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Damage Control Association

Wildlife Damage Management, Internet Center for

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The NADCA Probe, Issue 225

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Beaver Management— Nevada 1942-1943

C.R. "Pink" Madsen, Wildlife Biologist

Editor's note: Pink Madsen received a B.S. degree in Wildlife Management from Utah State University in 1937. His more than 30 year career as a wildlife biologist started with the USFW Service, Predator and Rodent Control Program. Pink retired as the USDA/APHIS ADC, State Director in Oklahoma, but he also served as State Director in Georgia, Florida, and Colorado along with interim overseas assignments as a vertebrate pest advisor for the U.S. State Department. Pink sent this article to Mike Conover and to me for inclusion in the PROBE. I did some minor editing and tried to shorten the article, however, as hard as I tried, there's just a lot of interesting information in the article that shouldn't be omitted. Therefore, I choose to present the article in two parts. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did.

PART 1

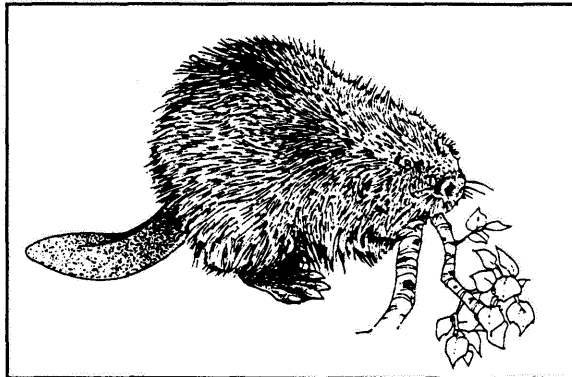
There are some nagging reasons why this report is being presented after so many years. Some interest by the Nevada Game and Fish Department has encouraged me to try to put together some notes concerning the live trapping and transplanting of beaver just prior to World War II.

At the time of this work, beaver were causing considerable damage in the northeast corner of Nevada. They were flooding out roads and washing out bridges which slowed down and often completely stopped travel in the area. The most serious damage was the flooding of irrigation systems and stopping the growing and harvesting of the grass hay crops that nearly every rancher relied on for winter feed for his livestock — and to help pay the mortgage.

The leadership of the Federal Predator and Rodent Control Program, the Nevada Livestock Growers, and Nevada sportsmen were all in favor of managing this beaver problem. Mr. Hammond G. Hansen, Nevada State Supervisor for the Fed-

eral Predator and Rodent Program, met with Nevada state officials to draw up an agreement for the Predator and Rodent Control Program to take over the beaver problem for one year. The agreement included a provision for prime beaver pelts to be turned over to the state and sold. The proceeds from these fur sales was to be used to initiate a Nevada Game and Fish Department. The agreement was approved by state legislative leaders who promised that they would provide a continuing appropriation to support the new department.

The agreement called for the Predator and Rodent Program to live trap and transplant as many of the beaver they could during the summer (about August to early October). As the pelts became prime during the winter, we would trap and pelt as many of the remaining beaver as we could. These pelts would then be sold and the funds turned over to the state for the initiation of the Nevada Game and Fish Department. Prior to this time, each county of the state would establish their



own rules and regulations for hunting, fishing, and trapping. I can't remember the exact amount but it may have been around \$6500 that was the total of all the fur sales. At any rate, it seemed like a lot of money at the time. This was really a gift to the State of Nevada and to her sportsmen. A gift seldom credited to the Predator and Rodent Control Program.

I was working for the Predator and Rodent Control Program and headquartered at Elko, Nevada, the center of the worst of the beaver problems. I was assigned as the supervisor of the beaver project. Since none of the trappers, including me, had any experience trapping beaver, the first order of business was to obtain the ser-

Continued on page 6, Col. 1

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

February 7-9, 2003 - 9th Annual Wildlife Control Instructional Seminar, Imperial Palace Hotel. Las Vegas, NV. Presented by Wildlife Control Technology Magazine and sponsored by the National Wildlife Control Operators Association. Call 815-286-3039 and see <http://www.wctech.com/>

March 11-15, 2003 - The National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association 2003 Symposium, Newport Marriott Hotel, Newport, R.I. Contact 320-259-4086

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EVER WONDER?

