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PRED-X® Ear-Tags Prove Disappointing to Producers

When PRED-X® ear-tags appeared on the retail market in March 1992, the olfactory repellent tags raised hopes among sheep producers that an effective new predatory control tool had been found. Unfortunately, research at the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station, Dubois, Idaho, as well as field tests conducted by the Animal Science Department of the University of Wyoming indicate that the tags appear to have little effect in reducing sheep losses.

Three experiments using 418 nursing and weaned lambs were conducted from May until November 1992 at the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station, Dubois, Idaho. In the first experiment, treated and untreated nursing lambs grazed separate pastures, while in the second experiment, treated and untreated nursing lambs shared the same pasture. In the last experiment, treated and untreated weaned lambs grazed the same pasture. In the first experiment, it was found that death losses were actually *higher* in the PRED-X® treated lambs, with the loss of 22 treated lambs versus 13 untreated lambs. Experiments 2 and 3, with both treated and untreated lambs in the same pasture, showed no difference in lamb deaths.

In Experiment 3, researchers discovered that the ear-tag from a coyote-killed lamb was missing. The tag was found a half-mile from the kill site. Marks on the tag indicated that the coyote had chewed it extensively.

While the University of Wyoming field tests were not quite as negative, they, too, indicate that PRED-X® tags overall have little or no effect. The tests involved twenty sheep producers from Wyoming as well as twenty-one others from various states including South Dakota, Montana, Colorado, Idaho, and California.

The bright orange PRED-X® tags, approximately 1-1/2 inches square and 3/16 of an inch thick, were usually attached at birth or docking to the middle third of the lamb's ear. The tags give off a strong odor similar to butyric acid which the Predex Corporation claims is similar to human odor. Predex also claims that limited field tests in 1991 proved the tag was effective in reducing lamb losses.

The University of Wyoming field tests did not bear out that conclusion. A great majority

of the sheep producers responding to the survey reported no benefit from using the tags. A few producers actually believe that the tags may, in fact, attract coyotes.

A Montana sheep rancher PRED-X® ear-tagged 1,000 lambs and suffered 50 losses—all confirmed coyote kills, all with tags. A producer in Ohio experienced coyote kills before the tags were in place and noticed no difference after ear-tagging his lambs. The producer also stated that tags on dead lambs sometimes had teeth marks in them.

In Wyoming, one producer PRED-X® ear-tagged 500 lambs in each of two 1,000-lamb flocks. In band 1, 17 lambs with tags were lost, 20 without tags; in band 2, 16 with tags, 18 without. Two additional 1,000-ewe flocks were used for comparison. One band had aggressive guard dogs and only 4 lambs were lost. The other flock suffered 24 losses. Although there were guard dogs with all flocks, the dogs in the 4-loss flock were felt to be more effective.

Investigators in both the Idaho and Wyoming tests found that the tags seem largely ineffectual. Although the Wyoming researchers admitted there was a remote possibility that a variation in the amount of the substance producing the odor may have occurred in the manufacture of the tags, they felt the most likely reason for the apparent success of a few producers was due to fewer coyotes in the area and/or a greater abundance of other food sources. When coyote populations are down and other food sources are abundant, repellents may have somewhat more effect.

At this time, no repellent has been found that has proven to reduce predation of coyotes on sheep. With the sheep industry's narrow profit margin, producers should contact their local extension agents or specialists before spending money on products with unsubstantiated effectiveness.

This article was adapted by Pamela J. Tinnin, Editorial Assistant to **The PROBE**. Sources were *The PRED-X Ear-tag: Does it work?*, P. G. Hatfield and J. W. Walker, U.S. Sheep Experiment Station, Dubois, Idaho, and from *PRED-X Field Test Results*, R. A. Field and J. E. Nel, Animal Science Department, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

April 18-22, 1993: Northeast Association of Wildlife Damage Biologists, Annual Meeting, Atlantic City, New Jersey. For further information, contact: James E. Forbes, USDA/APHIS/Animal Damage Control, P.O. Box 97, Albany, New York 12201, (518) 472-6492.

