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July 2002

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Suburban Invasion! By Wildlife?

*Michelle L. Shuey, PhD Student, Environmental Geography,
Department of Geography, Southwest Texas State University*

Thirty years ago the public would easily have believed raccoons, opossums, rabbits, deer, squirrels and other small animals would find a way into the suburbs. They were probably already dealing with animals nesting in crawl spaces and attics, consuming trash and rosebushes, and slightly irritating their human hosts, sometimes to the point of nuisance animal removal. But, would they have believed that someday adult elk would saunter down streets, jumping through windows after seeing their reflection? Would they laugh at tales of black bears breaking through house walls looking for kitchen food, or of cougars stalking and killing pets and attacking small children? How about stories of moose taking evening dips in a neighbor's pool, or alligators eating pets and invading water holes in neighboring golf courses, scaring golfers looking to seize their wayward golf balls out of the water? Would they believe that places on the eastern coast of the U.S. where sparse, native vegetation only supports approximately 100 deer in an 8 by 2 mile stretch of sandy soil, would soon support upwards of 900 deer?

Could they conceive of herds of 15 to 20 deer living within the confines of a single backyard, feeding heavily on imported vegetation like lush golf course grasses, hibiscus trees, maple trees and rose bushes, and scaring and sometimes attacking domestic pets? Thirty years ago people would probably have laughed at these strange tales, but we are not laughing today.

Over the last couple decades, residential wildlife problems have quickly become an epidemic all over the United States. From tree frogs to grizzly bears, it seems the "American Dream"

of suburbia has somehow become more populated with wildlife than people. What is causing this dramatic increase? For the most part, we cannot say with complete certainty that we know or understand all the causes. Maybe the sudden increase in residential wildlife is a movement of animals from harsh environmental conditions such as drought, wildfires, extreme heat or flood. Some say the lack of hunting in today's society has left growing populations of animals unmanaged and allowed other animals to lose their fear of humans. Other people believe frag-

mentation and loss of natural habitat is pushing animals into the suburbs as we develop and take over more and more wildland. Some blame the builders and suburbanites who, by introducing lush, non-native vegetation, alter the local environment into a veritable buffet complete with welcome mat and dinner bell. Numerous people

feel that the real problem is not that the animals are invading our homes, but that we simply are invading theirs. Consequently, there are myriad potential reasons for the growing human-wildlife conflict. Problems like these are extremely complex and emotion-ridden; hence solutions are usually hard to come by. In the end we get bogged down attempting to solve the immediate problem - removing problem animals, culling, building fences, immunocontraception, public meetings, etc. — that hardly ever satisfies those involved or resolves the larger problem. But, what if a simple solution lies in understanding how we got into this mess in the first place?

If the problems of residential human-wildlife conflicts were as simple as overpopulation pres-

Over the last couple decades, residential wildlife problems have quickly become an epidemic all over the United States. From tree frogs to grizzly bears, it seems the "American Dream" of suburbia has somehow become more populated with wildlife than people.

Ever Wonder?

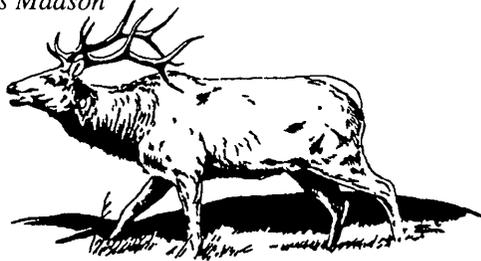
What are the health risks of consuming meat from deer or elk infected with CWD?