If I think an animal may have been poisoned or exposed to a toxin, is there a source of information—a non-human animal poison control center?

Yes, the National Animal Poison Control Center (NAPCC.) NAPCC is a non-profit service of the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Illinois. The 24-hour hotline - phone 800/548-2423 - is staffed by licensed veterinarians and board-certified veterinary toxicologists. There is a per call charge of \$35.

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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.



**PLEASE MAKE NOTE THAT THE
"CRITTER CONTROL HANDBOOK"
by Dan Hershey and Voyager Press
IS IN NO WAY AFFILIATED
CRITTER CONTROL, INC.®
Kevin Clark, President
Critter Control, Inc.**

Book Review: by Stephen Vantassel, Wildlife Damage Control, Springfield, Massachusetts (<http://www.wildlifedamagecontrol.com>)

"The Critter Control Handbook: Pro Secrets for Stopping Sneaky Squirrels & Other Crafty Critters in Their Tracks" by Dan "The Critter Man" Hershey. Voyageur press, 202. Pp. 1-176 softcover with B&W photographs.

Dan Hershey is a nuisance trapper located in New York who has been in the animal damage control business for over 20 years. The book contains animal damage control techniques and advice for 20 common species, including bats, beavers, deer, voles, and woodpeckers. The book, as the press release suggests, is clearly written for homeowners and not the professional animal damage control industry. You need to know this because I believe books should be evaluated against what they intended to accomplish for their intended audience. This will be an important point given the controversy surrounding this book. However, I will get to that later.

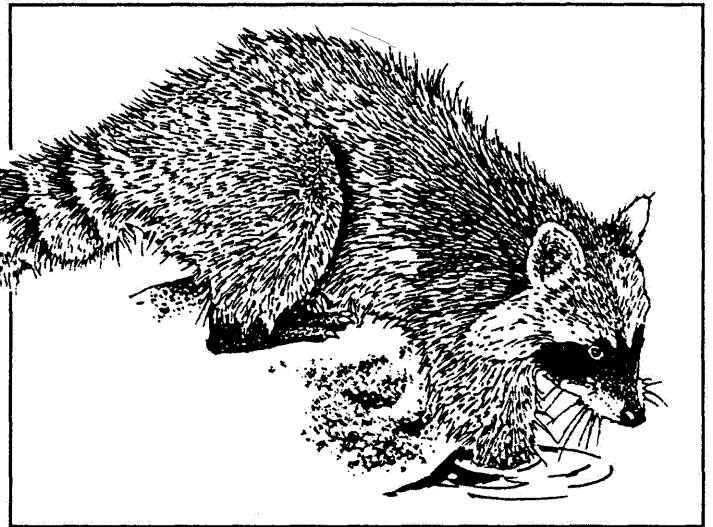
The opening chapter starts with general ideas for identifying the pest animal. Tips include, determining the animal's size, droppings, sounds, smells etc. as clues for identifying the animal. Chapter 2 moves to the important question, "Should the homeowner hire a contractor or do the control himself?" Mr. Hershey provides some important warnings

Chapters 3-4 cover deterrents and repellents respectively. I liked the terms and how he used them. Deterrents, for Mr. Hershey, refer to barrier protections such as fencing or hole closures. Repellents, on the other hand, refer to chemicals and effigies that seek to make the animal decide to move on as opposed to forcing them to move on through physical means.

for either choice. He counsels homeowners to consider the risks and responsibilities for controlling animals on their own. He appropriately mentions the dangers of contracting a disease and breaking wildlife laws. Chapters 3-4 cover deterrents and repellents respectively. I liked the terms and how he used them. Deterrents, for Mr. Hershey, refer to barrier protections such as fencing or hole closures. Repellents, on the other hand, refer to chemicals and effigies that seek to make the animal decide to move on as opposed to forcing

them to move on through physical means. He provides a table that is several pages long briefly listing chemical, mechanical and natural repellent options for various species that could be very helpful for people.

