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The Probe NADCA
ISSUE 177
JUNE 1997

What Is Urbanization Doing to the Future of Wildlife Management?

Laura Henze, Director, NADCA Northeast Region

The November 5, 1996 election saw 11 states with ballot initiatives regulating wildlife management. All of them had 3 main agendas: to ban trapping, to ban hunting bear with dogs, and to remove authority of the state wildlife officials in making wildlife management decisions and give it to special interest groups. My state of residence, Massachusetts, hosted one of these initiatives sponsored by Massachusetts Audubon, MA Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and the Humane Society of the U.S. My opinion may be a little self-serving, but I believe that what happens in these highly populated states, such as Massachusetts, is a preview of what will happen nationwide as urbanization spreads.

The Massachusetts ballot question, called the "Wildlife Protection Act" (or the "Wildlife Misinformation Act"), banned leghold, padded, conibear, and snare traps, bear hunting with dogs, and removed the requirement that members of the Fisheries and Wildlife Board have held a sporting license for the past 5 years. Massachusetts has been added to the quickly growing list of states to ban trapping including Florida, Rhode Island, Arizona, and Colorado. This ballot question passed with 64% in favor, and 36% against the measure. There was a very obvious separation between urban voters' approval and rural voters' opposition to this initiative.

For weeks before the election, there was a strong media campaign on both sides which became very emotional. The supporters of the initiative had much higher funding than the opponents ($860,000 vs. $344,000) and were more able to present their argument, showing pictures of pets and cute little raccoons caught in traps.

The opponents of the initiative were basically biologists and farmers arguing that removing the ability to trap would harm wildlife management. Despite a large public information campaign by the Citizens Conservation Coalition opposing the question, the ballot question passed, obviously based more on emotion than on "good science." The Wildlife Society and the Northeast Association of Wildlife Damage Biologists also circulated position papers to the media opposing the initiative.

Now what? Only state and federal health officials may use traps in Massachusetts. Even wildlife biologists and problem animal control officers may not use traps without a permit and proof that other means of capture have been ineffective. So the harvest of some species, although not previously large (an average of 1,400 beaver and 20,000 muskrat per year), will drop to nearly zero.

On a positive note, wildlife biologists predict that it is only a matter of time before this law is overturned. When Chelmsford, a town 20 miles outside Boston passed a similar ban in 1988, uncontrolled beaver populations flooded town wells, homeowners' septic systems, and roads. To prevent a health emergency, 4 years later, Chelmsford voters overturned the ban.

Legislators now faced with growing pressure, especially from the cranberry growers, to control muskrats are currently considering overturning the initiative. A 1996 survey of wildlife damage costs to cranberry growers conducted by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife showed muskrats costing cranberry growers $360,000 per year. Previous control methods used by the growers had been to hire muskrat trappers on the bogs. Trapping muskrats is now illegal in Massachusetts, except with a box trap.

It's pretty sad that our country is being run with special interest groups and ignores the professionals. We see this same trend with wildlife hazards at airports, and with the growing mountain lion populations in the West. Wildlife management has become a crash and burn philosophy. But, with more and more wildlife management restrictions, the need for wildlife damage management will grow and the public will come looking for us, as their financial losses from wildlife add up. The Massachusetts State Furbearer Biologist is responding to the flood of callers wanting beavers removed from their properties with "How did you vote on Question One?". He is finding that the majority of the callers, voting for the trapping ban, didn't realize how it would affect them. So don't be dismayed... it's what a recently-retired NADCA President called "job security."

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

June 14-18, 1997: 77th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Mammalogists, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma. Contact: Kaye White Walker, Arts & Sciences Extension, OSU, Stillwater OK 74078, (405) 744-8377, FAX (405) 744-6992, e-mail: kayeww@okway.okstate.edu.

August 12-14, 1997: 7th Annual Meeting, Bird Strike Committee—USA, Ramada Inn, Logan Int'l. Airport, Boston, Massachusetts. Paper and posters for presentation are solicited, and abstracts due June 23. For details on abstract format, contact Richard Dolbeer at (419) 625-0242, FAX (419) 625-8465. Pre-registration fee $35 by July 14; room rate $89. For information regarding meeting, contact: Laura Henze, USDA/APHIS/ADC, 463 West St., Amherst, MA 01002, (413) 253-2403.

