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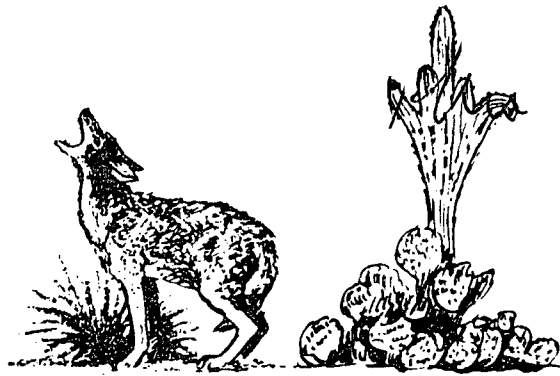


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THE PROBE



National Animal Damage Control Association

NO. 28

January, 1983

BARE FACTS

An experienced woodsman doesn't believe in socializing with bears. Only tourists and other part-time woodsmen like to get close to bears so they can take their pictures. The NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION reports that bear behavior in the National Parks is changing because bears are learning to associate man with food. They suggest that if you are going to feed the bears do it in a hurry and then get the hell out of there.

Charley Dickey (*Wildlife Views, Arizona Game & Fish Dept., Nov. 1982*) wrote a humorous article about his experiences. While fishing in a National Park he felt the fish jumping around in his creel more violently than their weight justified and reached around to slap the creel only to hit the wet nose of a "gaunt sow bear". Priding himself on his ability to make quick decisions and a charitable attitude towards wildlife and also being afraid the bear might get impatient trying to undo the catch on the creel, he quickly fished the trout out and tossed them to the bear who caught them one by one like a trained seal. As the last trout disappeared, Charley realized he had a problem as the bear still looked hungry. Making another quick decision, he decided the bear could fish that creek and he would move on to another one some four ridges away. He admitted she was probably only an old garbage can bear, but her teeth and claws were as long as any non-garbage can bear he had ever seen.

Charley then went on to cite some instructions from NWF on what your behavior should be when socializing with grizzlies. As I can't do it as well as Charley, I'll let him tell you himself:

"The Federation has a list of things to do if you meet a grizzly on a trail and I suppose it also applies to black bears. First of all, you shouldn't panic. That's fine, but the Federation doesn't tell you how not to panic. 'If the bear doesn't charge you, speak to it in firm even tones and back away.' Personally, I'd like more instructions than that! What specifically does one say to a 1,500-pound grizzly or 400-pound blackie? I would certainly start off by calling him 'Sir'.

'Never run. Climb a tree if possible.' Again, the instructions seem incomplete. Why isn't it permissible to run up a tall tree?

'If the grizzly charges, shout (don't scream) at it'. I wonder how a few squeaky promises might work.

'If you are attacked, try to lie face down on the ground or curl up with your hands clasped behind your neck. Play dead. Don't struggle or cry out.' That sounds like an unrealistic set of instructions to me, a set written by someone in Washington who never saw a bear. I could have written the complete instructions in two words - - 'Faint quickly!'

'If you are lucky,' the Federation says, 'you will convince the grizzly you're not a threat.' Why not tell him that while you're shouting at him? And what's wrong with waving a white handkerchief?" - *Thanks to Don Spencer.*

Money can't buy love, health, or even what it did last year.

MONEY IS NO OBJECT - - if it goes for duck production.

Dick Wetzel (Hudson, WI) sent me a copy of a rather revealing research project [Lokemoen, et al, *Electric fences to reduce mammalian predation on waterfowl nests, Wildl. Soc. Bull. 10:318-323 (1982)*]. This brags about the effect electric fencing had on reducing mammalian predation on waterfowl refuges in North Dakota and Minnesota (do you mean to say those appealing little animals like raccoons would eat those cute little ducks?) at an extra cost of only 65¢ in ND and 87¢ in MN per duck.