Chapters 5-6 cover in general terms nonlethal and lethal control techniques. Nonlethal techniques discussed include cage traps, footholds, snare poles and glue boards. He suggested a rather interesting technique with a conibear.



Conibears are normally understood as a lethal trap. However, Mr. Hershey has a technique that uses a conibear as a "live capture" device. Professionals may be interested in taking a look at the viability of this technique. Lethal control discusses the use of glue boards, snap traps, gas bombs, conibears, poisons and hunting. The information on snap traps is excellent. More homeowners would have better mouse control by following his suggestions.

There is an appropriate chapter on wildlife diseases as it will give homeowners useful fear which will engender caution. In no way should one consider this chapter be a thorough one. It is more of a snap shot as it only covers mange,

◆◆◆ Continued on page 5, column 1

The editor of **The PROBE** thanks contributors to this issue: Stephen Vantassel and C.R. Madsen.

U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance Launches Assault on Animal Rights Movement

The U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance is preparing to launch two nationwide legislative campaigns that may prove to be the largest steps yet taken to bring about the ultimate defeat of the animal rights movement.

The Alliance will work on two fronts to defeat the anti's. First, it will work with key legislators to introduce model bills to help states prosecute animal rights terrorists and organizations. The Alliance will also campaign for model legislation that will outlaw unproven birth control methods for wildlife.

Fighting Animal Rights Terrorism - The U.S.
Sportsmen's Alliance prepared The Animal and Ecological Terrorism Act, draft legislation to combat animal rights terrorism, and is promoting the bill to legislators in all 50 states.

The model bill officially recognizes animal and eco-terrorism as a form of domestic terrorism; increases penalties for persons participating in politically motivated acts of animal or eco-terrorism and creates specific penalties for those who encourage, assist or finance these acts of terrorism.

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a bipartisan membership association for conservative state lawmakers, has agreed to review the bill for endorsement. The draft legislation was recently presented before (ALEC) Criminal Justice Task Force and the Homeland Security Working Group.

The U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance is working with key legislators in Mississippi, New York, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin to have the bill introduced in 2003. The Alliance will initiate a campaign to rally the support of sportsmen and other groups that are affected by animal rights terrorism to back the legislation.

Animal Birth Control - A Dangerous Threat - Anti-hunters continue to pressure local lawmakers to permit birth control as a wildlife management tool. The U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance is leading the fight against the anti-hunting threat.

None of the drugs used in birth control projects on wildlife are approved for human consumption by the FDA or the USDA, despite the fact that venison is the most popular game food. Whether the drugs are safe for the deer or other wildlife is another concern. Research by Rutgers University and other institutions shows that birth control methods are not effective on free-ranging animals and could be detrimental to wildlife.

Over the next year, the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance will work with state wildlife agencies, key legislators and professional lobbyists to introduce model legislation that requires these health concerns be addressed before permits for future projects can be issued.

Sponsors in Ohio and West Virginia are poised to introduce the bill in their states. The Alliance is also working to line-up sponsors in Michigan and Pennsylvania.

Source - US Sportsmen's Alliance and www.ussportsmen.org

Wildlife Damage Management in the News

Rodent Rabies — Bolivia

At least 40 persons recently sought treatment at the Piloto health center La Paz, after being bitten by or being exposed to hamsters suspected of being infected by the rabies virus. The results of tests to confirm or rule out the suspected diagnosis are pending.

The government of Bolivia declared a health alert, after laboratory tests confirmed that a hamster that had bitten 2 members of a family was infected with the rabies virus. The bites were received at a birthday party at which one of the children received a hamster as a gift.

After the media made the case public, many owners of similar rodents became concerned when they observed changes of behavior in their pets. Several persons came to the health center, some of them with their animals. After being evaluated by health workers, some were encouraged to monitor the behavior of their pets, while others received prophylactic vaccination.