August 17-20, 1997: Symposium on Mammal Trapping, Univ. of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Registration CDN$275 includes refereed proceedings. Univ. of Alberta dorm rooms available for CDN$26.88/night (single) or $35.84/night (double); other nearby hotels are reasonable. Contact: Dr. Gilbert Proulx, Alpha Wildlife Res. & Mgmt. Ltd., 9 Garnet Crescent, Sherwood Park, Alberta, Canada T8A 2R7, (403) 464-5228, FAX (403) 417-0255, e-mail: alpha@xpress.ab.ca.

September 21-27, 1997: 4th Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society, Snowmass Village, Colorado. Includes the following symposia: *Over Abundant Goose Populations: An Emerging Challenge in Wildlife Conservation* (chair, Bruce D. J. Batt, Ducks Unlimited); and *Predation and Predation Management: Public Perceptions and Management Approaches* (chair, Terry Messmer, Utah St. Univ.). Also will include annual meeting of the Wildlife Damage Management Working Group (chair, Scott Hygnstom, Univ. of Nebraska). Contact: TWS, 5410 Grosvenor Ln., Bethesda, MD 20814, (301) 897-9770..

October 4-8, 1997: 51st Annual Conference, Southeastern Assoc. of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, Oklahoma City, OK. Contact: Kim Erickson, PO Box 53465, Oklahoma City, OK 73152, phone (405) 521-3721.

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Your contributions of articles 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.

October 16-19, 1997: 8th Eastern Wildlife Damage Management Conference, Clarion Hotel and Conference Center, Roanoke, Virginia. NADCA Membership Meeting planned. Contact: Jim Parkhurst, Virginia Coop. Ext., Dept. of Fisheries & Wildlife Sciences, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0321, (540) 231-5573, FAX (540) 231-7580, e-mail: jparkhur@vt.edu

October 19-24, 1997: Second International Congress of Vector Ecology, Holiday Inn Int'l. Drive Resort, Orlando, Florida. Sponsored by Society for Vector Ecology. For registration information, contact: Gilbert L. Challet, Sec-Treas., P.O. Box 87, Santa Ana, CA 92702, (714) 971-2421 ext. 148, FAX (714) 971-3940.

December 7-10, 1997: 59th Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Theme: "Managing Natural Resources: Integrating Ecology and Society." Conference will include sessions on Prevention and Control of Invasive Species, and Managing Overabundant Wildlife. For further information, contact Michael Samuel at (608) 271-4640, or visit website http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/fh/fish/mwfwc.htm.

New Gas Cartridges Available

After producing a 6-ingredient gas cartridge for over 50 years, the Pocatello Supply Depot discontinued its production last fall and began selling a new, 2-active-ingredient cartridge on April 1. This was done to comply with the EPA requirement to delete sulfur and phosphorus from the formulation.

The supply depot and the USDA National Wildlife Research Center developed the new gas cartridge with 2 active and 2 inert ingredients during 1993 and submitted an application to EPA for registration in 1994. EPA registered the new cartridge on April 1, 1996, with the stipulation that the supply depot sell all of its inventory of the old cartridges by April 1, 1997. Users will have until April 1, 1998 to use up their stocks of the old cartriges.

The new gas cartridge was increased in length to 6" to provide the same amount of lethal carbon monoxide gas as the old 3 1/2" cartridge. Unlike the old cartridge, the contents of the new cartridge are hard and compacted, odorless, and grease-free. This is due to the deletion of sulfur, phosphorus, and mineral oil from the formulation. A fuse hold is pre-punched in to the new cartridge at the time of manufacture to aid the user in inserting the fuse into the hard cartridge when preparing it for burning. The new cartridges are registered for the control of

Continued on page 3, col. 1

NWCO News

Rich Daniotti, President of Connecticut's NWCO Association, reports considerable effort has been made by members in an attempt to defeat SB 6577, "An Act Concerning the Control of Nuisance Wildlife." This piece of legislation would require that nuisance wildlife control operators follow current American Veterinary Medical Association guidelines for euthanasia.

The AVMA guidelines, last reviewed in 1993, pertain to domestic animals and pets, and specifically are not intended by the AVMA to cover wildlife. However, a recent highly-publicized incident, in which a NWCO in Connecticut was observed euthanizing two captured raccoons by drowning, precipitated this legislation. By law, a NWCO must either destroy captured animals or must re-release them on the property where they were captured. A complaint of cruelty to animals against the NWCO involved was eventually resolved in the defendant's favor, but only after considerable legal wrangling and expense.

