WCO training curricula should promote long-term solutions (including human tolerance) to wildlife damage situations, but recognize that short-term solutions are often appropriate.

WCO training curricula should promote good customer service.

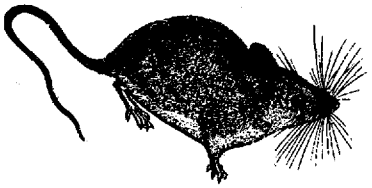
WCO training curricula should promote the ethical and humane treatment of animals.

Both non-lethal and lethal wildlife damage control techniques should be recognized as legitimate options for WCOs. Appropriate non-lethal techniques should be encouraged. However, the application of lethal techniques should not have to be preceded by the application of non-lethal techniques that are known to be ineffective.

WCO training curricula should be guided by BMPs and the best available science.

Research into the management of wildlife/human conflicts should be promoted and WCO training curricula should be periodically updated to incorporate new information. For this reason, WCO certification programs should require continuing education.

Source: Michael R. Conover, President, National Animal Damage Control Association



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Booklet Review

ferent views to help further aid understanding. His quick set mole trapping technique should help you save time in setting traps on the mole job. As we all know, time is money. I appreciated Mr. Jameson's willingness to be available for further consultation. I am confident, if you purchase this booklet and have some problems, he would be glad to help you out. I found the cost of 75 dollars a copy to be pretty steep for a booklet that is so brief. My *Wildlife Damage Inspection Handbook*, hard copy, costs the same amount and is over 100 pages in length. However, if you don't think you are making enough money with mole control, then this booklet could really help. If you're successful in landing one commercial account, then the price-tag would be definitely worth it.

To get your own copy of Bob Jameson's "Comprehensive Guide to Professional Mole Control" send a check for $79.00 which includes shipping and handling (continental U.S.) to Bob Jameson, Box 579, Brownsville, PA 15417. You can phone him at 1-724-938-2002 or e-mail at wcs@dp.net He accepts Master Card and Visa.

Wildlife Damage Management in the News

Big-Ticket Mice

Subsequent to an anonymous complaint about mouse sightings in the non-refrigerated food section, Georgia State Agriculture Department inspectors found 15 mice, their nests, gnawed food products, and droppings behind pallets in an Atlanta Sam's Club store. As a result, state officials have reached a tentative agreement on an $80,000 fine with Wal-Mart, Sam's Club owner. That works out to about $5,333 per mouse. The agreement includes placing the store on 18-month probation.

The Agriculture Department had considered a fine of $1000 for each contaminated food product — for a total of $566,000. This would have been the largest fine the department has sought for food sanitation violations. However, officials chose to suspend the bulk of the fine in lieu of an extended probationary period.

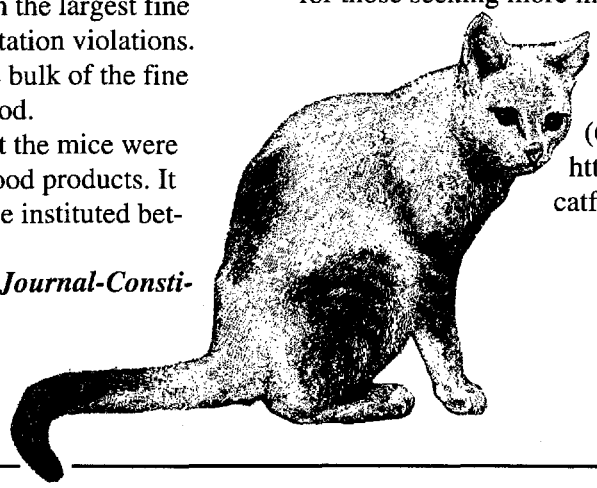
Department officials speculated that the mice were transferred into the store on pallets of food products. It has been reported that the store has since instituted better procedures.

—Source: Excerpted from ***The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*** *9/5/02*

Free-Ranging Cats Publication Available

Kitty turns killer when allowed to roam, that spells doom for native songbirds as well as mice and other pest species. Studies have shown that nearly all free-ranging cats, even well fed ones, kill wildlife. A particularly skilled free-ranging house cat may kill more than 1,000 wild animals a year.