Currently there is no evidence that humans are susceptible to Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). However, most wildlife agencies in states where CWD has been found in free-ranging deer and elk are suggesting a few precautions:

- 1) Don't shoot an animal that is acting abnormally or looks sick
- 2) Wear rubber or latex gloves when field dressing an animal
- 3) In areas where CWD has been reported, minimize your contact with a dead deer's brain and spinal cord and wash your hands after contact
- 4) Don't eat deer brains or spinal cord
- 5) Bone out your deer meat and discard the brain, spinal cord, eyes, spleen, and lymph nodes

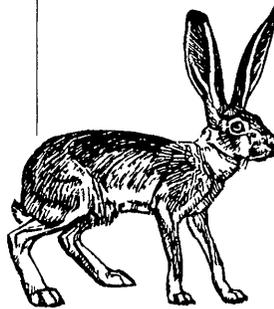
There are a number of web sites with good background information available. www.maddeer.org and www.mad-cow.org are examples.

— Source excerpted from a Wyoming Game and Fish article by Chris Madson



Conference Includes Session on Human/Wildlife Conflicts

The 68th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference is set for March 26-30, 2003, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The 68th Conference theme is *Meeting the Challenges of Modern Conservation*. The conference will feature six Special Sessions. One of the sessions is entitled, *Trouble in the City: Human/Wildlife Conflicts in Urban and Suburban North America*. Anyone interested in presenting a paper in this session is encouraged to contact the session chair, Craig Miller, Illinois Natural History Survey (217-333-7485, craig@inhs.uiuc.edu) for presentation guidelines. Proposals must be submitted before September 15.



— Source: *Wildlife Management Institute, Outdoor News Bull*, Vol. 56, No. 6

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

September 15-18, 2002 - Society for Vector Ecology Annual Meeting, Hyatt Regency, Albuquerque, New Mexico. For information see www.sove.org or e-mail soveoffice@pe.net

October 22-24, 2002 - 4th Joint Annual Meeting of: Bird Strike Committee USA/Canada, Sacramento International Airport, CA. Theme: practical Wildlife Control Techniques for Airports. Will include papers, posters and demonstrations on wildlife control techniques, new technologies, land-use issues, training, engineering standards, wildlife strike statistics, and habitat management. For further information go to www.birdstrike.org

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 (rmtimm@ucdavis.edu) and Kathleen Fagerstone (kathleen.a.fagerstone@aphis.usda.gov)

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

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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.

Book Review: by Stephen Vantassel, Wildlife Damage Control, Springfield, Massachusetts

Living in the Shadows: How to Help the Stray Cat in Your Life (Without Adding to the Problem) by Ann K. Fisher. Amethyst Publishing, Los Angeles, CA 2002. Pp. 8-141 with appendix (Illustrated). Softbound \$14.95 plus 4.00 S&H.

You can imagine my surprise to find this book in my mailbox. I never dreamed a Trap and Release proponent's book would be sent to me for a review. But there it was. Whether by mistake or on purpose, I decided that I should respect the request and review the work.

The author, Ann K. Fisher, loves cats. She wrote the book because she wanted to fill the information gap among people desiring to help stray and feral cats. I was pleased to read that she doesn't believe in promoting a feral cat population. She clearly believes cats are best kept indoors with loving families. Instead, she sees her book as a way to deal with the feral and stray cat problem in what she believes is a humane and responsible way. She definitely disagrees with feral cat eradication programs. She seems to have the idea that cats that enjoy their freedom should have that freedom respected by humans. She is also quite humble in that she doesn't consider herself a cat expert. Rather she is just one of an estimated 17 million people that feed feral cats.

The book opens with background material about cats. Ms. Fisher gives a brief history of cats which I found to be rather interesting. The next chapter covers the difficult task of distinguishing feral cats from strays. She admits the guidelines aren't hard and fast but they are certainly better than nothing. I should say that the principles follow the tone of the late Mr. Kruse of Pennsylvania who wrote an article in WCT on cats in March/April, 1995.