April 21-23, 1993: Conflicts in Natural Resources Management: Integrating Social and Ecological Concerns, Eccles Conference Center, Utah State University, Logan, Utah. Sessions include: *Overview of the Issues; Perspectives on Natural Resources Conflicts; Case Studies in Integrated Resource Management; and Contemporary Natural Resources Conflicts.* For more information contact Dr. Joanna Endter-Wada, College of Natural Resources, Utah State University, Logan, Utah 84322-5215, (801) 750-2487 (office) or FAX (801) 750-4040; or Lisa Anderson, Conferences and Institutes Division, Utah State University, Logan, Utah 84322-5005, (801) 750-2302 or FAX (801) 750-3771.

April 26-29, 1993: 11th Great Plains Wildlife Damage Control Workshop, Hyatt Regency Crown Center, Kansas City, MO. For further information, contact: F. Robert Henderson, Ext. Wildlife Specialist, Kansas State University, (913) 532-5654, or Robert A. Pierce II, Ext. Wildlife Specialist, University of Missouri, (314) 882-7242. *The Annual Meeting of the NADCA membership will be held in conjunction with this meeting. See page 5 for details of agenda items to be discussed, as well as specific date and time of this meeting. Plan to be there!*

May 25-26, 1993: The Wild Pig in California Oak Woodland: Ecology and Economics. Embassy Suites Hotel, San Luis Obispo, CA. Contact: Dr. William Tietje, Forestry & Resource Management, 2156 Sierra Way, Suite C, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401. (805) 549-5940.

June 24-27, 1993: Fur Takers of America Annual Convention, Washington County Fairgrounds, Bartlesville-Dewey, Oklahoma. For further information contact Bill or Dee Jackson, HC 73, Box 204, Pawhuska, OK 74056 or call (918) 336-8154.

The Probe is the newsletter of the National Animal Damage Control Association, published 10 times per year.

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Your contributions to *The Probe* are welcome. Please send news clippings, new techniques, publications, and meeting notices to *The Probe*, c/o Hopland Field Station, 4070 University Road, Hopland, CA 95449. If you prefer to FAX material, our FAX number is (707) 744-1040. The deadline for submitting material is the 15th of each month. Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of NADCA.

July 4-10, 1993: Sixth International Theriological Congress, Sydney, Australia. This is an international meeting of scientists interested in mammalogy, and will include symposia and workshops including such topics as population biology of mammals, the role of disease in population regulation, and wildlife management. Will include sessions on *Management of Problem Wildlife and Predation As a Regulator of Mammal Populations.* For further information, write: The Secretariat, 6th Int'l Theriological Congress, School of Biological Science, P.O. Box 1, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia 2033.

August 2-6, 1993: Bird Strike Committee—USA, Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, Seattle, Washington. Will include two days of conference papers and a one-day field trip. Contact: James E. Forbes, USDA/APHIS/ADC, P.O. Box 97, Albany, NY 12201, (518) 472-6492.

September 12-18, 1993: F.T.A. Professional Trappers College, Limberlost Camp, LaGrange, IN. Contact: Charles Park, 410 S. Poplar, LaGrange, IN 46761.

September 19-25, 1993: First International Wildlife Management Congress, Hotel Cariari, San Jose, Costa Rica Includes session *Conflicts Between Man, Agriculture, and Wildlife.* Send abstracts before 31 March 1993 to: Dr. Paul R. Krausman, Sch. of Renewable Nat. Resources, Univ. of Arizona, 325 Biological Sciences East, Tucson, AZ 85721. For further information, contact IWMC Secretariat Director, The Wildlife Society, 5410 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814, phone (301) 897-9770.

October 3-8, 1993: First International Congress of Vector Ecology, Hanalei Hotel, San Diego, California. Topics include: *Changing Patterns of Vector-Borne Disease; Human Ecology and Sociology; Vector-Host Interactions; and New Approaches to Control.* For more information, contact: Secretariat, 1st International Congress of Vector Ecology, P.O. Box 87, Santa Ana, CA 92702.