"Cats and Wildlife: A Conservation Dilemma," a six-page publication, reviews the cat/wildlife situation, suggests humane solutions, and includes 25 references for those seeking more information. The publication is available from the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Publications phone (608) 263-6325 or on the Web at http://wildlife.wisc.edu/extension/catfly3.htm



Graduate Student Opportunities at the Berryman Institute

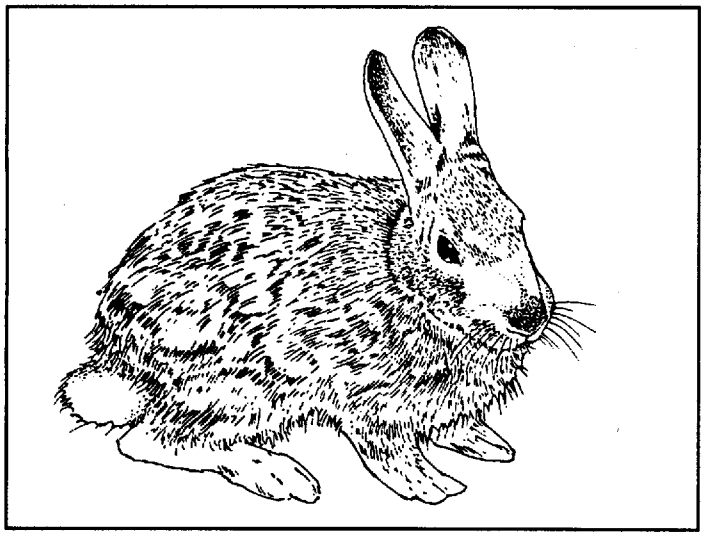
PH.D ASSISTANTSHIP. We seek a Ph.D. student to study the impact of coyote predation on mule deer recruitment in western Colorado. Starting date for the position is open, but we would like to fill the position as soon as possible. The student must have s strong interest in resolving human-wildlife conflicts or wildlife damage management. To apply, please send a cover letter, resume, GRE scores and college transcripts to Dr. Michael Conover, Berryman Institute, Department of Forest, Range and Wildlife Sciences, Utah State University, Logan, UT 84322-5230; email: conover@cc.usu.edu.

PH.D ASSISTANTSHIP. We are seeking a highly motivated student to examine the winter ecology of ducks on the Great Salt Lake. Starting date for the position is open but we would like to fill the position as soon as possible. To apply, please send a cover letter, resume, GRE scores and college transcripts to Dr. Michael Conover, Berryman Institute, Department of Forest, Range and Wildlife Sciences, Utah State University, Logan, UT 84322-5230; email: conover@cc.usu.edu.

A Review of the Impact of Predation on Sage-Grouse Populations

Sarah G. Lupis, Student, Department of Fisheries and Wilflife, 5210 Old Main Hill, Utah State University, Logan, UT 84322-5210

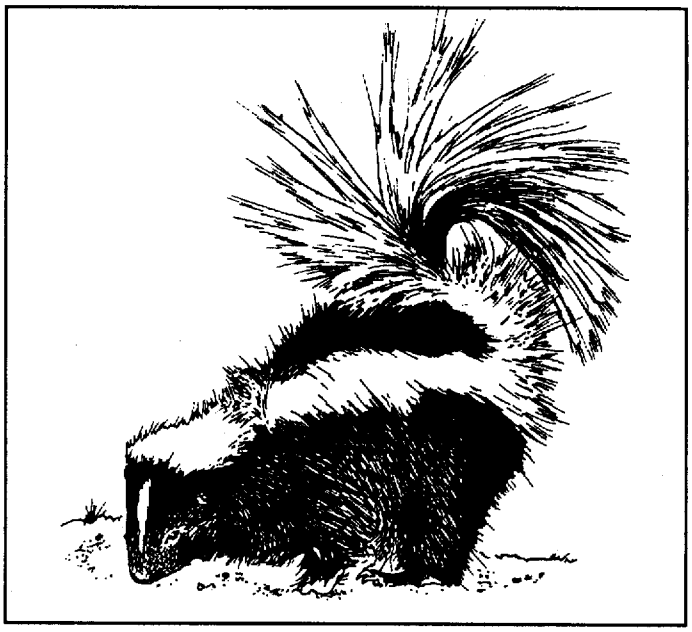
Sage grouse have declined throughout their range during the 20th century (Connelly and Braun 1997). The role of predation in influencing sage grouse population numbers is unclear (Connelly et al. 2000). Mammalian predators of sage grouse nests are: lagomorphs (white tailed jackrabbits [*Lepus townsendii*], mountain cottontails [*Sylvilagus nuttalli*], and pygmy rabbits [*Brachylagus idahoensis*]); deer mice (*Peromyscusmaniculatus*);



