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January 2003

## The NADCA Probe, Issue 226

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# Beaver Management— Nevada 1942-1943

C.R. “Pink” Madsen, Wildlife Biologist

*Editor’s note: This is the second part of an article that ran in the Jan/Feb issue of THE PROBE. Pink Madsen trapped and translocated beaver in Nevada for the Predator and Rodent Control Program. In the winter when the pelts were prime, beaver pelts would be sold and the revenue from these sales were used to establish the Nevada Game and Fish Department.*

## PART 2

I’m not sure of the total number of live beaver I transplanted, but I do know that none of the transplants were fatal. So I think that part of the job was very successful. From the average number of beaver per trip and the number of trips per week, I came up with an estimate of a little over fifty beaver transplanted. By my original memory, I thought I had planted many more than that. My satisfaction and pleasure on the job plus nearly a hundred years of elapsed time may have dimmed my memory.

At the close of the transplanting work, there were still many beaver left, particularly in the Humbolt River and some of the harder to reach locations. Harvey Edward, one of our better trapper supervisors and who later became State Supervisor in Nevada, was assigned to beaver pelting work. His assignment to the pelting work fit in very good. He had helped with the live trapping and learned the skills of beaver trapping, although the settings for steel traps is vastly different from the setting places for live traps in most cases.

Harvey kept three or more skinning knives. One to open the belly and cut around the leg, and others to alternate on the skinning. He was very protective of his skinning and fleshing equipment. He would hold them out and let me look at them, but he declined to let me handle them in

any way. He said that sharpening was too time consuming and he had seen me handle knives before so he would pass on that.

We soon learned that the number 4 wolf traps that we had for predator work were not satisfactory for beaver. So we ordered a small supply of number 10 (I think) steel traps. We then discovered that these new traps were much better when one spring was taken off. This resulted in a trap with about a 10-inch jaw spread and only one spring to deal with in the setting.

For drowning weights, we used small canvas bags that would hold about one gallon of mud, rocks, or sod. The trapper always carried a coil of wire to tie the traps to the drowners on the trap wire. It made for a little extra equipment, but not too much.

For a beginning scent to attract the beaver, we used turpentine and fresh aspen sawdust. Later on, of course, we saved both castors and oil sacks for scent; both in beaver work and in some of the predator scents.

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None of the streams had enough water flow between dams to justify any sort of boat. The trapper was able to drive his pickup from one dam to the next. This was pretty important because I hadn’t mentioned that a small hatchet, a shovel,

some stretcher hoops, and some skinning equipment were always needed.

Harvey tried to skin as many of the beaver in the field as he could. He became expert at it and was able to skin a beaver in about 30 to 45 minutes. He didn’t just take the hide off, he skinned it very clean. He could do one and a half beaver to my one, and mine still needed a lot of finishing. He said that extra time skinning saved more time then it took when it came to scraping the

*Continued on page 4, Col. 2*

# CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

**March 26-29, 2003 - North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, Adam's Mark Winston Plaza Hotel, Winston-Salem, NC.** Sponsored by the Wildlife Management Institute. For information go to [www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org](http://www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org)

**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](mailto: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. For information contact Co- chairs, Robert Timm ([rmtimm@ucdavis.edu](mailto:rmtimm@ucdavis.edu)) and Kathleen Fagerstone ([kathleen.a.fagerstone@aphis.usda.gov](mailto: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>.

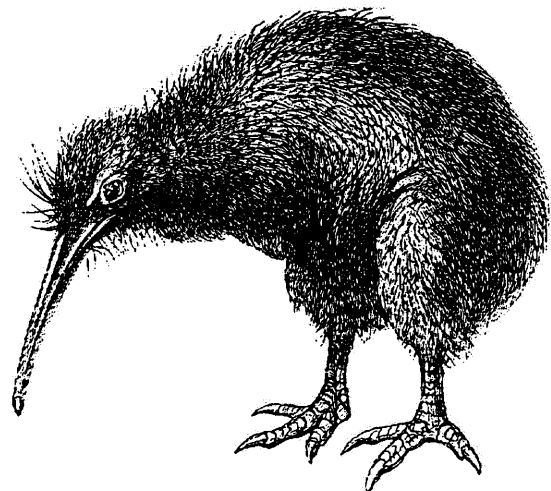
**May 5-7, 2003 - Urban Wildlife Management National Conference, Arbor Day Farm, Lied Lodge & Convention Center, Nebraska City, NE.** Presented by The National Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with Urban Working Group of The Wildlife Society; The Humane Society of the United States; and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Branch of Habitat Restoration. See website: [arborday.org](http://arborday.org).