Ms. Fisher spends a fair amount of space prepping the would be cat feeder. She is properly concerned over the potential for someone to start feeding these cats and then quit due to frustration or poverty. She is careful to coach people to carefully count the cost in time and expense. She asks the potential feeder to consider more than just money and time. Intangibles such as space and neighborhood relations also factor into the mix. I was quite pleased with her tone and low key recommendations. I also found her explanations of cat behavior to be quite enlightening. As an owner of three cats, (rescued from the pound), her information helped me

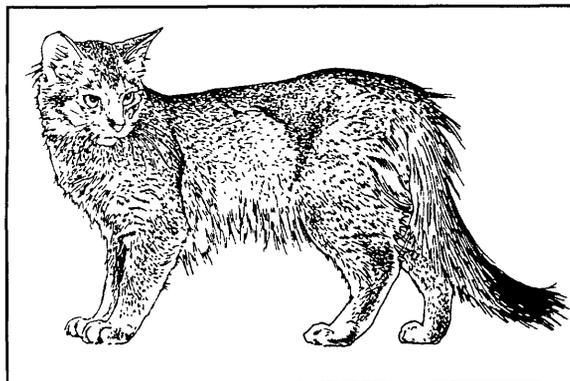
understand the actions of my own cats. One fact in particular was intriguing. Ms Fisher argues that cats "play" with their quarry in an attempt to tire the animal and reduce potential injury when they go for the kill. So rather than an action of cruelty, the cats behavior can possibly be better understood as a survival mechanism.

As can be expected, the book covers recommendations on the type and manner of feeding. (Hint, she recommends dry food for a variety of reasons). She explains the when and where of feeding and encourages people to do it out of public view. Perhaps the most difficult part of the book is the chapter entitled *Trap, Spay or Neuter and Release* (TNR). Here she teaches people about trapping cats and getting them veterinary care and then releasing back into the environment. Beside the philosophical problem with a TNR program, I had some other problems with the chapter. First, Ms. Fisher isn't aware of low cost cage traps. This is just a result of her lack of familiarity with the trapping industry. But she would have helped her readers immensely if she actually did an on-line search for cage traps and saw companies with lower priced cage traps. She also

wasn't aware of plasti-catch traps either. Second, I think she should have spent more time on teaching potential cat trappers to protect themselves against diseases, like rabies. As one who lives in a city that had two cats test positive to rabies, I think her oversight is potentially dangerous to people. Finally, her trapping suggestions won't help people that have to catch trap-wise cats.

I was impressed with her chapter on taming feral cats. It would certainly take a dedicated soul to put that much work into taming a cat. She even added a chapter on caring for or-

Continued on page 7, col. 1



The editor of **The PROBE** thanks contributors to this issue: Michelle L. Shuey, Barton Stam, and Stephen Vantassel.

Goose School

Larry Sullivan, Editor, *THE PROBE*

I had the distinct pleasure of attending the first National Goose Management Training Academy in Indianapolis, Indiana, on June 8 & 9, 2002. The training program was created and conducted by the National Goose Management Company, a partnership of Tim Julien of A&T Wildlife Management in Indiana and Kirk La Pierre of A1 Saver Wildlife Management in New Jersey.

Fifty-five students representing 22 states and Canada, along with 8 staff, spent two information packed days in the classroom and in the field earning their CGMP (Certified Goose Management Professional) credentials.

The concentrated and comprehensive course focused

on an integrated approach to the management of urban, resident Canada geese. Before attending this course, I expected it to be pretty much focused on "goose roundups." However, the course presented a truly integrated approach to addressing human-goose conflict in urban and suburban environments. Several hazing techniques were covered, including a presentation by Migratory Bird Management Goose Control Specialists on the use of border collies. In addition, a

wide variety of management tools and strategies were described and demonstrated including habitat modification, pyrotechnics, bio-sonics, visual deterrents, lasers, egg addling, physical and electric barriers, chemical repellents, cannon nets, and more. As I mentioned, these tools and techniques were not just simply described — they were also actually demonstrated in the field.

Of course goose roundups were covered — completely covered. Subjects ranged from how to conduct a roundup, to the legal requirements and permits necessary before and after a roundup, to handling and transporting geese (including the construction of goose trailers), to the variety of the necessary tools and equipment required, to evaluating a roundup site and developing a strategy. And best of all, we actually participated in two goose roundups. No textbook or lecture can substitute for actual field experience. Just one example, a few students, myself included, ended up with some minor lacerations learning that you should wear a long-sleeved shirt and gloves when handling geese — this

was absolutely "hands-on" learning.