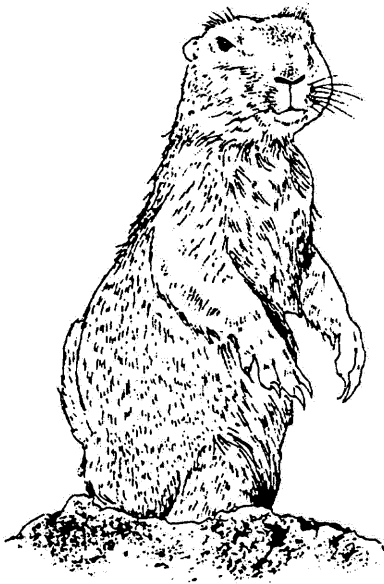
Almost every person bitten by the hamsters said that the animals had been purchased as presents for their children. According to the vendors, the hamsters came from Arequipa, Peru. Eduardo Negron, director of the health center, explained that not all persons require vaccination, but that it is being administered systematically to children less than 5 years of age who came in contact with the suspect animals.

This is the first time that rodent rabies has been detected in Bolivia. The fast rate of reproduction of these animals, and the fact that they are in close contact with humans, are cause

Continued on page 7, column 2

Book Review

rabies, distemper and a couple of parasites. I was disappointed by the claim that a pictured raccoon had rabies without also mentioning that a positive diagnosis can only be had through testing. The implication of his writing, in my opinion, is to suggest that one can diagnose a rabid animal by looking at it. As I understand it, only a test of the brain tissue can determine whether an animal is rabid. (At least the Centers for Disease Control didn't mention any non-laboratory test for rabies evaluation see <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies/Diagnosis/diagnosi.htm>). I fear that any suggestion that one could visually ID an animal as rabid may give people a false sense of security. Nevertheless, I did love the detailed photos of a flea and a tick. Those are enough to scare anyone.



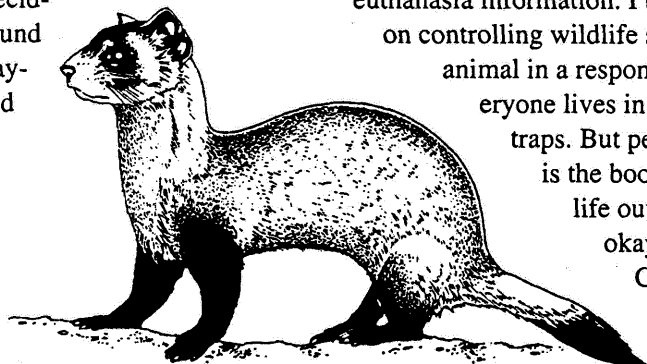
www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies/Diagnosis/diagnosi.htm). I fear that any suggestion that one could visually ID an animal as rabid may give people a false sense of security. Nevertheless, I did love the detailed photos of a flea and a tick. Those are enough to scare anyone.

About half of the book deals in alphabetical order with animals most commonly associated with damage. There is a general outline of sub points followed for each animal: a

general description of the animal, typical damage, repellents, deterrents, live capture, lethal control, baits, handling and diseases. Each sub-point is not covered for each species so detail loving homeowners may be disappointed. However, one can understand why relocation isn't covered for deer as I doubt too many homeowners would consider relocation for animals of that size even if it was legal.

The book closes with information on designing traps and a listing of supply companies. I was particularly impressed with the trash can trap. If you are handy this would be an excellent raccoon trap in my opinion.

My feelings about this text are decidedly mixed. On the positive side, I found the book very readable with superb layout and design. Photos were clear, and for the most part, helpful. There was certainly a lot of information contained in the book that homeowners and even some professionals would find helpful. I enjoyed reading the text. He had excellent information



on baits and repeated himself enough on certain issues to really get the point across.