October 1993: 6th Eastern Wildlife Damage Control Conference, Asheville, NC. For further information, contact: Greg K. Yarrow, Ext. Wildlife Specialist, G08 Lehotsky Hall, Clemson University, Clemson, SC 29634-0362, (803) 656-3117.

December 11-15, 1993: 55th Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference, St. Louis, Missouri. The theme is *New Agendas in Fish and Wildlife Management: Approaching the Next Millenium.* Features include an *Urban Deer Management Symposium.* For more information, contact: Wayne Porath, 1110 S. College Ave., Columbia, MO 65201, (314) 882-9880.

December, 1993: 2nd International Symposium on Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*) And On Order Suiformes, Torino, Italy. For more information, contact: Secretariat, 2nd International Symposium on Wild Boar and on order Suiformes, c/o Prof. P. Durio, Dipartimento Produzioni Animali, Epidemiologia ed Ecologia, Via Nizza 52, 10126 Torino (Italy), Telephone 39.11 . 6503734 - FAX 39.11 . 655455.

ADC News, Tips, Ideas...

Grackles Draw Ire and Often Fire of Texas Mayor

Othel Brand never met a grackle he liked. According to a recent article in the *Wall Street Journal*, Brand, 73-year old mayor of McAllen, Texas, claims to have shot as many as 125 grackles in one morning, cruising in his Buick with his rifle beside him. Because the birds are so prolific and often viewed as nuisances, Brand has not drawn the attention that such attitudes usually bring. Wildlife defenders are more enthusiastic about such scarce types as the whooping crane. For now, Brand also seems safe from prosecution, operating under the provision that "...federally protected birds can be shot when they are found committing or about to commit depredations." Besides, says Special Agent Joe Ramos of U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, "...arresting him would mean a hundred people down here pointing rifles at my back."

Deer Collision Insurance? Good Idea Falls Flat

Under the heading of "another good idea that didn't work" is insurance against deer damage. Aware of an increasing number of auto collisions with deer and resulting car damage as well as human anguish, injury, and deaths, I visited a leader of a major regional insurance company with an idea. It was, simply, to create a special deer collision insurance.

Along with it, hand-in-glove, would be conducted a private deer management program that would seek to reduce claims and maximize net corporate gains from the program. The other objectives were generally improve human quality of life, improved deer management, and also increased steps to privatize wildlife work and shift it from outmoded state influence.

The idea was dispatched humanely because of the expected prevalence of fraudulent claims. The conversation turned to an insurance program for garden and crop damage from deer with possible parallels in hail insurance. Oh, well!!

*Robert H. Giles, Jr.
Dept. Fisheries & Wildlife Sciences
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University*

The editors of The PROBE thank contributors to this issue: Robert H. Giles, Bob Noonan, Mike Fall, Richard Colantuno, Pink Madsen, James E. Forbes, and Wes Jones. Send your contributions to The PROBE, 4070 University Road, Hopland, CA 95449.

Dominican Parrots Prove to be Problems—Ideas Needed

Efforts to save two endangered parrots in Dominica are proving successful but are creating a new problem. According to a report in the March/April issue of *Bird Watcher's Digest*, the parrots now pose a threat to the citrus crops on the island, and the government is asking for suggestions. Anyone who has experience in nonlethal methods of protection should write (immediately!) to Felix Gregoire, Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Roseau, Dominica, West Indies. All ideas are welcomed.



Selective Raccoon Set Avoids Cats

Sometimes I am asked to trap a nuisance coon where there are a lot of house cats, and the owner can't or won't keep the cats indoors for the night. I devised a special cat-proof set just for these situations. This set catches a coon pretty consistently for me, but has yet to catch a cat.

Nail a piece of white rag to a tree about a foot off the ground, and dose it with a sweet coon lure, something with no fish or flesh or musk or gland odor in it. Pure anise or honey is good. Set a trap under it, but about eight inches out from the tree.

When the coon investigates the sweet scent, it gets up on its hind legs to pull at the rag with its front feet. This causes the animal to tread around a lot while trying to pull the rag down with its front feet. The higher up on the tree I put the rag, the more erect the coon must stand, and the closer to the tree its feet will be. With the rag nailed at a foot high, the hind feet should be back eight inches to a foot. With the trap this far back, if a cat does check out the lure, chances are it misses the trap pan anyway.