Hidden away in the paper is the admission these costs relate only to fence construction costs and not the costs of operation and management. For example, management expenses alone in Minnesota (not counting the acquisition costs) on Federal Wetland Production areas divided by the number of ducks produced on these lands averages over \$130 per duck per year. (And the USFWS hierarchy gripes about the cost of killing one coyote!!!) The total figures are so embarrassing, no one wants to give out the annual cost of the ducks produced per unit for fear of being a prime candidate for Senator Proximire's "Golden Fleece" award.

The income tax is the government's continuing program to handicap the hired.

SO, WHAT ELSE IS NEW ?

Dick Wetzel (Hudson, WI) sent YE ED another paper [Gene Stout, *Effects of coyote reduction on white-tailed deer productivity on Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Wildl. Soc. Bull. 10:329-332 (1982)*]. This study showed that the first summer following reduction of coyotes, the fawn/doe ratio increased 174%. Prior to the study in 1976, the average fawn/doe ratio had been 0.37 fawns per doe. At the end of the study, the fawn production was 0.94, an overall increase of 154%. Predator control is of no value in game management! Who sez?

My wife is much younger than I am - - recently.

THE PILL ISN'T FOR EVERYBODY

Again thanks to Dick Wetzel we got another paper [Stephan Allen, *Bait consumption and diethylstilbesterol influence on North Dakota red fox reproductive performance, Wildl. Soc. Bull. 10:370-373 (1982)*]. There has been considerable pressure to develop anti-fertility protocols for controlling predator populations by putting them on the "pill". This study on red fox shows good acceptance of bait containing a single 50-mg tablet of

DES. In the field there was little indication of any changes in reproductive performance of wild foxes as compared with captive foxes. There is the possibility the pellet form may pass unassimilated through the digestive track. So it looks like back to the drawing board for those who want to fool Mother Nature.

If ignorance is bliss, why aren't you smiling ?

CALIFORNIA VOTERS ON GUN CONTROL

The anti-gun element (which includes most of the anti-ADC groups too) were bragging about their 2:1 margin going into the recent California election on Proposition 15 which would ban handguns. They stated 10% of the American electorate were voting on gun control and the message would not be lost on the politicians in Washington. People could now vote their "consciences". The media lapped it up with editorial after editorial coming out in favor of the bill.

That all changed on November 2 when Proposition 15 went down by that same 2:1 margin. The "unbiased media" afterwards reported that California voters were "... conned or panicked out of (their) own best democratic impulse..." by a well-organized media blitz. - - *National Rifle Assoc. News Release, 30 November 1982.*

"Crack" is a noise made by a Chinese camera.

THE GRASS IS GREENER - - -

When YE ED was in Australia/New Zealand a few years back, the ADC people there were interested in American public attitudes towards ADC. While those countries seemed to be a heaven for this old USFWS ADC type as they had money, personnel, research, and little legal opposition, the people there felt the sentiment would follow the protectionist trends of both Great Britain and the U.S.A. However, there is still some hope for them according to a recent report (*Annual Report of Agricultural Protection Board of Western Australia for 1982*). They are still doing the naughty things I wish we could get away with. Nearly 56,000 feral donkeys (shades of Wild Horse Annie !) were destroyed during 545 hours of helicopter shooting, plus some 10,000 taken on the ground, and another 8,000 taken by pet meat hunters. Some 500 donkeys were "mustered" (*No, dummy, that's Australian for round up. Mustard is put on when you eat them.*) and taken to Derby for slaughter. This was felt impractical except for stations near the abattoir. At least they didn't have to put them up for adoption.

The same decisive treatment was meted feral pigs and goats and they even indulged in some poisoning for the pigs ! Their ADC activities against birds were even more mouth-watering. Starlings and house sparrows have not become a problem in Western Australia and they want to keep it that way. Trapping with decoy birds, water baits, netting, shooting in caves and other refuges, and poisoning on microwave towers are methods used to keep these pests from moving into this portion of Australia. They reported only 52 sparrows were shot this year compared with 400 last year. Isolated invasions of a few birds brought in on ships have been diligently hunted down.

They still have their problems with dingos, feral dogs, rabbits, parrots, emus, kangaroos, opossums, and a horde of foreigners like Asian silvereyes (a vireo-like

bird imported from the Orient who is a serious predator on fruit), Indian palm squirrels, crows, etc., but it is a most interesting part of the globe for an ADC type.