Daniotti notes that practical, acceptable methodologies for euthanizing various captured nuisance wildlife are quite limited. For example, NWCOs face unique and difficult situations in attempting to remove nuisance animals from homes, garages, etc. It is not always possible to achieve complete control of such animals. Skunks present a unique problem because they can spray, and they do so readily when many other methods of euthanasia, such as shooting or CO_2 chambers, are employed. Drugs that could likely be used to effectively euthanize skunks by injection are federally controlled, and it is unlikely that such drugs will ever become available to NWCOs. Research is badly needed on alternative injectable compounds or materials that could be used by means of a jab pole to humanely euthanize skunks or other species. Some such materials are already known, but data on their effectiveness, safety, humaneness needs to be documented in order to gain their official approval.

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New Gas Cartridges Available

woodchucks, yellow-bellied marmots, ground squirrels, and prairie dogs. Pocket gophers were deleted from the label since NWRC tests showed that efficacy was far below the 70% minimum required by EPA.

The larger 12" denning cartridge for coyotes, red foxes, and striped skunks already had a 2-active-ingredient formula, but EPA also registered it with the new formula, since the loose contents of the old cartridge would sometimes spill out of the tube and extinguish the cartridge when it was placed downward into a steep den.

The new cartridges for rodents are sold in cartons of 50 and 100. Contact the Pocatello Supply Depot at 238 E. Dillon St., Pocatello, ID 83201, phone (208) 236-6920 for further information and prices.

Trapping Video Available

A video production entitled "Balancing Nature— Trapping in Today's World" has been produced and distributed through the efforts of the National Trappers Association, the International Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, and the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission. The purpose of the video is to "gain informed consent that regulated trapping is consistent with responsible human use of renewable natural resources and an important component of wildlife management."

The primary target audiences are: urban women ages 25 to 40, state and federal lawmakers, and impressionable youth in 4th-6th grades. The video comes in both a 30-minute and a 10-minute version, the latter primarily aimed at lawmakers. Through a low-cost pricing structure for multiple copies, the sponsors hope that agencies, organizations, and groups that have a vested interest in the continued use of trapping as a management tool will find ways to fund a video give-away program to make this information available to the widest possible audience.

For the 30-minute version of the video, prices are 1-99 copies, $19.95 each; 100-499 copies, $10.95 each; 500 or more copies, $2.25 each, plus shipping and handling. A resale price list is also available upon request.

For more information, contact SunDancer, P.O. Box 24181, Omaha, NE 68124, phone (800) 827-9929, FAX (402) 393-8762.

Editor's note: anyone interested in providing a brief review of the video for a future issue of ***The Probe*** *is encouraged to contact Bob Timm at (707) 744-1424, e-mail: rmtimm@ucdavis.edu.*

New Web Page Available

Robert Schmidt of Utah State University has a web page under construction, and your comments on this developing resource are requested. The web page is called "Keeping Wildlife At A Safe Distance."

Please send suggestions for additional links, comments, etc. to Robert H. Schmidt, Dept of Fisheries & Wildlife, Utah State University, Logan UT 84322-5210, or contact by e-mail: rschmidt@cc.usu.edu.

The web page can be visited at:

http://cc.usu.edu/~rschmidt/welcome.html.

The Editor thanks the following contributors to this issue: Laura Henze, Sherm Blom, Guy Connolly, Richard Daniotti, Mike Fall, Lynwood Fiedler, Scott Huber, Wes Jones, Jim Miller, Don Stoker, Gary Nunley, Mike Dwyer, and Robert H. Schmidt. Send your contributions to **The PROBE**, *4070 University Road, Hopland, CA 95449.*

NWCOs: A Letter of Response

Robert (Robert H. Schmidt):

Thank you for sharing your commentary ("Open Letter," **Probe** #176, page 6). Here's mine.

I no longer share your optimism that the majority of NWCOs will organize either under the NADCA banner or any other. Not in my lifetime or yours. In order for NWCOs to organize there must first be a NWCO identity. The certification issue, which you so deftly dodged this time around, is the key to development of that identity. And as you are undoubtedly aware, many, perhaps the majority of NWCOs, and some if not many state agencies have their own agendas and will resist certification.