I bed a No. 1-1/2 coil spring at this set, as the larger jaw spread is needed for the coon's bigger hind foot. Solid bedding isn't quite as critical here, as the coon's attention is on the rag, and it's not paying much attention to where it's stepping.

The above tip by NADCA member Bob Noonan is reprinted from the October issue of *Fur-Fish-Game Magazine* and is used with permission of the magazine and Mr. Noonan.

Message from the President

It's been almost two years since we revamped **The PROBE**. We hope it is serving the needs of NADCA. If you have comments about it, please let your regional director, the editors, or myself know.

Unfortunately, the new **PROBE** is a costly communication mechanism for the association. The cost of producing and mailing the **PROBE** exceeds the revenue we obtained from membership dues. This also leaves nothing for such things as the annual meetings, Board of Directors communication, etc. Fortunately, we have had a surplus in past years that has been used to defray costs of running NADCA.

We find ourselves, however, at a financial crossroads. We must do something to either increase revenues or decrease costs or the organization will go broke. No one thing is the answer. Some immediate options are:

1. Increase the number of members, something the executive committee and regional directors have been concentrating on in past years with some success;
2. Increase sponsorships by corporations and other commercial entities with an interest in NADCA. This is something we have done in the past but will rekindle our efforts;
3. Increase the dues for individual members; or
4. Reduce the number of **PROBE** issues per year to reduce costs.

I want to concentrate on membership dues as one possible action. Reducing the number of **PROBES** per year would defeat the purpose of the organization. Membership dues have remained at \$15.00 since January 1988. Because of the heavier weight paper and professional printer, the cost of **The PROBE** has increased. I suggest that we increase the annual membership fee to \$20.00. This would allow the organization to keep up with added costs of producing **The PROBE** and I hope would not be too burdensome to each of you.

In today's economic times, we are very reluctant to raise dues. Therefore, we would like to discuss this with you at the annual meeting (April 26, 1993) at the Great Plains Workshop in Kansas City, Missouri. If you're not able to attend or would like to give me your ideas or input, feel free to write me, or any of the executive board members, or regional directors about your comments and concerns.

We recognize the need to provide you something for your membership and feel **The PROBE** is the key component that you're receiving as a member of NADCA. In light of that, we want to make sure that it is in fact something that you value. We have discussed ways of increasing membership participation in writing **The PROBE** and would encourage you to write opinion

articles, letters to the editor, questions that you would like to see answered, etc.

The following produced dues structure would restore the financial position of NADCA:

Class	Current	Proposed
Student	\$7.50	\$10.00
Active	\$15.00	\$20.00
Sponsor	\$30.00	\$40.00
Patron	\$100.00	\$100.00

As you can see, NADCA is at a financial crossroads. I think it is important that we take the high road with a very modest increase in membership dues. This will allow us to keep the organization's communication tool, **The PROBE**, first-class.

What do you think?

*Terrell P. Salmon, President
NADCA*

Publications Available

Supplement to 1990 APHIS/ADC Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Two volumes, 1,117 pages. Changes include: 1) *An expanded discussion an analysis of alternatives, including a detailed discussion of the ADC decision model;* 2) *A quantitative and qualitative risk analysis;* 3) *An expanded economic analysis;* 4) *Completely new mitigation and monitoring chapter;* 5) *Responses to comments on the DEIS have been appended;* and 6) *The final biological opinion about impacts of the program on threatened or endangered species from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.* Copies are available for review at each State ADC office, State offices of the Bureau of Land Management, USDA Forest Service Regional Offices, ADC Regional Offices, ADC headquarters office in Hyattsville, Maryland, and the APHIS reading room 1141-S in the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. Personal copies may be obtained from Richard L. Wadleigh, Acting Director, Operational Support Staff, ADC/APHIS/USDA, 6505 Belcrest Road, Room 819, Hyattsville, Maryland 20782, Telephone (301) 436-8281.

