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TWS Wildlife Damage Management Working Group Newsletter: Spring/Summer 2000 – Volume 7(2)2

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FROM THE CHAIR:

Those who were able to attend this fall's 7th Annual TWS Conference in Nashville learned that our working group is now the largest among some 15 active working groups within the Society, at 253 paid members. Let's give ourselves a pat on the back for maintaining a growing, active group within our profession! As has been true at past TWS annual conferences, the gathering of our working group at Nashville drew a good and enthusiastic crowd (about 55 persons). Also, the various presentations dealing with wildlife damage issues, including the symposium we co-sponsored, were well received and well attended. I encourage you to review the minutes of our meeting, found elsewhere in this newsletter.

Perhaps the most far-reaching decision made during our recent working group meeting was the vote to move forward in overseeing/organizing the Wildlife Damage Management Conference (successor to the Great Plains and Eastern Conferences). Our assuming this responsibility will help ensure the future for these important meetings—as well as provide some useful continuity and a means for carrying forward funds from one conference to the next. During the coming months, our working group officers and board members will be considering ways in which future conferences can be designed and changed so as to best serve our audience and accomplish our educational and professional mission. (Continued on page 7) .

APOLOGIES FROM THE EDITOR:

I sincerely regret not being able to produce this issue sooner. I hope the lateness of this issue does not put anyone off. If it does, let it be known that the delay was my responsibility alone, and should not reflect on any of the officers of the Working Group. For the past several months I have been very actively job searching while working full-time for the USGS, managing 38 apartment units, and first and foremost being a husband and father. Happily, I can report I have just started a new job with the South Dakota Department of Fish, Game and Parks. Now that my family and I are settled, I anticipate that I will be able to resume production of INTERACTIONS at the frequency which we have become accustomed. I look forward to this new year, and am excited with the prospects of reporting Working Group activities and related information.

My new contact information follows. Again, I apologize for the delay in this issue. Thank you for your patience.

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*Minutes of the TWS's Wildlife Damage
Management Working Group
2000 Annual Meeting, Nashville, Tennessee*

The meeting was opened at 3:30 pm, September 13, 2000, by Scott Craven, Chair. About 55 persons were in attendance, including officers and board members Scott Craven, Robert Timm, Robert Schmidt, Richard Chipman, Larry Clark, Desley Whisson, and Gary Witmer. Chair-elect Kathy Fagerstone had sent her regrets that she was not able to attend and that she was looking forward to the 2001 meeting and in participating in the Group's activities over the next year. Scott introduced the three new board members, Richard, Larry, and Desley. The minutes of the 1999 meeting were voted on and accepted. The Group's membership was reported to be 253, making it the largest working group in The Wildlife Society. The treasurer's report listed a balance of \$2,593.73 with the only expenses being newsletter costs and the only income being membership dues. Dick Curnow has again agreed to conduct an audit of the Group's checking account.

Old business included updates on the Group's two collaborative publications. The initial printing (4,000 copies) of "Managing Canada Geese in Urban Environments" has been sold out and another 4,000 copies will be printed by Cornell. About 600 copies of the goose video have been sold. The "Managing White-tailed Deer in Suburban Environments" manual has been reviewed and revised; it should be printed relatively soon. Scott Craven noted that he was giving a presentation on translocation of nuisance wildlife in the Symposium on Nonlethal Approaches to Wildlife Damage Management and wondered if some of the Group's members would like to work on a position statement. Interested persons should contact Scott. There is a draft position statement out on "Feral and Free-Ranging Domestic Cats"; it was printed in the July-August issue (No. 301) of The Wildlifer. Comments are due in to TWS, Bethesda, MD, by January 15, 2001. It was reported that Dallas Virchow of the University of Nebraska was making good progress on the University's wildlife damage management website: <http://wildlifedamage.unl.edu/>. At this year's TWS Annual Conference, the Group co-sponsored a full-day TWS Symposium (Wildlife and Highways: seeking solutions to an ecological and socio-economic dilemma) that was well attended. Copies of the presentations were compiled and are available through Terry Messmer. A number of Working Group members were involved in another well-attended Symposium (Nonlethal Approaches to Wildlife Damage Management: promise, potential, and reality). There was also a contributed papers session on wildlife damage management and several posters in the poster session.