Don't try to think for me. It's hard enough to explain my own mistakes.

WHAT HARM CAN A LITTLE STARVATION DO ?

While YE ED admits that in his own case such action might be a good thing, he has to disagree violently with FRIENDS OF ANIMALS (FA) who are interfering with the New York Department of Environmental Conservation's plan to remove excess deer from Harriman Park. The deer herd on this park land is estimated at 3,350 animals which figures out to 3.3 acres per deer. The Park Commission wants to reduce this herd to half that number as signs of overbrowsing are evident everywhere in the park. And, horrors, they want to do this by hunting.

The protectionists groups are blocking this "...proliferation of terror, broken bones, torn flesh, bloodshed, death and ecological destruction." An FA spokesman claims starvation is nature's way of handling over-population and that starving to death is not really very painful. These "fat cats" ought to try it ! They also overlook the fact that if the herds are allowed to continue to increase they will really witness "ecological destruction". It is much more difficult to build a range back after overbrowsing than it is to build up a deer herd. The weights of the deer taken in the disrupted hunt were little more than half of what should be expected of yearling bucks in New York State - - dressing out at only 67 pounds (*we have jackrabbits bigger than that in New Mexico*). Biologists claim poor nutrition is responsible not only for winter kills but is affecting reproductive rates and fawn survival. As they're so good at using the courts why don't the protectionists get a law passed making it illegal for deer to starve to death ? - - *Nat. Rifle Assoc. Repts. from Washington, 9:20:3 (1982)*.

Think small. Big ideas upset people.

SEEN ANY BLACK-FOOTED FERRETS LATELY ?

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish is conducting a review of the historical circumstances of the black-footed ferret's presence in New Mexico, Arizona, and trans-Pecos Texas. They wish to contact persons who may have worked in those areas especially in the 1920's and through the 1940's in prairie dog and predator control. Both sightings and negative data is needed. Contact John P. Hubbard, NM Dept. Game & Fish, Santa Fe, NM 87503.

Experience is what you have plenty of when you're too old to get the job.

STOP THAT TRAPPING

Congressman Sidney R. Yates (D-IL) who we've mentioned before as no friend to ADC intends to introduce an ammendment to the USDI appropriations bill which would ban all trapping in National Parks unless the legislation creating the park specifically stated trapping would be permitted. He is the one who ruined the chances for the Smithsonian to reduce the whitetail deer problem on the Front Royal preserve. This was supposed to

be brought up during the lame duck session so I'm not sure of its status.

At present, trapping is permitted on many National Park Lands where it is not inconsistent with multiple use programs. These uses include, hunting, fishing, and trapping. If the last is prohibited, trappers would be discriminated against by "method of take". So even if you never trap on National Park Lands, you still should have the right. We don't know what the new makeup of Congress is as yet. Found out we were not alone as our local Congressman's office said they didn't have the new roster and didn't expect it for a couple of months. But then what could you expect from a group who isn't even sure of the 1982 budget ?

Start everyday with a smile - - and get it over with.

UNEMPLOYMENT

One factor the preservationists tend to overlook is the economic aspects of trapping, but then they believe animals have more right to health and happiness than people. Fur exports from the U.S.A. exceeded \$500,000,000 last year. Take this amount and divide it by \$6,968 [$\3.35 (minimum wage which a trapper would be lucky to get) x 2080 hours (normal work year) = \$6,968]. This adds up to 71,757 full time jobs. All of these jobs would be lost if trapping was outlawed. Of course, unemployment of the masses is of no concern to those with enough bread to feed an overweight Cleveland Amory. - - *The Trapper, Oct. 1982.*

Nostalgia ain't what it usta be.

RAT POISON FOR GOPHERS

The Environmental Protection Agency has issued an experimental permit to ICI Americas to try brodifacoum (TALONtm) on pocket gophers on some two hundred acres in Minnesota. We'll try to keep you posted on the results. - - *Thanks to Don Spencer.*

The best substitute for experience is to be 16.