My problems with the book fall into two categories. The first category is preference. I was troubled with the information on footholds. He gave information on using footholds to catch animals under porches. My difficulty with this lies in understanding that homeowners really don't have the training to be taught anything about footholds. It is like publicizing a popular version of surgery for homeowners. Some idiot may actually think they can do surgery after reading the book. Another issue is the lack of up to date control techniques. I got the impression that the author wasn't aware of a wider world of animal damage control. So what you get here is sort of an intellectual island where techniques were invented and used without the cross fertilization that could be gained from other animal damage controllers. Examples of his lack of exposure to other WCO's can be found in the use of footholds for stove dwelling squirrels (p.58), no mention of beaver pipes (pp.86-90), ignorance of bat traps (p.84) and lack of mention of the coral snake which doesn't follow typical poison snake rules (pp.144-146). To be fair, he did tell me in personal correspondence that he does subscribe to WCT magazine (I don't know for how many years) and is a member of

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the NTA. Perhaps he didn't mention beaver pipes because he didn't think it was a good technique for a homeowner. I also think the coral snake oversight could very well be due to his geographical perspective, *i.e.* living in a state with no coral snakes.

Another difficulty I had with the book was its lack of euthanasia information. I think that people who write books on controlling wildlife should talk about how to kill the animal in a responsible manner. The fact is not everyone lives in states that allow the use lethal traps. But perhaps the biggest problem I had is the book's emphasis on controlling wildlife outside a building. This would be okay, if the title was, *The Critter Control book for lawns and gar-*

Continued on page 7, col. 1

Beaver Management—Nevada 1942-1943

vices of an experienced beaver man to provide some short courses for the rest of us. We obtained some Bailey live traps and built some holding and transporting cages of small wooden frames and lined from the inside with heavy hog-wire. The cages were about 25 to 28 inches square and about 3 feet long with a hinged door at one end.

There were some personal items that we supplied to the trappers, like hip boots that most of the time were full of wa-

There were some personal items that we supplied to the trappers, like hip boots that most of the time were full of water. Each of the men had to have his own bedroll which they could roll out at the various ranches where they stayed. We were able to arrangement for the men to eat their meals with the ranchers for free.

ter. Each of the men had to have his own bedroll which they could roll out at the various ranches where they stayed. We were able to arrangement for the men to eat their meals with the ranchers for free.

For transporting beaver I used a sedan delivery panel truck that was furnished to me by the Predator and Rodent Control Program. In those days a lot of folks called my truck a "pie wagon." But the pie wagon label didn't live long after a few trips with live beaver. On one trip, I stopped at my house in Elko to pick up fresh clothes. My wife was just ready to walk to the grocery store for supplies, so I offered to give her a ride as I was passing right by the store. The next time I was home after about a week or ten days, she lit into me like a house afire. When I got her tamed down she finally told me that on her way home from the store that dogs were coming from behind houses to sniff at her. By the time she got home, there were six or more dogs sniffing and following her. It took several years before she would ever ride anyplace with me again.

Everybody on the crew quickly learned how to handle beaver by grabbing their tails and holding them on the ground until they settled down. We could also lift and carry the beaver by the tails, but we had to watch the larger ones as they would reach out and grab your legs and pull over to you. For larger beaver, we usually put them in a burlap bag

to carry and had no trouble that way. None of us were ever bitten that I remember. Now and then we'd get nipped a little when we ran our hands under their belly too far. We had been told that we could sex a beaver by rubbing and massaging just ahead of the vent. With patience and the right animal, sometimes the penis would become evident the males. We tried this for a time, but soon abandoned it. From then on we took all the animals we caught at one family set of dams and planted all of them together at one site. We didn't have time to check to identify our transplanting success ratio. The local Game Warden checked some of the plants for us and on one occasion a couple of cowboys reported a pair of beaver walking together and several miles from the nearest water.