In the absence of certification or professional standards, any reference to the NWCOs as members of a "profession" is absurd. In the absence of certification NWCOs remain nothing more or less than a cross section of society who by chance, choice, or default, undertake wildlife control as a job or hobby. If this job/hobby category is ever to be elevated to a profession we must recognize that the current cross section of society we now call NWCO's contains some individuals unfit to be called professionals by any set of reasonable standards. Weeds.

In my own real life experience, the potential for weeding out unfit operators is often perceived as a threat by the very state wildlife agencies we would hope to take the leading role in professional development. State wildlife agencies faced with a decreasing funding base and increasing nuisance wildlife complaints may prefer the short term benefits of help from the willing without regard to their individual qualifications and the long terms costs in agency credibility and public opinion. As shortsighted as it is, many state agency folks so used to politically based brush fire management are convinced that free poor help is better than no help. And it further complicates the matter that state wildlife agencies are reluctant to tell any current or would-be NWCOs they do not make the grade when the overwhelming majority of these people come from the license buying constituency of the agency, lest they bite the hand that feeds them.

In my own real life experience, the potential for weeding out unfit operators is often perceived as a threat by the very state wildlife agencies we would hope to take the leading role in professional development.

I find it interesting that you perceived so much of the clatter at the WCT conference as the "What have they done for me?" baloney. Did you ask "Who are 'they'?" And "Why should 'they' give a damn about you?" The answer is simple: "They" are us, except the "us" who have ever done anything to try to benefit or organize NWCOs are few and far between when compared to the huge numbers of NWCOs out there. I suppose it is a good thing I wasn't there and no one came up to me and asked "What have they done for me?" I might have actually smacked somebody. You see, "they" is tired.

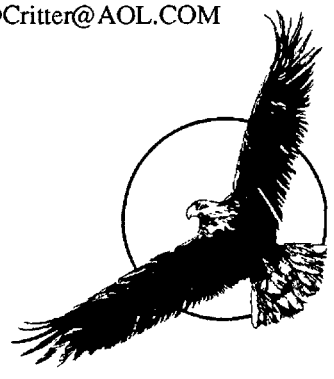
Merge **The Probe** with **Wildlife Control Technology** magazine (WCT)? No. I don't think so. Frankly, I find **WCT** to be often entertaining, occasionally informative, but it is not a professional journal, not by a long shot. If NWCOs want to be professional, the NWCOs themselves, en masse, should start with professional standards promoted in a professional journal. Establish and maintain professional standards and let would-be members aspire to attain it—don't lower the bar. The only way to accommodate everybody who wants to be a "professional" NWCO is to place the bar on the ground. No thanks.

Establish and maintain professional standards and let would-be members aspire to attain it—don't lower the bar. The only way to accommodate everybody who wants to be a "professional" NWCO is to place the bar on the ground. No thanks.

NADCA meetings are at places not generally attended by NWCOs? Why not? What is it about an academic setting that precludes NWCO participation? Elitism among academicians? Yes! Pride and ego among NWCOs? Yes! It's a pity and yet a reality that wildlife management researchers and the field practitioners who could greatly benefit from research are becoming increasingly isolated from each other. Do we solve this by further separating? No!

But in the final analysis, it doesn't matter a hill of beans as long as the vast majority of NWCOs sit on their duffs and wait for somebody else to do something for them (and meanwhile half or more are carping about whatever it is that is proposed). NWCOs must understand that "professional" is not a royal title that can be bestowed by someone else. I challenge every NWCO—if you want to be a professional, then act "as if" you are a professional and soon you will be one.

Mike Dwyer, Critter Control of Columbus, OH
e-mail: MDCritter@AOL.COM



Legislative Update

Wildlife Refuge Bill Advances

In a dramatic turn of events, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbit declared his support for the National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act (H.R. 511) and his commitment to work with WLFA and other supporters of the bill in an effort to secure its passage this year. Speaking at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in March, Babbitt reversed a position he had stated less the two weeks earlier, when he told the House Resources Committee that he would not support the bill in its present form and, if passed, would recommend a Presidential veto. The bill defines the purposes and uses of the 93-million acre refuge system, while protecting the future of hunting, fishing and other wildlife dependent activities, based on compatibility.