There was a discussion on the fate of future Eastern and Great Plains Wildlife Damage Management Conferences. It was generally agreed that there should be one every two years in years alternating with the VPC which is held in the West in even-numbered years. It was moved and approved that the Working Group would oversee future conferences and work to line up sponsors. Kathy Fagerstone and Bob Timm will be looking for someone in the Midwest to host a conference in 2003. This conference, the Wildlife Damage Management Conference, would replace the former "Eastern" and "Great Plains" meetings.

In new business, there was a discussion of the American Society of Mammalogists, (ASM) letter and resolution submitted to USDA Wildlife Services (WS) expressing concern over the number of "nuisance" wildlife (and in particular, predators) taken by federal and state agencies each year (see J. Mamm. 80(4):1395-1396 for the printed resolution). WS Acting Deputy Administrator, Martin Mendoza, sent a detailed, 3-page response to ASM President Dr. O. J. Reichman. Because most Working Group members hadn't seen the ASM letter and resolution nor Mr. Mendoza's response, it was agreed that no

action should be taken at this time. The Board may draft a letter to the ASM President, however, urging them to share Mr. Mendoza's letter with the ASM membership.

Symposium ideas for next year's TWS Annual Conference were discussed. Webb Smathers again suggested a wildlife damage economics session and it was agreed that, should he pursue that, he should consult with Larry Clark since Larry had coordinated the National Wildlife Research Center's recent "Human Conflicts with Wildlife-Economic Considerations" symposium. Terry Messmer suggested a session on "Wildlife-Human Conflicts on Western Rangelands". Dennis Slate suggested a session on raccoons in the East for the 2002 TWS Annual Conference. Anyone interested in any of these suggestions should contact those persons. Also, it was mentioned that the Working Group might want to consider another species for the next damage management manual, having completed the goose and deer manuals. The only suggestion at this time was a manual on raccoons.

Several upcoming conferences were mentioned: the Eastern in Pennsylvania (now past); The Role of Predator Control in Game Management, in Texas in April, 2001 (contact Dale Rollins); the Australian VPC in May, 2001; and the 3rd European VPC in Israel in September, 2001.

Scott Craven turned the position of Chair over to Bob Timm. Bob welcomed the opportunity to serve as Chair. He thanked the outgoing board members for their service and reminded the Group that we will have an election for 3 new board members before next year's meeting. Also, although Art Smith is still producing our newsletter, it was suggested that the Group begin considering a replacement should Art move on to a new position and a busier lifestyle! The annual meeting was adjourned at 4:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Gary Witmer, Secretary/Treasurer, October 13, 2000

WHEN IT COMES TO FISH, HERONS HAVE GOOD TASTE

Virginia Groark, Chicago Tribune, 22Jul00

In backyards throughout the Chicago area, ponds that were meant to be tranquil refuges from life's daily pressures have become the setting for predatory scenes straight out of "Wild Kingdom."

The ponds are home to the coveted koi, large exotic fish prized for their color, grace, and companionship. But the fish, it seems, are a hit not only with humans. They have become popular with blue herons, which pluck them out of ponds without thinking twice about eating someone's pet.

Or about how much they cost!

In a North Barrington incident, wildlife apparently enjoyed a koi feast that would have made a pricey entree at a fancy restaurant look like cheap fast food. The 40-odd koi snatched from two North Barrington homes earlier this month were valued between \$3,000 and \$5,000 – enough to prompt their owners to file theft reports with the Lake County Sheriff's office.

An animal specialist later visited the scene, found fish remains and concluded that one or more large birds were most likely to blame for the carnage. Blue herons, it seems, are being blamed for koi massacres throughout Illinois. From Palatine to Peoria, people are saying the birds, admired for their elegance, are also opportunists that stalk easily accessible fish in backyard ponds. The phenomenon is not a new one. Herons and other

predators such as raccoons have been raiding farmyard ponds for years.