pocket mice (*Perognathus* spp.); coyotes (*Canis latrans*); badgers (*Taxidea taxus*); ground squirrels (*Spermophilus* spp.); striped skunks (*Mephitis mephitis*), swift fox (*Vulpes velox*); red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*); and domestic dogs and cats (DeLong et al. 1995, Niemuth and Boyce 1995, Ritchie et al. 1994, Connelly et al. 2000). Avian nest predators are typically common ravens (*Corvus corax*), black-billed magpies (*Pica pica*), and California gulls (*Larus californicus*) (Ritchie et al. 1994). Adult sage grouse are predated on by coyotes, red fox, badgers, raptors, owls, and eagles (Griner 1939, Bean 1941, Patterson 1952, Enyeart 1956, and Autenrieth 1981).

Research by Gregg (1991) and Gregg et al. (1994) indicated that predation limited sage grouse numbers. Their research suggested that poor nesting habitat was responsible for increased predation. Current studies in Strawberry Valley, Utah warn that red foxes are having a significant impact on the population (Flinders 1999). Nest-success rates for most sage grouse populations are greater than 40% (Connelly et al. 2000). Adult and juvenile (>10 weeks) sage grouse also have high survival rates (Connelly et al. 2000, Connelly et al. 1993, and Zablan 1993). This suggests that population declines are not related to predation (Connelly et al. 2000).

Predation rates may increase because of poor habitat. Most sage grouse nest under sagebrush (Patterson 1952, Gill 1965), but will nest under other plant species (Connelly et al. 1991, Gregg 1991). Research has not reached a consensus regarding nesting habitat that minimizes predation. Richie et al. (1994) found that nest predation rates were higher in untreated stands of sagebrush with low sagebrush cover. DeLong et al. (1995) and Gregg et al. (1994) determined that areas with ample tall



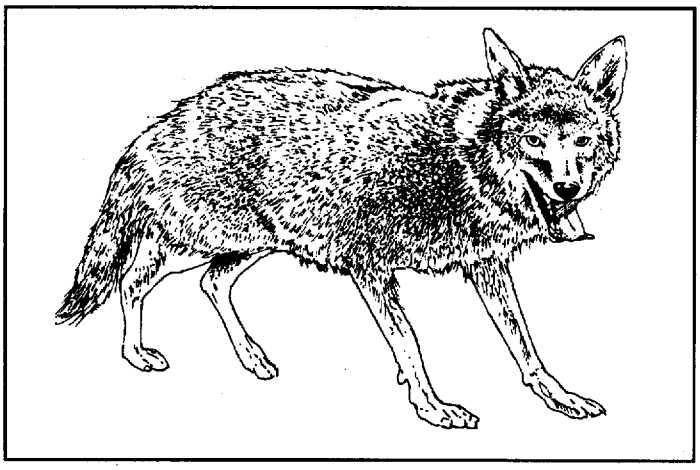
grass cover and medium-height shrub cover made good nesting habitat. In general, nest success is correlated with the presence of sagebrush and grass cover (Connelly et al. 1991, Gregg et al. 1994, DeLong et al. 1995). Grass cover at nest sites may serve as a physical barrier to predators, preventing them from smelling, seeing, or reaching a nesting sage grouse hen (DeLong et al. 1995).

Continued on page 7, Col. 1

Continued from page 6, col. 2

Predation on Sage-Grouse Populations

Management of predator populations may be warranted to increase sage grouse numbers. In recently published Management Guidelines for sage grouse, Connelly et al. (2000) recommend that nonnative species, such as red fox, be discouraged or eliminated from sage grouse habitats. Because predator control programs can be expensive, management was recommended when available



data on adult survival warrant such actions (e.g., nest success <25%, annual survival of adult hens <45%). The landscape can be altered to discourage predators. Connelly et al. (2000) recommend that construction of power lines and tall structures that could serve as perches for raptors and other avian predators be avoided. Similarly, they suggest that current structures be modified to prevent their use as perches.

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