The valleys in the Elko area are about 5,000 feet high. Most of the mountains are about 6,000 to 8,000 feet high, but the Ruby Mountains just to the southeast of Elko reach up to 10,000 feet. Therefore, some of the nights, even in

A lot of my night meals were a can of tomatoes or pork and beans with crackers. At the time, some people asked why I didn't go to a motel or an all night cafe. There were two reasons for not going to these places. One was that none of them were anywhere near where I was planting beaver. The other reason was that, at the time, I was getting a grand total of \$3.20 a day of per diem.

summer, get chilly. My usual routine was to pick up all the live beaver at the trapping camp soon after noon and head out for the planting sites. This would give the trappers time to go out and reset traps and look for new locations. They would run the traps early in the morning and bring all the beaver into camp, or to a location where I could drive to them for loading. Normally I could handle two or three cages per trip. Some of the plants were in good locations for me to roll out my bed until daylight. A lot of my night meals were a can of tomatoes or pork and beans with crackers. At the time, some people asked why I didn't go to a motel or an all night cafe. There were two reasons for not going to these places. One was that none of them were

Continued on page 7, Col. 2

Continued from page 6, col. 2

Book Review

dens. But it isn't. Mr. Hershey provides very little about house inspections and control of building dwelling animals. Essentially this book is for those who live in more rural environments or suburbs away from urban centers.

The second category of problems centers on potentially dangerous and/or potentially illegal control techniques. I couldn't agree more with the suggestion that people cap their

The second category of problems centers on potentially dangerous and/or potentially illegal control techniques. I couldn't agree more with the suggestion that people cap their chimneys. However...°

chimneys. However, his wire screen method is very possibly illegal (p.167). The mention of using gasoline to evict a woodchuck was probably illegal in that gasoline is a controlled substance. Even if it is legal, I still think that techniques like this should have not been mentioned. The potential for abuse is very great.

From this review you might think that I hate this book. I don't. I will be selling this book from my web site. But I do think that the book could have been an awesome one with a little more judicious editing. I would have suggested that he cover fewer species but provide more detail. For example, the information on mole trapping could have been expanded to really explain how to trap moles. I hope he does a second edition. I would love to be an editor for it. I also think he should have ignored insects and stick with wildlife only.

You can purchase your copy of the book from Amazon.com for \$11.17 plus S&H, so it's very reasonably priced. If you are a professional, the book may be worth the plans for the trashcan trap. But otherwise, you will do better buying something else. If you want to sell a book to clients, make sure they know this book is best for people who live in states with very liberal wildlife damage control laws and who live in very rural environments.



Continued from page 6, col. 2

Beaver Management

any where near where I was planting beaver. The other reason was that, at the time, I was getting a grand total of \$3.20 a day of per diem.

There were some compensations on the job. For example, several times we caught pairs of kittens that looked as if they had their eyes open for only three or four days. When this occurred, I always took the kittens up in the seat with me where they would snuggle up in my jacket or crawl into my lap and purr like house cats. I would stop and show them to anyone who would look and listen. I really enjoyed the little rascals. I always took some time to try to sort out their mothers by feeling for their mammary nipples. Then I would turn the kittens loose next to the mother's cage and wait until she settled down and finished eating the apples and carrots I would carry. I don't think I made orphans of any of the kittens.

There was one funny event at the Thousand Springs Ranch, of the Utah Construction Company, just east of the present city of Jackpot. We'd set some traps in some little spring runs of about 10-inches deep. The next morning one trap was gone. We found it about fifteen yards away in the edge of some willows. A call to the ranch a day or so later we were told by the foreman that one of his saddle horses came in from that pasture with his head all skinned up. They thought it might be a mountain lion in the area. We told him about our trap and we all decided that the horse nosed into the trap trigger and it snapped on his head. It wouldn't lock, so after a few back flips and somersaults, he soon got rid of the trap. *(To be continued)*

Continued from page 1, col. 2

ADC in the News

for great concern by the health authorities. The sale of hamsters in Bolivia has been prohibited.

Source: ProMed (<http://www.promedmail.org>)

Counter Terrorism Includes Animal Rights and Eco-Violence

A list of terrorist groups issued by the National Counter Terrorism Center, a government agency tasked with collecting and analyzing information about terrorist threats in the U.S., includes Earth First, the Animal Liberation Front and the Earth Liberation Front. That puts these kooks right in there with al Qaeda, which was also prominently mentioned.

—Source: *Cow-Calf Weekly*

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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

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