Colorado Resolution to Support Hunting Rights

A resolution has been introduced into the Colorado Senate that, if passed, would ensure that fish and hunting would not be prohibited or otherwise restricted except as provided in state laws enacted by the General Assembly or set forth in the rules adopted thereunder. Senate Concurrent Resolution 1 was introduced to eliminate future initiatives from taking the rights and privileges away from law abiding hunters, anglers, and trappers. The Colorado Division of Wildlife supports SCR 1. A two-thirds vote will be required for placement of this resolution on the 1998 general election ballot.

Vermont, Oregon Bills Would Restrict Trapping

Bills recently introduced in Vermont (HB 297 and SB 68) and Oregon (SB 885) would place substantial restrictions on trapping in these two states. The Vermont bills would prohibit the use of steel-jaw leghold traps, and were introduced at the request of an anti-trapping organization, EndTrap. The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department opposes both bills, which are pending in committees with no hearing dates scheduled. The Oregon bill would require a permit be granted in order to place or maintain a leghold trap for the purpose of capturing and holding a fur-bearing animal. The applicant would first be required to state the nature of the problem that the leghold trap is intended to abate, and must recite the efforts made to abate the problem without the use of a leghold trap. The applicant would be required to first attempt to use a confinement trap, and must also use all reasonable nonlethal techniques for abating the specific problem. According to the bill's sponsor, the bill was drafted at the request of an animal rights activist who has been attempting to eliminate trapping, as well as all hunt-

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More ADC in the News

Grizzly Reintroduction Plan Supported

A compromise agreement on the reintroduction of grizzly bears to the four-million-acre Selway Bitterroot and Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness complex in Idaho could chart a new course for the management of endangered species. The agreement has gained active support by the timber industry and labor. Some politicians such as Gov. Marc Racicot of Montana have endorsed the concept. Opposition to grizzly bears, however, is widespread in the farming and ranching areas of Montana and Idaho, and Gov. Phil Batt of Idaho remains adamantly opposed. Rather than giving Federal officials the power to make unilateral decisions, the proposal, if adopted in an environmental impact statement by the Fish and Wildlife Service, would set up a management committee made up of citizens and state officials. Under this "citizen's proposal," about five grizzly bears would be brought in from British Columbia for five years. This new approach to endangered species management is part of a nationwide trend to find alternatives to full designations under the Endangered Species Act.

—from the *New York Times* , April 27 issue.

Continued from col. 1

Legislative Update Continued

ing, in the state of Oregon through legislative means for a number of years. According to the sponsor, this bill attempts to make obtaining trapping permits extremely difficult, as opposed to previous unsuccessful legislation which would have simply eliminated trapping.

Idaho Bill Makes Initiatives More Difficult

A bill signed by the Governor of Idaho makes the tasks of placing initiative measure on the ballot more challenging. It revises the time allotted for gathering and submitting signatures for petitions. The bill also revises the formula for the number of signatures required and provides that signatures must come from at least 22 of the state's 44 counties. Also, the petitioners must receive 25% of the required number of signatures by halfway through the time period.

*The above items are summarized from the April issue of *WLFA Update*, the monthly newsletter of the Wildlife Legislative Fund of America, with permission.

ADC News, Tips, Ideas , Publications . . .

FWS Proposes Coyote Kill to Protect Deer

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has proposed killing coyotes on the Julia Butler Hansen Refuge at Cathlamet, Washington in order to protect the declining herd of Columbian white-tailed deer. However, Friends of Animals opposes the predator control plan, claiming the real problem on the refuge is cattle grazing. According to FOA representative Priscilla Feral, the proposed coyote-killing will give the government "a chance to pretend it is killing coyotes to protect an endangered species, as well as subsidize the livestock industry." The deer, which once roamed the river bottomlands of western Washington and Oregon, is now limited to three separate "subpopulations." Without predator control, refuge officials say the herd which once numbered 500 but now is reduced to 60 animals, will disappear before the end of the decade. Refuge biologist Al Clark disputes the animal rights group's position: "The cattle are confined to specific fields. Their purpose is to keep (the grass) short and nutritious for the deer. They occupy less than 30% of the habitat, and only during the grass-growing season," he noted.

Concerning this issue, the editor of *Livestock Weekly* noted that the positions taken are instructive: the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service "never had much stomach for controlling predators to protect livestock but it takes an entirely different view of the issue when its own animals are at risk."