But the stakes have become higher as backyard ponds have become a hot trend in landscaping. Koi, which can grow to about 36 inches and live more than 25 years, are a popular item because of their color, tame nature, and their "fishy personalities," said Bob Passovoy, president of the Midwest Pond and Koi Society. La Grange resident Betsey Stiles said one of her koi – named Bob – rushes to the edge of the pond as soon as the garage door opens. It waits for her to walk by, then makes a sucking sound as it begs for food.

"My husband gets them to the point that he gets down on one knee and they don't get fed until they bring their heads out of the water and he strokes their head," Stiles said.

It is very distressing when a predator spears a koi. It's a "lot like having your dog run over," Passovey said. "All of a sudden there's a member of the family lying on the lawn with a hole through him."

In addition to more people owning koi, the heron population has experienced a modest increase, so more food is needed. Also, as development sprawls from Chicago, subdivisions may be nearing heron nesting colonies. During the nesting periods, which end in June, adult herons generally feed within 10 miles of their nests, putting them in easy striking distance of suburban ponds ripe with yummy possibilities. Also, herons may be becoming more accustomed to people and less shy about visiting back yards for a little gourmet dining.

Passovoy believes a deep pool with steep sides is the answer. Herons and raccoons like to prey on the fish from the shallows. so if the water is deepened, the koi should fare better.

TURKEY CROSSING

Bassett, Nebraska (Associated Press)

So many wild turkeys descend on this north-central Nebraska town every winter that officials have installed the state's first Turkey Crossing signs.

Living with the birds has become part of the daily routine in Bassett, a town of 740. The new signs warn motorists about the birds, which weigh up to 23 pounds, at all four entrances into town.

"They are kind of a traffic hazard," said resident Donna Wright, who lives on the regular turkey route. "Turkeys are scroungers," lifelong Bassett resident Kathy Maloun said.

No turkeys were available for comment about the new signs.

FERAL AND FREE-RANGING DOMESTIC CATS - DRAFT POSITION STATEMENT

TWS Council intends to consider and adopt a position statement on Feral and Free-ranging Domestic Cats at its March 2001 meeting. A position statement draft is available for review and comment in *THE WILDLIFER*, July-August 2000, p. 64.

Comments must be received by 15 January 2001 to be considered in any revision of this draft. Send comments to: Position Statement, The Wildlife Society, 5410 Grosvenor Lane, Suite 200, Bethesda, MD 20814-2197.

WOLF HANDLING & CHEMICAL IMMOBILIZATION FOR CAPTIVE WOLF MANAGERS AND RELATED PERSONNEL

**Presented by Wildlife Veterinary Resources Mark Johnson, DVM
January 18-20, 2001 California Wolf Center Julian, California**

Wildlife Veterinary Resources, Inc. (WVR) is dedicated to providing professional resources and field expertise for wildlife professionals. WVR is offering a course in wolf chemical immobilization, capture and handling. The course will be three days of classroom and outdoor labs, January 18-20, 2001 at the California Wolf Center, part of the Julian Center for Science and Education, a California non profit organization. A portion of the course proceeds will be donated to the California Wolf Center.

Course Focus and Materials: This three day course will focus on wolf capture and handling equipment and techniques for personnel involved with zoos, captive wolf facilities, captive breeding programs and animal control agencies. Course material and laboratories will also teach skills and applications for wild wolf field biologists and personnel. This unique course will address all aspects of capture and handling of captive wolves, including pen design, physical restraint, drugs and drug delivery systems for penned wolves, documentation of each chemical immobilization, and disaster & veterinary emergencies. The course will increase the ability of personnel to capture escaped wolves and will discuss practical approaches for the safe containment and potential evacuation of wolves due to human caused and natural disasters. Students will gain invaluable experience through extensive laboratory work and field practice with a full day of wolf handling and veterinary care and will strengthen the working relationship between wolf programs and their veterinarians.