The business aspects of commercial goose management were covered in detail. Included were sessions on marketing, proposals, and contracts.

Although Kirk and Tim did most of the teaching, several guest speakers including representatives from USDA Wildlife Services, the Indiana DNR, Flight-Control, and Sea-Tech made additional presentations. Tim Julien Jr., a third-year veterinary student, gave a very informative presentation on Canada goose biology.

The course fee was \$255 per person which included lunches. There was a \$25 discount for members of the Na-

tional Wildlife Control Operators Association (NWCOA) and for non-members, their first year NWCOA dues were paid from the course fee. A total of 16 credits toward NWCOA's Certified Wildlife Control Professional certification were awarded to all participants.

A post-academy survey indicated that participants felt that this course was definitely a valuable learning experience. Suggestions for future

courses included extending the course to three days and increasing the actual roundup experience at more sites and with fewer participants at each site.

Plans are underway for the 2003 academy which will take place in June, in Indianapolis. Those interested in attending may get further information from Kirk at, kirk@goosecontrol.com or from Tim at, tjulien@iquest.net. Information on the academy, as well as a variety of goose management supplies and services, can be found online at www.goosecontrolsupplies.com.

Photos from the academy may be found at the following URLs:

<http://community.webshots.com/album/40561012CLIWLk>
<http://community.webshots.com/album/42172522FWXNGn>
<http://community.webshots.com/album/42175897auDgPR>
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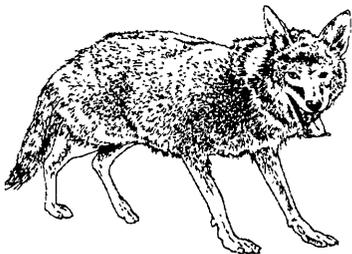
Wildlife Damage Management in the News

Couldn't We Just Reason With Them?

Los Angeles animal control recently approved increased efforts to control coyotes in residential areas by using traditional deterrent programs. The Los Angeles Animal Services Commission decided to assign two inspectors to deal with coyote complaints around the city, look at ways to deter coyotes from coming into neighborhoods and, as a last resort, trap any animals that appear to be overly aggressive. Animal Services Director Jerry Greenwalt says the panel also encouraged officials to explore ways to install water systems in hillside areas to keep coyotes and other animals out of housing developments. "The idea is to have water sources about a quarter-mile up in the hillsides, and that would keep coyotes and other animals out of backyards." Department spokeswoman Jackie David says that the department also plans an aggressive public education effort. "We're looking at ways to work with the community on ways to deter coyotes, such as having bright lights in back-

yards to keep them away," she said.

—Source: *North American Hunting Club Weekly News*, July 2, 2002



Continued from page 4, col. 2

Goose School

I highly recommend this course to anyone interested in resident Canada goose management from a commercial standpoint or from a wildlife resource management standpoint. I have spent almost 30 years as a Cooperative Extension educator and have organized and conducted more workshops, short-course, field exercises, and other forms educational programs than I could ever possibly count and I must say that I was impressed with the amount of information and hands-on experience — and fun — this course packed into two days. And after all that, I was still ready to go out on a few more roundups. However, after my brief encounter with Indianapolis' June humidity, this old desert rat would have needed scuba gear to continue.

California Approves Animal Damage and Bird Control License

The California Contractors State License Board, (CSLB), recently approved a new sub-classification in its Non-Specialty Contractors License category. The new license is listed as C-61/D-64 "Animal Damage and Bird Control".

Acting under authority granted in Section 832.61 CCR and approved by the California Department of Consumer Affairs, the CSLB on May 30, 2002, issued the first contractors license in this new classification to Alan Merrifield, dba Urban Wildlife Management of Burlingame, California.

This new license allows the contractor to undertake work on homes and other buildings for the purpose of excluding birds and other nuisance animals and to engage in construction activities to repair or prevent structural damage created by wild animals including birds.