WRITE YOUR CONGRESSMAN

This is the type of opposition we had on the 1080 hearings - - illogical as hell but many of them. With politicians numbers are the only things that count:

"Dear Judge Nissen,

Today I learned of your recommendation to renew the use of the lethal, indiscriminate killer - Compound 1080. Today I made my decision to become a vegetarian. Because of your abominable announcement at least my decision will benefit some animals.

It is not difficult to find alternative sources for meat and their by-products and more Americans are willing to sacrifice some things in order to make room for the vanishing wildlife in our country. If the livestock industry cannot use alternative methods of predator control - - and there are many, many safe ways, then I cannot sympathize with their over exaggerated complaints.

Sincerely, Mrs. Juanita Taylor, 431 W. Price St., Philadelphia, PA 19144.

SOLID STATE TECHNOLOGY COMES TO FISHING

SOME REGARD ANGLING AS AN EXACT SCIENCE

YE ED attended an interesting conference earlier this month where this cartoon didn't seem so far fetched after all. A couple of New Mexico fisherman (not all our water is underground) demonstrated some solid state technology applied to the art of fishing that had been developed locally. This is a little gray box about the size of portable pocket radio with a retractable antenna. Battery operated, it gives barometric pressure, altitude, and temperature right for the spot you're at on a digital readout by just twisting a knob.

Bob Lake, an avid fisherman with the enviable job of teaching fishing at the University of New Mexico, says this was developed to test the theory that barometric pressure influences fishing success. He claims that when the barometer is falling, you might as well pull your lines out of the water and do some serious beer drinking. But when there is a turn around and the barometer starts to rise, you'd better start casting like mad and stand back so the fish fall in the boat.

This isn't as far out as it sounds. We know barometric pressure changes affect living things, so for the serious fisherman, short range weather forecasting, and behavioral wildlife researchers, this little gadget might be worth investigating. Called the "Bat 15", it isn't cheap (\$129.95), but it has potential for a number of outdoor uses. Write MNM Products, Inc., Box 9091, Albuquerque, NM 87119 for further details.

Never invest in anything that eats or needs repainting.

PERSONNEL CHANGES

Louis Huffman (USFWS, North Platte, NE) reports that *Lorraine Grant*, long time secretary for ADC in South Dakota, retired this past October and had a nice retirement party in Pierre. *Clarence Grant*, Lorraine's husband is retiring December 17, 1982. A retirement "roast" is planned for him on the 16th (*sorry the letter got here too late*). Clarence was a DFA in the USFWS ADC program for 17 years, becoming a trapper for the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish & Parks when that Department took over the ADC program in 1974.

Thanks for the idea. I'll see that I get all the credit.

LETTERS TO YE ED

Charley Andresen (Santa Rosa, CA) who worked in the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioners office writes: "I had to retire abruptly in July when doctors found cancer

in my sternum. I feel pretty good now and get good reports from the doctors. After 27 years, I miss the ranchers and the coastal hills. Remember the Raven days? Some fun. The ravens have not killed lambs too heavily the last few years. That area is still infested with hippie earth-rangers and the coyotes also have been moving in... we had some excitement a few months ago with a bear...only 35 crow miles from the kook capital of the world. A pork sausage and honey bait was his undoing...it looked like a circus around here for a short while after the rancher called the press, TV, etc." Chuck included the front page story from the local *PRESS DEMOCRAT* (10 Oct. 82). The bear killed a couple of calves before Sonoma County trapper Jim O'Brien caught it in a foot snare. Jim reported the bear was half asleep, but held securely by the left front paw. However, Jim's chances of pictures were gone as the bear became unglued when the trapper came up and Jim had to shoot him. (*Reminds me of a time in Colorado. I got mad at the late Lloyd Anderson when he decided I'd wasted enough film on a snared bear and shot him. When we went to skin the bear, we found most of the strands of cable wire had broken in one spot. If they'd let me take all the pictures I wanted to the bear might have been writing this story instead of me*) - - Charley, you have our prayers for a complete recovery.