**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

**June 13-16, 2003 - National Goose Management Training Academy, Holiday Inn Select North at the Pyramids, Indianapolis IN.** A one of a kind comprehensive training opportunity providing the hands on experience to create and manage comprehensive goose control programs. For additional information contact: Kirk La Pierre 201-933-9700 [kirk.lapierre@verizon.com](mailto:kirk.lapierre@verizon.com) or Tim Julien 317-895-9069 [tjulien@iquest.net](mailto:tjulien@iquest.net)

**August 18-21, 2003 - Bird Strike Committee USA/Canada annual meeting at The Westin Harbour Castle, Toronto, Ontario.** For information, go to [www.birdstrike.org](http://www.birdstrike.org).

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



## EVER WONDER?

Has there ever been a documented case of rats attacking and killing a human? From a 1929 article by A.M. Hogarth, entitled *The rat, a world menace*. "In the Walker colliery (an open-pit coal mine), near Killingsworth, in which many horses were employed, the rats had accumulated in great multitudes. It was customary at holiday times to bring to the surface the horses and the fodder, and close the pit for a time. On one occasion, when the holiday had extended to 10 days or a fortnight, during which the rats had been deprived of food. On reopening the pit, the first man who descended was attacked by the starving rats and speedily killed and devoured."

From — *Corrigan, Robert M. Rats & Mice. Chap 1., Mallis Handbook of Pest Control, 8th Ed. 1997*

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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.

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# Humane Education Has Agenda

*Debra Sanders, Columnist for the San Francisco Chronicle*

The most dangerous assault on teaching science in public schools doesn't come from creationists, who object to the teaching of evolution.

The danger is in animal-rights activists peddling what they call "humane education."

Like every dubious educational trend, humane education starts with a reasonable concept. Kids who mistreat animals are likely to mistreat, maybe even murder, people when they become adults.

Teach kids to respect animals and society gains, they claim. To the extent that the programs stick to that principle, they can be a plus.

But some so-called humane educators have a political agenda that veers away from teaching respect for life and instead embraces the philosophy that animal have the same moral status as humans.

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These educators oppose scientific research using "non-human animals" and want to grant animals civil rights.

Another tip-off that humane education isn't just about being kind to Fluffy is when the works of Princeton University professor and philosopher, Peter Singer, whose writings are the underpinnings of the animal rights movement, are on the suggested reading list (you'll find them listed on the International Institute for Humane Education's Web site).

As a step toward equal rights, such groups as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals fight animal research in the field and animal dissection in schools. They argue that computer programs can replace dissection for students and can be a good substitute in medical research. Nonsense, says Dr. Linda Cork, who chairs Stanford University's comparative medicine department, "The reality is, you cannot do biomedical research without animals."

If animal-rights activists had their way, Cork would be out of business. She took me to the underground animal-research laboratories at Stanford's School of Medicine. The majority of the research animals are mice and rats, kept on stacks of small cages.

Cork's project uses a specially bred line of narcoleptic Doberman pinchers. When the dogs saw us through the door window, they jumped up and barked. For them, a dog's life is entirely indoors.

Do I want to fling open the doors and instigate a doggie break-out? Of course I do. But then I'd be sabotaging a project that could help the 135,000 narcoleptic Americans, as well as research on unraveling the mysteries of sleep.

Cork noted that the number of animals used in research is tiny when compared to the number of unwanted animals euthanized each year.

She's right: According to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 2 million to 3 million dogs and 3 million to 4 million cats were put down in 1999, while only 100,000 dogs and cats were used in medical research.

So, with the prevalent — and needless — abuse and neglect of animals, why pick on medical researchers?

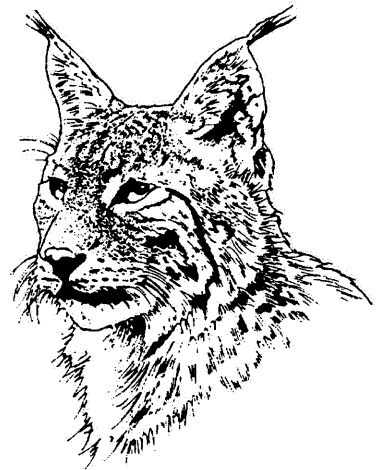
PETA argues that animal experiments are "useless" because animals' biology is different from that of humans. Stanford University Medical Center neurobiologist William Newsome relates tales of going to talk to schools where students announce that they are morally opposed to animal research and would end it tomorrow.