The Animal Damage and Bird Control Contractor may work either as a prime contractor or as a sub-contractor to another licensed contractor. However, the California Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators Association is seeking a ruling from the State on the question of whether contractors licensed by CSLB and Branch 2, Structural Pest Control Operators can contract with each other to perform ADC and Bird Control work specified in the CSLB classification description.

Along with licensure in this new classification, new contractors must also obtain a "Home Improvement Certification" authorizing them to make repairs and additions to residential properties. They are also required to be bonded for a minimum of \$7,500 and to carry workers compensation insurance if they have one or more employees.

— Source: <http://www.cnwcoa.org>



Identifying Predator Kills

Texas A&M has a website with some excellent photos to help identify predator kills of livestock. See <http://texnat.tamu.edu/ranchref/predator/p-gen.htm>

Suburban Invasion! By Wildlife?

tures, us moving into their habitat, or fragmentation, then we would expect the same human-wildlife conflicts to appear evenly in areas where fragmentation and such are occurring. This, however, is not the case. For instance, recorded data from across the U.S. and Canada suggests cougar encounters occur with more frequency in certain places than others. Over the last 100 years, a full 50% of all documented fatal and non-fatal cougar attacks in the U.S. and Canada have occurred in British Columbia, the vast majority taking place on Vancouver Island. In the United States, places like San Diego, Sacramento, and Boulder are seemingly hotspots of cougar-human interaction, with three fatal cougar attacks on humans in and around Boulder, and two in San Diego between 1990 and 2001 alone. What makes these locations so special? Unfortunately, we are still no further at understanding why cougar-human encounters are occurring more frequently in these places.

In my research I am attempting to look at the human-wildlife conflict from a different perspective — from the landscape or geographic point of view, rather than the biological. I have chosen both Boulder and Vancouver Island as study sites. I would like to be able to identify and document “how” a specific place became so cougar

friendly, as opposed to other places that did not. Maybe it is about how specific places were planned and built, such that certain types of development are more “wildlife friendly” than others. Maybe it is all about vegetation that supports a greater number of deer — the cougar’s main prey. Maybe the answer is not going to be simple at all but convoluted and complex. Either way, my goal is to create a model of risk that will be able to identify certain themes in landscapes that, based on my research, will be more vulnerable to a cougar-human interaction.

I have just begun gathering data from Boulder, and at first glance, a cursory visual analysis of the data seems to suggest, for Boulder at least, that cougar-human interactions occur more frequently within the younger residential development than the older. The younger development is more representative in structure of the na-

tion-wide suburban sprawl epidemic of windy roads, cul-de-sacs, with pockets of idle open space of dense undergrowth, and vegetation corridors connecting clusters of similarly structured houses. The older section of town is much more grid-like, with smaller plots and very little idle land between structures. Vegetation in the older development is more mature with much less undergrowth than the younger residential area. Interestingly, the data also suggests cougar-human interactions are more common in the front range just outside the older residential area than the younger, however, that could easily be a factor of higher recreational usage of that area than the front range just outside the younger development. Hopefully, further analysis will tease out that information.

If living precariously among bears, cougars, deer, raccoon, elk, or coyote was what we wanted, a few places seem to have the recipe. I am hoping that further research will be able to determine the ingredients that produce unwanted or harmful human-wildlife encounters, and allow us to change places now, to prevent such happenings in the future. Until then, I imagine the 1950s and 60s black and white advertisement for suburban living with the perfect, smiling family

standing outside their new home, updated for today’s suburbia with a herd of deer in the yard, rabbits eating the garden bare, raccoons sticking their heads out windows and doors, black bear tearing away the outside kitchen wall, coyote dragging a roast out the backdoor, and a cougar sitting on top of the car watching the family dog, who is warily watching the cougar over his shoulder.

Maybe it is about how specific places were planned and built, such that certain types of development are more “wildlife friendly” than others. Maybe it is all about vegetation that supports a greater number of deer — the cougar’s main prey. Maybe the answer is not going to be simple...