Fred Carpenter (Atascadero, CA) sent in an article from the Paso Robles *COUNTRY NEWS* (22-28 Dec. 82) describing the antics of our old friend, Alice Herrington, President of FRIENDS OF ANIMALS (FA). She's offering bumper stickers - - *HELP CONSERVE HUNTERS - HARVEST ONE TODAY*. According to Herrington, "The driving public should become aware that deer charging across the road in front of cars are only trying to escape a hunter and his bullets. Our 'guesstimate' is that a car's chances of hitting a large animal during hunting season are about 10,000% than in the spring and summer [*'guesstimates' are all these people ever deal in. If Ms Herrington ever looked at the real statistics she would find most accidents occur at night when deer are not being hunted*]...if you point a gun at a hunter and tell him to get back to his own territory, he'll run home and hide in the closet - and that's real conservation, of animals and car drivers."

In his letter, Fred says, "Surely not all persons who contribute to this organization are this radical and I feel they may have made a mistake in publishing this...Alice Herrington lives in my home town of Atascadero and this gives me some insight into who the lady might be who called me on the phone sometime ago and threatened to shoot me in the back of the head." - - *what a sweet lady!*

Don Donahoo (Rexburg, ID) says, "...heard the first growl by a Bingham County farmer that the jackrabbits are eating him up, more should follow soon. I will wager that these farmers won't back off and let the varmints have their way - with or without the antis. The judge did a nice job last year of placating both sides, but he has retired. No telling what a new court case would do...high water delayed the fishing, but I still managed to kill a bunch of nice cutthroat trout."

RD Pink Madsen (Florence, AZ) writes, "I'm afraid that all concerned have succumbed to the fallacy that if coyote-sheep problems are resolved (by repellents on sheep) then there would not be a coyote problem. In other words - - if coyotes are trained not to eat sheep, the result will be many more coyotes with added competition for food and that means the opportunist coyote will increase its pressure on poultry, wild birds, deer, antelope, calves, little kids, and a lot of other things. The other day a coyote just walked across the road in front of me, just a few hundred yards from my house. It may tempt me back into "main street trapping."

Monte Dodson (Cookson, OK) wrote, "Sure glad I went to see John Pickens before he left us. He took a wealth of coyote knowledge with him - - somuch of it goes that way. Still think you ought to write some kind of a book while you're still around - - if nothing else - on 'how to make your supervisor break out in a cold sweat'. [*When you goof up some people never let you forget it.*] The use of tranquilizer tabs ought to be pursued as opposition to foot hold trap damage. After all, the major injury is the animal fighting the trap. You don't see such when domestic dogs and cats are caught. They just lay down and give up.

The fur market and trapping surge is waning. Heard that Montgomery had filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy and Woodstream has bought out Northwoods. History seems to be repeating itself. During the last depression Oneida (Animal Trap Co.) bought out Gibbs, Triumph, and Diamond...Am planning on attending the National Trappers Conference in Hutchinson, Kansas next summer."

Free advice is usually worth ten times the price.

LET'S TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT PREDATION

This is the title of a paper given by Dr. Bart O'Gara (Montana Coop. Wildl. Research Unit at the North American wildlife & natural resource conference, Portland, OR last year). It discusses the adversary positions taken by environmental groups and livestock producers over predator damage control. While the rancher suffers emotional trauma as well as financial loss when his livestock is killed, the environmentalist having no direct interest in livestock is frustrated in seeing tax dollars spent in inhumane treatment of interesting wildlife. Even though all levels of opinion exist on both sides, they become more polarized as the rhetoric becomes more emotional.

At the beginning of this century, a rural population tried to kill predatory animals as they viewed them as direct competitors. Then in the 1930's predators were found to play a valuable role in wildlife communities so predator control as a game management technique was reduced. The urbanization of America during the depression and World War II removed many people from direct contact with livestock production. These people, including biologists, transferred the idea that predator/wildlife interactions were the same as predator/livestock interactions. Thus predation was good. Ten-eighty was against this ethic so it was banned in 1972 further polarizing the two opposing points of view. The livestock interests felt they were deprived of their best weapon in reducing predation losses. The environmentalists claimed the producers were exaggerating their claims, blaming all their own mismanagement losses on predators.