"If people had stopped (animal research) in 1900, people would still be dying of diabetes and crippled from polio. There would be no such thing as open-heart surgery," Newsome explains.

Ban such research today, and expect few advances against AIDS, Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease in this century.

So you can call the animal-rights movement many things, but don't call it humane.

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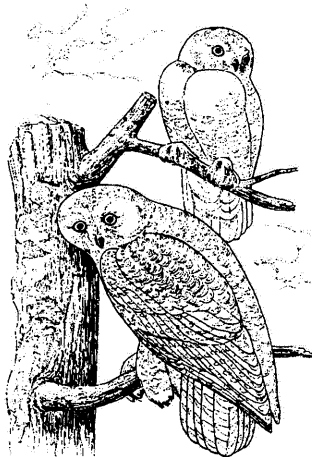
The editor of **The PROBE** thanks contributors to this issue: Debra Sanders, Richard Dolbeer, and C.R. Madsen.

# The "Birdcast" Brought to You By...

An interesting recollection was posted recently on the wildlife\_operators listserv. Kirk La Pierre, of A-1 Saver Wildlife Management in New Jersey, was charged with dispersing starlings from roosting sites in a township in Northern N.J. Kirk's innovative approach follows:

"I obtained a starling in distress audio tape, went to the local college radio station and they played the tape every day for 5 days for a half hour over the radio at dusk. Everyone in the affected area PLUS the rest of the town tuned into that station at the same time and pointed their radios out the window or put boom boxes or speakers on their decks etc. and blasted the sound — it was great! The entire flock (85,000) was in a total state of confusion. In addition, we hit them with shotgun fired banger shells and whistlers, and a propane cannon on top of a fire truck. The fire truck also shot water into the trees and followed the flock as it fired the cannon at them. It worked!"

—Kirk La Pierre via [wildlife\\_operators@yahoo.com](mailto:wildlife_operators@yahoo.com)



## NADCA on the WEB

NADCA now has their own web site located at <http://nadca.unl.edu>. It includes the home page and the following menu items: Who We Are, Goals and Objectives, Benefits As Members, Upcoming Events, and Newsletter. Visitors to the NADCA web site can see NADCA at a glance and download an application form to join NADCA. NADCA members can keep current on events and upcoming meetings as well as view an on-line version of THE PROBE or past on-line issues.

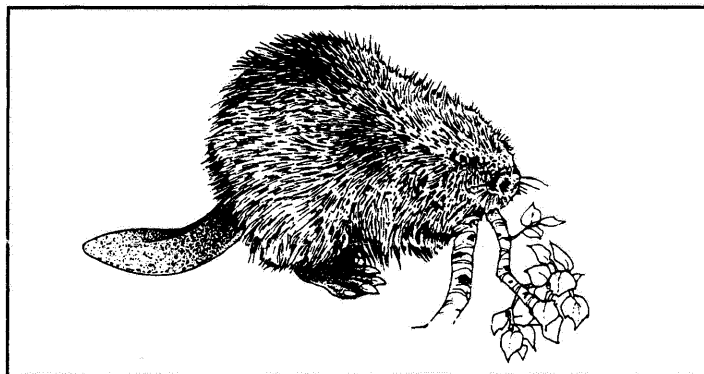
The current web site administrator is Dallas Virchow at the University of Nebraska. You may reach Dallas at: Rm 306 B, Biochem Bldg., University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE. 68583-0759, [dvirchow1@unl.edu](mailto:dvirchow1@unl.edu) phone 402-472-8961

*Continued from page 3, col. 2*

## Beaver Management Nevada 1942-43

hide later on. He skinned some animals in his garage at home and did all of the scraping there. And, of course, he was on a monthly salary with no provisions for overtime — same as for the live trapping and transplanting.