Labs: A hands-on lab will be scheduled for each day of the course. Labs include practicing drug delivery systems; monitoring temperature, pulse, and respiration on dogs; wolf chemical immobilization; and wolf physical restraint. On day three, students will participate in the annual wolf veterinary check-up when (15-18) gray wolves at the Center are handled for yearly vaccination and examination. This wolf handling course will help participants with the following: - Legal responsibilities (documentation and storage) associated with chemical immobilization.

- Immobilizing drugs and delivery systems for captive animals.
- Preparing for and organizing planned and unplanned capture and handling events.
- Monitoring temperature/pulse/respiration - details in assessing animal health and anesthetic depth.
- Marking systems for identifying individuals - ear-tagging, tattoos, PIT tags.
- Blood and data collection - documentation of each animal that is handled.
- Veterinary emergencies - prevention and treatment.
- Disaster preparedness and evacuation models.

Course Logistics: This course is conducted at the California Wolf Center in Julian, California (San Diego County). It begins at 7:45am on Thursday January 18th and concludes at 5:00pm Saturday January 20th. Class will run each day 8am to 5pm. Limited motel accommodations are available in Julian. Details will be provided with registration. Professional Continuing Education Credit Each participant will receive a course booklet and Certificate of Training. Arrangements can be made for attending veterinarians and veterinary technicians to receive continuing education credits for state licensing. Contact Holly at WVR for information: information@gomontana.com.

Wolf Center Location: The California Wolf Center is located about 60miles east of San Diego. Out of town participants should fly into San Diego's Lindbergh Field. Registrants will receive (late fall) a detailed information package including specific directions to the Center, hotel accommodations. Airport to hotel transportation may be provided.

To Register: The 3-day course fee is \$350 (after December 1st: \$375) which includes seminar, course booklet, certificate of training and lunch each day. The course is limited to 25 participants, and you are encouraged to

register early. This course is available on a first come first served basis and is limited with priority given to captive and free-ranging wild animal professionals, animal health care professionals, keepers, animal facility managers, agency personnel, students in related fields of study and other related personnel. Refunds: Cancellation after December 1, 2000 - 75% Refund; after January 1st - 50% Refund; No refunds for no show or cancellations after January 15th. Reservations are only held after full payment is received. Please fill out the registration form and send it with the registration fee to: California Wolf Center PO Box 1389 Julian CA 92036 (PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO CALIFORNIA WOLF CENTER).

Wisconsin, was driving on Interstate 94 near Brookfield when a goose smashed into his windshield. The crash left Kresl showered with tiny specks of glass, but he suffered only a few scratches. A Waukesha County sheriff's deputy later found the goose on the side of the road, but it died as he took it to a wild animal rehabilitation center in Delafield.

(AP) John Kresl was on his way to buy a shotgun to hunt geese Tuesday (26Sep00) when he found his sport utility vehicle could do the job just as well. Kresl, of St. Francis,

WARNING !!

The end of the year is approaching. This means that your 2000 TWS membership, as well as membership to this Working Group, is also coming to an end. Now I know you do not want this to happen. Human/wildlife interactions are very complex and require participants to keep up with the latest products, projects, and exchange of information. This is a very active Working Group and is trying to keep pace with the informational challenges and research and management needs. We need, and look forward to, your continued support and influences. However, this can't happen without your renewing your membership. Therefore, this threat . .

. .

IF YOU DO NOT RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP, A NEAR-TO-LIFE SIZED COLOR PICTURE OF GARY WITMER WILL BE RUN IN THIS SPOT FOR THE ENTIRETY OF THE NEXT YEAR.

Nobody wants this, so please save us from this tragedy, and keep your place within TWS and this Working Group. You won't regret it!

P.S. Those who do not renew their membership will still receive at least 1 issue in 2001, so don't think by simply non-renewing you will avoid Witmer's picture. And yes, we know this is inhumane.

This threat is intended as a joke, and is used as shock value for those who may be considering letting their Working Group membership lapse. Gary's support of this Working Group has never been questioned and his contributions have been, and will continue to be, extremely welcomed.