—from *Livestock Weekly*, Feb. 27, 1997

Idaho Ranchers Oppose Lion Study

The Idaho Fish & Game Department's plan to study mountain lion impact on deer populations is raising opposition from livestock producers, who feel the time has come to control lion numbers in order to reduce predation losses. Idaho Fish & Game has proposed a 5-year study of lion and coyote impacts on deer by specifying the level of predator removal in certain areas. In some study areas, only one lion per year could be killed, while in other areas unlimited killing of lions and intensive coyote control would be practiced. Simultaneously, biologists would monitor radio-collared deer for survival and causes of mortality."We feel like we're overrun with lions, and we need to get them under control," stated rancher Barry Williams. Other Idaho ranchers report having lost a colt and ten calves to lions in the past year, or an average of 12 calves per year for four years, in another case. Additionally, several ranchers believe it is already clear that lions are the reason deer numbers have not rebounded since a 1992-93 die-off. But others note that without solid scientific information to support any management decision, the state could be sued by anti-hunting interests.

—from *Livestock Weekly*, Feb. 27, 1997

Bat Rabies Contracted Without Bite

In 1996, four cases of human rabies were documented in the United States, including two cases in which the source of the disease was bats.

In October and December 1996, a woman in Kentucky and a man in Montana died from rabies. In both of these cases, the rabies virus variant was associated with the silver-haired bat, *Lasionycteris noctivagans*, and in neither case could a definite history of bat bite or contact be established. This species of bat is widespread across the U.S., with a range including all the contiguous states except the southernmost portions of California, Texas, and several southeastern states plus all of Florida.

These findings are consistent with the emerging pattern in the epidemiology of human rabies in the United States: bat-related virus variants have been identified from 17 (53%) of the 32 cases of human rabies diagnosed in the United States since 1980. Of these 17 bat-related cases, 12 (71%) were infected with a rabies virus variant primarily associated with the silver-haired bat. A definite bite history could be documented in only one of these 17 bat-related cases; in eight of these instances, although contact with a bat was reported by the patient, a family member, or friends, in none of these cases was a bite recognized or a wound evident.

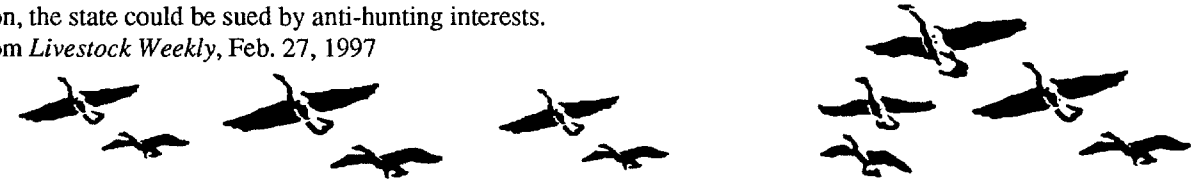
These findings suggest that limited or seemingly insignificant physical contact with rabid bats may result in transmission of virus, even without a definite history of animal bite. Therefore, rabies PEP should now be considered in all situations in which there is reasonable probability that contact with a bat may have occurred, unless prompt laboratory testing of the bat has ruled out rabies infection.

—from the CDC Morbidity Mortality Weekly Report, Vol. 46 / No. 18, May 9 1997.

Texas Completed Oral Rabies Project

For the third year in a row, the Texas ADC Service assisted the Texas Dept. of Health in oral rabies vaccine bait distribution to battle both the canine rabies outbreaks in south Texas and the gray fox rabies outbreaks in west and central Texas. The 34-day distribution program which ended in early February distributed 2.6 million baits units, using three leased twin-engine otter aircraft during 243 flights. Bait distribution covered 42,000 square miles.

—from *The Trapline*, newsletter of the Texas ADC Program, Jan/Feb '97



ADC News, Tips, Ideas , Publications . . .

Low Success in Alabama Spear Season

Last summer, Alabama began issuing permits for hunters to take deer and wild boar with spears. Following the first season, it was reported that of the 64 sportsmen issued permits, only a few got within spear-throwing range, and only one hunter bagged a deer. The spear is the greatest deer saver around," said the Alabama's game and fish director, Charles Kelley. However, the U.S. Humane Society considers the hunt barbaric, and is determined to publicize the issue in an effort to get it stopped. A state game committee is scheduled to vote this spring on whether the spear season will be continued.