Book Review

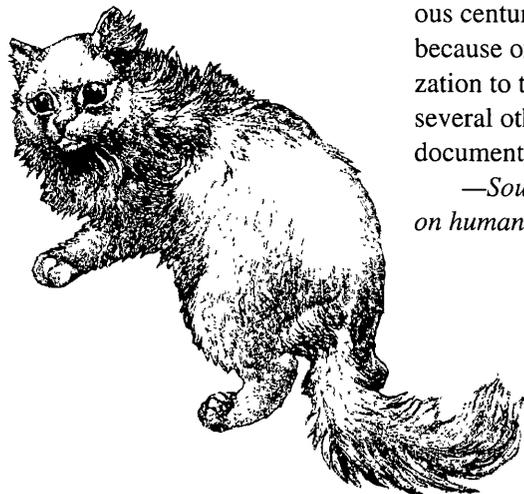
phaned kittens. The book concludes with a perspective on long term cat management. One will also find an appendix on the rights of cats and lists of resources for the potential feral cat caretaker.

As a leader in the struggle against the animal rights movement and its cohorts, I found many portions of this text difficult to read. The side bar stories of people's experiences

As a leader in the struggle against the animal rights movement and its cohorts, I found many portions of this text difficult to read. The side bar stories of people's experiences with cats were to my mind disturbing. I am increasingly saddened by the energy people will put into animals like cats but not for the drug addict or poor person down the road.

with cats were to my mind disturbing. I am increasingly saddened by the energy people will put into animals like cats but not for the drug addict or poor person down the road. I also seriously question the real world validity of TNR programs. I doubt that people who have committed their life to feed feral cats will suddenly stop when the last cat dies. (The idea being that they are all fixed therefore there is only one generation to care for). Given the level of dedication among these people I find it difficult to believe that they won't reseed the cat area to ensure they are still needed.

Even if cat feeders did stop, I still have serious problems with maintaining feral cat populations. I don't care whether it is proven they ravage wildlife or not. Feral cats, like feral dogs, are a nuisance and should be removed. Domestic species don't belong in the wild and they become a burden to property owners. Nevertheless, if you want a book that will provide an introduction to implementing a TNR program in your area. I would think this book would be a good place to start.



History of Wolf Attacks in Europe and Asia

Barton Stam, Student, The Berryman Institute, Utah State University

Wolves and humans have had a long and bitter history on the European and Asian continents. Populations of wolves once ranged from the Mediterranean to the Arctic and from the Western shores of Europe east to Japan. Extermination efforts were present before medieval times and continued until after World War II.

Almost all European countries have unconfirmed attacks by rabid or non-rabid wolves, while many have confirmed cases of wolves attacking humans. The vast majority of attacks occurred before the dawn of the 20th century, yet there have been at least a couple dozen attacks as recent as the last decade, particularly from Eastern European countries such as Latvia and Lithuania. Wolves are currently reestablishing populations in countries, such as France. Interestingly, the French have historically suffered more confirmed wolf attacks than most other countries with 838 people attacked by rabid wolves and 1082 people attacked by healthy wolves respectively since 1750.

The lands which, once were included in the former USSR, were home to the largest wolf population in the world and were recently estimated at 40,000. According to some researchers, the USSR has also suffered the majority of wolf attacks with 1206 cases reported from 1847-1999. There has been much controversy over the number of attacks, much of it surrounding the book "The Wolf" by Michail Pavlov, which includes data of many wolf attacks from 1847-1978.

Wolf attacks are poorly documented in many Asian countries, yet there is no doubt they occurred in most if not all of the countries. India has suffered several hundred attacks in the 20th century and more than a thousand in previous centuries. Iran's recent wolf attacks are well known because of the work done there by the World Health Organization to treat rabies. There is passing mention of attacks in several other Asian countries, but very few which are well documented.

—Sources: *The fear of wolves: A review of wolf attacks on humans.* Norsk institutt for naturforskning. January 2002.

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Additional Address Info: _____

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Please use 9-digit Zip Code

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