He used a bell "hog scraper" that had about a 4-inch bell at one end and about a 2-inch bell at the other end. These bells were kept about as sharp as his skinning knives. Instead of a fleshing beam, he used a three foot square piece of 1/2-inch plywood. He would lay the skin on the plywood then lay the plywood on a work table or in the back of his pickup, or on the flat ground in a pinch, and do some scraping. We also used a drying system of a re-bar bent into a circle. We took



lengths of re-bar to the highway shop and bent them around culverts. We then welded a single chain link on to one end at a 90 degree angle. We would then thread the other end of the re-bar through the link and secure the size and stabilize the frame with a small "U" clamp.

These re-bar stretcher-dryers worked real good. They make a pretty and round skin and they make the scraping and drying easier. We made hoops for each size of beaver by using heavier re-bar and longer lengths for blankets and shorter lengths of smaller re-bar, about 3/8-inch, for young and medium sized skins.

Harvey had letters from the Seattle Fur Exchange complimenting him on the good condition and care he gave his pelts. And, as you know, better skin care will always result in higher sales.

Some of the harder locations to get to with live traps included the "Contact" area. If that is the correct name for the stream just to the south of the present city of Jackpot. There wasn't a permanent rancher living there so there was no place to eat. But Harvey batched in their bunkhouse. He trapped

*Continued on page 5, column 1*

Continued from page 4, col. 2

## Beaver Management—Nevada 1942-1943

there and north to the Idaho line. Then he went over the mountains and west to the Bois and neighboring ranches. There were a lot of beaver in the meadows.

But now it was coming on to winter. Cold and lots of ice on the rivers. And before anybody was ready, it snowed. Then it snowed more, and more. Harvey was snowed in without much of a prospect of getting his pickup

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*Then it snowed more, and more. Harvey was snowed in without much of a prospect of getting his pickup and outfit out for weeks to come. They tried several times, and about had to leave a tractor out in the snow. Finally they got the telephone to work, on a wire fence I think, and the Bois ranch put Harvey on a horse. With a cowboy helper, they headed out for the ranches at Contact to meet someone with a car to take Harvey to Wells.*

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I picked Harvey up at Wells. We left his pickup, with its load of traps and furs, at the ranch for five or six weeks until they broke the road open and we went back to the ranch and got all his stuff. For the rest of the season, Harvey trapped the Humbolt River all the way from about the Death area to the Beowawe area west of Carlin.

Harvey's diligence and care in handling skins is a real gift to Nevada sportsmen, as this was the work that provided the revenue to start the Nevada Game and Fish Department.

The State Supervisor for Predator and Rodent Control in Nevada made an agreement with Arizona and California for Harvey to use a boat and trap beaver on both sides of the Colorado River from about Willow Springs, below Boulder Dam, to just about Havasu City — which wasn't there at the time.

I never had a chance to talk much with Harvey about the Colorado River deal. I don't know if he had trouble with fishermen stealing from his camps or thinking he was a poacher or whatever. I don't know what size rapids he was able to run or how often he had to load up his camp and drive down river to another boat landing.

From the Colorado, Harvey went to the Reno office of Animal Damage Control — which was still under the Department of Interior. From Reno he went to work with ADC in Oregon where he retired.

Harvey was a good man and a good trapper. He was well liked and well respected. Harvey never went beyond high school and learned all he knew about wildlife and trapping in the field. He died about 3 or 4 years ago.

There's one last item you should be interested in, eating beaver. Harvey didn't know much about how it was done by the old mountain men, so he saved a medium beaver and tried it out for a roast. I ate some and liked it OK.

Maybe a few beaver roasts would be a good gimmick for a Nevada Game and Fish Department Bar-B-Que? If I could make it, I'd sure like to come.

## LOOK FOR YOUR NADCA MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE

The 2003 NADCA Membership Directory is included with this issue of **THE PROBE**. Members whose memberships have expired are included. PLEASE CHECK YOUR EXPIRATION DATE and if expired, please renew by filling out the renewal form on the back page of this issue and return it to Art Smith.

— The editor

## We Need Your Articles!

Send your articles, book reviews, announcements, and product reviews to **THE PROBE!** (See address, e-mail, and FAX number on page 2 of this issue.)

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## Membership Renewal and Application Form

### NATIONAL ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL ASSOCIATION

Mail to: Art E. Smith, South Dakota Department of Game, Fish & Parks, 523 E. Capitol Avenue, Pierre, SD 57501

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Home

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Office

Additional Address Info: \_\_\_\_\_

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:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Pest Control Operator  |
| <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) _____             |   |