INTERNET CENTER FOR WILDLIFE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT

Dallas Virchow is asking for your help on the wildlife damage website. He is in need of images of common wildlife species that caused damage, or examples of the damage itself. By visiting the site at <http://wildlifedamage.unl.edu> under the problems and solutions pages, you can see which species images are most needed. Pages showing specific damage and animal signs (tracks, droppings, chew marks, etc.) will also be created. If you would like to contribute to this effort, or just comment on the site and make suggestions, please contact Dallas at (402) 472-8961 or dvirchow@unl.edu.

WILDLIFE-RELATED ELECTION RESULTS

There were quite a few wildlife-related proposals voted on this past election day. This information was blatantly copied from an email Robert Schmidt posted to the WDMWG email list 9Nov00. Thank you, Robert!

ALASKA

Measure 1 – FAILED (36% to 64%), would have barred all citizen ballot initiatives relating to the protection of wildlife.

Measure 6 – PASSED (53% to 47%), will retain the prohibition of same-day airborne (“land and shoot”) hunting of wolves, which Alaska voters banned in 1996.

ARIZONA

Prop 102 – FAILED (38% to 62%), would have required a 2/3rds supermajority vote to approve any ballot initiative relating to the protection of wildlife.

MASSACHUSETTS

Question 3 – FAILED (49% to 51%), would have prohibited dog racing and meetings at which betting or wagering on dog racing occurs.

MONTANA

Initiative 143 – PASSED (52% to 48%), will impose a moratorium on new game farm licenses and will ban canned hunts.

NORTH DAKOTA

Question 1 – PASSED (77% to 23%), will create a new section of the North Dakota Constitution relating to the right to hunt, trap, and fish.

OREGON

Measure 97 – FAILED (39% to 61%), would have banned the use of steel-jawed leghold traps and other body-gripping traps for recreation and commerce in fur, and would have banned the use of Compound 1080 and sodium cyanide.

VIRGINIA

Question 2 – (PASSED (60% to 40%), will amend the Virginia Constitution to establish “a right to hunt, fish, and harvest game.”

WASHINGTON

Initiative 713 – PASSED (54% to 46%), will ban the use of steel-jawed leghold traps and other body-gripping traps for recreation and commerce in fur, and will ban the use of Compound 1080 and sodium cyanide.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Thanks to the following individuals for contributing to this issue: E. David Green, Robert Schmidt, Bob Timm, Dallas Virchow, and Gary Witmer.

SWANS VS. DUCKLINGS, WHO WINS?

Ashland, Oregon (AP) – A visit to the park has long been a wholesome activity for families. But two graceful swans at Lithia Park have been shocking visitors by killing and eating ducklings.

The most recent attack occurred last weekend (mid-September) when the swans cornered a duckling in a pond. Despite efforts by the mother duck and onlookers to intervene – and the screams of horrified children – one swan grabbed the duckling and killed it.

Eric Setterberg, caretaker for the swans, thinks they may feel crowded by all the ducks on the pond. Setterberg also wonders if their violent behavior might have something to do with their food. They don't seem to care for the pellets they're eating now. Setterberg plans to feed them Romaine lettuce on a more regular basis.

The swans have had their wings surgically cut to prevent their flying. They arrived in March after the city paid about \$1,500 for them.

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CHAIR (con't) . . .

- Bob Timm
<rmtimm@ucdavis.edu>

Our target is to hold the next conference in spring 2003, possibly in Arkansas or Missouri. While our working group officers and board members will likely play key roles in conference planning and organization, we also need help from our general membership in whatever area you might like to serve. Some categories of organizational needs include the following: program planning; registration; continuing education credits; commercial and educational displays and exhibits; proceedings editing and publication; publicity; field trip; and local and site arrangements. If you're interested in being active in planning or assisting with the upcoming conference in any of these aspects, please contact me! Volunteers are needed and appreciated.