Black Bear Management Handbook for Louisiana, Mississippi, and East Texas, First Edition, October 1992. 29 pp. For more information, contact The Black Bear Conservation Committee Coordinator, P.O. Box 4125, Baton Rouge, LA 70821. Telephone (504) 338-1040.

Teaching Materials for Wildlife Damage Management

Utah State University entered into an agreement in 1989 with the USDA-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's Animal Damage Control (ADC) program to develop an academic program that incorporates wildlife damage management at the most basic levels of education in fish and wildlife management. The program was established to:

- *develop an appreciation of the scope and role of wildlife damage management throughout the wildlife profession;*
- *provide personnel suitably trained in the principles and practices of wildlife damage management for employment by ADC and by other federal, state, and local agencies; and*
- *create a public understanding of the way in which wildlife damage management meets the needs and promotes the values of the American people.*

Among other activities, USU's Program in Wildlife Damage Management has developed a number of classes to supplement the conventional coursework recommended for a major in wildlife biology and management. These classes, designed for the quarter system, are:

<i>USU Course No.</i>	<i>Course Title</i>
FW 405	Urban Fish and Wildlife Management
FW 491/691	Management and Ecology of Exotic Species
FW 491/691	The Role of Gender in Natural Resources Management
FW 510	Principles of Wildlife Damage Management
FW 512	Techniques in Wildlife Damage Management
FW 510/623	Predator Management and Ecology
FW 635	Wildlife Damage Management Policy

Syllabi for these courses are available upon request for individuals interested in developing similar courses at other universities. In addition, I would like to hear from you if you have developed a course along these lines. Contact Robert H. Schmidt, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Utah State University, Logan, UT, 84322-5210.

In My Opinion

Editors:

I'm responding to Dr. Fred Knowlton's report of the (idiotic) animal rightist vandalism at the coyote research unit at Logan, UT (December '92 PROBE). This, I'm sure, was not Dr. Fred's first (or last) conflict with the "warped" animal rightists. Part of the tragedy is that *some* of the animal rightists are graduates of "quasi" schools of wildlife management. I'm sure that some of them think they are both *morally* and *educationally* right. Maybe I should even add *spiritually* to their crackpot reasons.

I don't know how to get at the biased and warped "quasi" professors of wildlife management, but I'd like to suggest a possible approach to some of the emotional irresponsibility of the general public. In the past, Information Specialists were assigned by the Fish & Wildlife Service, but they were responsible to Regional Directors who were always hungry for non-controversial publicity. This non-controversial aspect nearly eliminated any news on wildlife damage control and gave a free hand to refuges, law enforcement, sportfish, etc. Coupled with this was the infiltration by the "Defenders of Wildlife" and other animal rightists into high level areas of government, and even into Fish & Wildlife...

My suggestion would be for a specific assignment *and training* in each state wildlife damage district for the writing of positive news releases for management and control work.

To me, it is painfully evident that we can't stop the "floods" at our doorstep. We need to plug up the leaks and cracks in the dam long before the floods start. It may already be too late to overcome the head start of the "antis." But I think we should try something.

*Sincerely,
C.R. "Pink" Madsen
Florence, Arizona*

NADCA Annual Meeting

**Annual Meeting of Membership, NADCA
Monday, April 26, 1993, 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.
Hyatt Regency Crown Center Hotel,
Kansas City, Missouri**

(In conjunction with 11th Great Plains
Wildlife Damage Workshop)

(NADCA Board of Directors will meet 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.)
Among items for discussion at meeting: possible dues increase; membership recruitment; content of **THE PROBE**; potential for group insurance coverage; fund-raising ideas. If you have additional agenda items, please suggest them to your Regional Director or any of the officers prior to the meeting.

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Membership Application

NATIONAL ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL ASSOCIATION

Mail to: Wes Jones, Treasurer, Route 1 Box 37, Shell Lake, WI 54871

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

Address: _____ Phone: (____) ____ - ____ Office

Additional Address Info: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP _____

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

Membership Class: Student \$7.50 Active \$15.00 Sponsor \$30.00 Patron \$100

(underline one)

Check or Money Order payable to NADCA

Select one type of occupation or principal interest:

- | | |
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| <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) _____ | |