—from *Newsweek*, April 7, 1997

Colorado Urban Coyote Problems Continue

The city of Westminster has now requested permission to use humane leg-hold traps to capture coyotes which have lost their fear of humans, attacking 12 dogs and killing as many as six of them in recent months. Recently, the coyotes, estimated to number 30 to 35 individuals in a four-square-mile-area, have become more aggressive toward humans. Amendment 14, passed last November by Colorado voters, allows use of leg-hold trap only to safeguard human health or safety. The city has requested such a declaration from local health officials and meanwhile has posted signs warning residents about the bold coyotes. The city also paid $4,500 to a professional trapper, who worked for a month in an attempt to capture the coyotes using a permissible cage trap. He caught one coyote and one fox.

Police Chief Dan Montgomery summarized the situation: "Because of Amendment 14, we really didn't have many options, and my worst nightmare is some young kid will be mauled. In the end, our choices are to trap and kill the coyotes, to shoot them—which is difficult in an urban area—or simply to do nothing. And from the number of complaints we continue to receive, that last choice is no choice at all."

—from the *Rocky Mountain News*, May 22

Miscellaneous Notes...

People who opposed a wolf transplant to Yellowstone Park, and proposed putting wolves in New York's Central Park as a means of giving easterners a taste of living with the animals, may come close to getting their wish. Defenders of Wildlife is promoting the idea of bringing wolves back to wild parts of Adirondack Mountains in New York.

According to the Fur Information Council of America, the total value of U.S. fur sales exceeds all retail sales of fresh tomatoes; more people buy fur in New York than in any other city; and tax revenues generated by the U.S. fur trade could fund half of the national school lunch program.

Latest Pet Craze: Hedgehogs

"These things are going to be the pet of the '90s," says Cindy Snider, pet store owner in Blue Springs, MO. Hedgehogs are so popular that some pet store managers are having trouble keeping them in stock. "A lot of people used to associate them with porcupines and they didn't want them. But once people see that they're really sweet and soft underneath, they change their minds," said Dennis O'Neal of Petland, in Roeland Park, KS. "We get them in five or six at a time, and they go pretty quick." On the average, they sell for $50 to $80 apiece.

Hedgehogs are insectivores, native to Europe, Asia, and Africa. The small, 2.5-lb nocturnal mammals resemble miniature porcupines, and are about the size of a baseball when curled up in a protective stance. Owners say the pets require little maintenance, and some say their hedgehogs are even litter-box trained. They eat a variety of foods but prefer snails, slugs, worms and insects. They'll also consume lizards, mice, frogs, snakes, birds' eggs, and cat food. According to one owner, Jessica McGowen of Oak Grove, MO, "They're supposed to be really affectionate, but mine kind of likes to be by herself and not be bothered. She's really kind of lazy."

Paula Henstridge of USDA's APHIS division noted "We've had to crack down on some of them that are being imported. They're small, easy to care for, and quite popular. But they also can carry tuberculosis."

—from the *Kansas City Star*

Waterfowl Group Promotes Predator Control

Delta Waterfowl, the nation's oldest waterfowl organization, is soliciting funds to promote increased levels of predator control for the purpose of increasing nesting success of ducks in North America. Field research conducted during 1994, 1995, and 1996 demonstrated a 9- to 10-fold increase in nest success on blocks where nest predators such as skunk, raccoon, and fox were controlled. This research, supported by Delta, covered more than 200,000 acres and monitored in excess of 3,000 nests. In a letter to potential supporters, DW Vice President Lloyd A. Jones notes the lack of recovery of several species of ducks, despite recent optimum water and nesting habitat conditions— the best in 30 years. Quoting waterfowl biologists, he says "...the single most important factor depressing current waterfowl populations is the low success rate of nesting hens that is a result of severe predation rates on the prairies... Over 90% of waterfowl nests in these areas are being destroyed by a predator population out of control." He continues, "There are now predators in parts of the prairie duck nesting region in greater numbers than ever before seen in history."

Delta Waterfowl is based in Bismarck, ND. It claims to be the only organization that is actively pursuing action on the problem of predators and ducks.

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NATIONAL ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL ASSOCIATION

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Name: _____ Phone: (____) _____ - _____ Home

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City: _____ State: _____ ZIP _____ - _____
Please use 9-digit Zip Code

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

Membership Class: Student $10.00 Active $20.00 Sponsor $40.00 Patron $100 (Circle one)

Check or Money Order payable to NADCA

Select one type of occupation or principal interest:

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