As O'Gara points out, both groups are hurt by the lack of understanding and false, or misused, information. They should be working together for an improved land ethic to the advantage of both. He feels these are basic disagreements:

Stockmen exaggerate predator problems

This thesis is exemplified by good ol' Cleveland Amory who is quoted as saying, "...any man who would swear under oath that he had lost three hundred sheep or goats to coyotes in one year (I want to ask)...how many sets of books he keeps. I presume, like some ranchers, he keeps one for himself and another for the coyotes." The Cain report had the same attitude about rancher surveys showing 5% predator losses. Subsequent field studies showed that documented minimum losses ranged from 3.36 to 5.8%. So O'Gara warns about implying all ranchers are liars.

Ranchers believe every animal fed on is a kill

While individuals vary in their ability to judge the nature of a kill, O'Gara by his own field studies concluded that hard to recognize instances of predation and the small likelihood of finding lambs fed upon but not killed by predators often outweighed the instances where ranchers identified carrion feeding as predation.

Predators kill only the sick and weak

While the scientific literature is clear on the limitations and exceptions to this "sick-and-weak" syndrome, any semblance of a balanced viewpoint disappears when the popular media becomes involved.

Ranchers with predator problems are poor managers

O'Gara states predators are unpredictable due to individual preferences, density of buffer species, and other things that are not even suspected. He cites in his experience where one rancher suffered heavy losses and a neighbor did not, even though their operations are similar.

ADC is inefficient and ineffective

The ranchers look upon the ADC field force of the USFWS as the only bureaucrats attempting to help them in this problem. It is not easy to judge the effectiveness of a field operation, but studies indicated ranchers under ADC operations had predator losses to ewes of 0.2 - 1.6% and lambs of 2.9 - 3.2%. Predator losses on ranches without ADC ranged from 0-8.4% on ewes and 12.1 - 29.3% on lambs. While he warns that these figures should not be extrapolated as the overall effectiveness of ADC, they certainly indicate ADC is not as worthless as its opponents claim.

Compound 1080 is the worst poison known

He points out the myths that have been perpetrated by such as Amory (again?). "(1080)...is a poison so lethal that there is no known antidote. It is chain reacting - - thus, when a meadow mouse eats it and is in turn eaten by a larger animal who is in turn eaten by a coyote who is in turn eaten by a mountain lion - - well 1080 will have poisoned them all." O'Gara says the facts about 1080 should be known to both sides. The case for its reinstatement should be decided on reason and fact and not on emotion and hearsay.

In conclusion, O'Gara pleads resource managers, biologists, and environmentalists to realize their alienation of livestock producers hampers better land management objectives for both groups. They need each other, but stockmen will refuse to cooperate with groups they feel have accused them of everything from ignorance to fraud. Peer support will encourage illegal activities that will be more damaging to predators and less selective to other wildlife than legal control programs. The credibility of resource interests in general is eroded when ridiculous statements or insinuations concerning predators and livestock surface. - - *Thanks to RD Pink Madsen.*

Please lower your voice. What you say is going over my head.

THIS PUBLICATION IS INTENDED AS AN INFORMAL NEWSLETTER TO MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS OF NADCA. IT IS NOT AN OFFICIAL DECLARATION OF NADCA POLICY OR CONSENSUS IN ALL INSTANCES.

YE ED - *William D. Fitzwater*

Have lots more, but am running off at the mouth as usual. Anyway the DIRECTORY is going to make this mailing heavy enough. The DIRECTORY includes all paid-up members through 13 January 1983. I'm not a typist so by the time I finished this task I was too sick of it to bother to check for errors so you can find your own and let me know. Also I want to get this in the mail so I can go down to Miami next week for a cruise through the Florida cays in my son's boat.

As I hope we get lots more late enrollees I will probably have to redo this list later. I hope to get #29 earlier in February as I was holding this up waiting for the late ones. As usual, I would appreciate your comments concerning this newsletter as well as more grist for the mill.

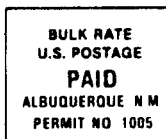
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