In closing, I want to pay tribute to an individual who has perhaps done more than any other person to elevate the status of wildlife damage management within the wildlife profession: Jim Miller. This month, Jim officially retires after serving for some 21 years as National Program Leader – Fish & Wildlife for USDA Cooperative Extension in Washington, DC. Jim also served as President of TWS during 1999. Throughout Jim's time on the national TWS Board, he has been highly effective in educating our wildlife colleagues about the professionalism within our sub-discipline of wildlife damage management. Those of you who have been in this profession for awhile will recognize the major shifts in attitude toward wildlife damage that have occurred in a relatively short time! Thankfully, Jim will remain professionally active, as he has accepted a position as Extension Wildlife Specialist at Mississippi State University beginning in March 2001.

Thanks, Jim, for all you've done for our working group and for our profession.

**ANNOUNCING THE
AVAILABILITY
OF A NEW PUBLICATION ON
MANAGING WHITE-TAILED
DEER
IN SUBURBAN
ENVIRONMENTS**

(AP) – Rabies killed five people in the United States this year in the first such deaths reported since 1998, the Government said Thursday (14Dec00).

All but one of the deaths occurred after the person was bitten by a bat, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta reported. The deaths took place in California, Georgia, Minnesota, New York, and Wisconsin.

In many areas of the United States and Canada, populations of white-tailed deer have readily adapted to suburban landscapes. Because of their large body size and their mobility, suburban-living deer have become one of the primary sources of human/wildlife conflicts by over browsing landscape plants and collisions with autos.

A new 52-page guide, *Managing White-tailed Deer in Suburban Environments*, provides information on the biology of the white-tailed deer and discusses methods for reducing deer-related problems. Comprehensive strategies are outlined. Fencing and repellents are covered, as well as options for lowering deer populations and experimental techniques for deer fertility.

Designed to help people across North America, in urban, suburban and rural areas, make choices that affect their livelihood, health and safety. Authored by Anthony DeNicola, White Buffalo, Inc., Kurt VerCauteren, USDA NWRC, Paul Curtis, Department of Natural Resources, Cornell University, and Scott Hygnstrom, School of Natural Resource Sciences, University of Nebraska, the manual is the result of collaboration by Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Northeast Deer Technical Committee, and The Wildlife Society, Wildlife Damage Management Working Group. This manual complements the video *Suburban Deer Management: Voices, Views, Visions*.

These educational resources are available from the Cornell University Media and Technology Services Resource Center, 7 BTP, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850, (607) 255-5830, fax (607) 255-9873. The publication (# 147IB245) and video (# 147VSDM) are \$10.00 and \$19.95, respectively, which includes S&H. Quantity discounts are available. Costs are payable by purchase orders, Mastercard and Visa; checks should be payable to Cornell University.

**5 IN US DIED OF RABIES
THIS YEAR**

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Annual basic membership dues are \$56.00 of which 15% pays for the bimonthly newsletter, *The Wildlifer*, which is received by all members. Dues for full-time students are \$28.00. TWS accepts U.S. dollars drawn on a U.S. bank only or by credit card.

WITH YOUR PAID MEMBERSHIP you may subscribe to the *Wildlife Society Bulletin* for an additional \$23.00. The *Journal of Wildlife Management with Wildlife Monographs* for an additional \$26.00, or ALL publications for an additional \$48.00. Members may also join a section, chapter, and/or working groups.

WORKING GROUP DUES (\$5.00 each)

- 01 - Wildlife Planning & Administration
- 02 - Wildlife Economics
- 03 - Biological Diversity
- 04 - Biometrics
- 05 - College and University Wildlife Education
- 07 - GIS, Remote Sensing, & Telemetry

- 11 - Sustainable Use of Ecosystem Resources
- 12 - Wildlife Damage Management
- 13 - Wildlife Toxicology (\$7.00)
- 14 - Urban Wildlife
- 16 - International Wildlife
- 17 - Public Conservation Education &

Extension

- 08 - Restoration
- 09 - Native Peoples' Wildlife Management

- 18 - Local Governance

