

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

*****news release

For Release to PM's October 20, 1966

REMARKS OF JAMES T. McBROOM, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, AT THE NATIONAL PEST CONTROL ASSOCIATION, INC., ANNUAL CONVENTION, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA, OCTOBER 20, 1966

The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife
Looks at Pest Control

Pest control can be a controversial business.

In this day of proper concern about the quality of our Nation's environment, many organizations that control pests are under some kind of criticism.

So, too, are we in the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife for our animal control activities. After all, we are chiefly concerned about the conservation and protection of the wild animals in Nature. Whether it is fish or fowl, our job is to do battle to find a permanent place in the sun for wild animals in this World of stern competition for land and water. This competition, of course, results from our rapid growing population and attendant growth of industry, commerce, and transportation.

As the chief Government defender of wildlife, we have a clientele of many millions of people who have a close and critical interest in the preservation of wild animals. A large number of them don't agree that coyotes and other predators are pests.

Responding to the concerns of many citizen wildlife conservationists, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall asked his blue-ribbon group of wildlife advisors to look into the Bureau's predator and rodent control activities.

In June 1965, the Secretary adopted, as a policy guide, their report -- the popularly known Leopold Report, named after A. Starker Leopold, a distinguished member of the University of California faculty, the Chairman of the Secretary's Wildlife Management Advisory Board.

Broadly speaking, the report supported the policies of Federal animal control but urged refined application of them. For example, the Secretary's experts called for improved supervision, to eliminate, among other actions:

- (1) The practice of indiscriminately killing the largest possible number of predators;
- (2) The practice of selling and promoting control activities to user groups like woolgrowers and cattlemen.

The Leopold Report made several other important recommendations -- among them, expanded and intensified research in methods and techniques of animal control.

I want to give you a report today on how we're doing in carrying out Secretary Udall's directive with respect to a new look in animal control.

First, we are requiring written justifications for animal control programs, heretofore not required, as a part of annual state animal control plans. In a nutshell, these plans, being developed cooperatively in each State will tell where, why, when, and how animal control will be undertaken. Similarly, monthly and annual reports have been redesigned to reflect progress on specific goals outlined in the annual plan.

Second, we have issued policy instructions and are about to issue a new manual on animal control to be an operational handbook for our 800 or so Federal and cooperative employees engaged in animal control.

Third, we have asked and received concurrence by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service that they, as land managing agencies, also have a responsibility for identifying land use requiring control and determining where and when animal control measures should be applied on their lands. This is as it should be. Animal control, like reforestation or range improvement, is just another tool to be used in managing lands for multiple use.

We have established, as you may know, the new Division of Wildlife Services to replace the old Branch of Predator and Rodent Control. We have called the signal to use more finesse in animal control -- using the sharpshooting technique rather than the scattergun technique.

We are increasing our use of aerial hunting and flying squads to reduce damage from predators. Flying squads, by the way, are not necessarily airborne. It's just a concept of concentrating manpower and equipment from adjacent counties or states temporarily to deal in force with a predatory animal situation which may be particularly destructive in one place.

We are also striving to enrich the professionalism of our animal control force, already a capable group of professionals. Most of the \$200,000 increase we received from Congress this year for predatory animal control will be used for employing college graduates in wildlife management or in allied fields to be Assistant District Supervisors. They will actually be doing the work of reducing predatory animal populations in the field at first. Later, they will go into jobs as District or State Supervisors and thus upgrade the high professional quality of our cadre of animal control personnel.

We are acutely aware of the need for an amplified animal control methods research program. Control methods and tools, particularly in the field of bird control, must be improved. Compound 1339 was field tested last year in the West for starling control at feed lots. The preliminary results were most encouraging and it is being labelled this year for a nationwide use. It appears to have limitations, however, since it is most applicable to situations where birds feed in large numbers, such as in feed lots.

There is growing concern over resistance of rats to anticoagulant rodenticides. This group of chemicals has been the strong right arm of the pest control industry for many years. Resistance has been reported in Great Britain and Haiti. If this should also develop in this country, what rodenticide will be available as a replacement? This is one area which needs investigation at the earliest possible date. Even though many rodenticides are available, none match the universal utility and margin of safety of the anticoagulants.

Although not considered as a substitute for the anticoagulants in commensal rodent control, we are optimistic that the new Compound DRC 714 will serve as a replacement for Compound 1080 in the control of subterranean animals such as pocket gophers.

Let me get into a little philosophy about animal control.

At a time when this continent was being colonized, natural resources appeared to be limitless, and conservation, as a movement, had not been born. In many respects the endless resources, including the broad expanse of forests, the clean rivers, and abundant populations of wild animals were obstacles to man's progress; this wild country had to be tamed.

Although wild animals provided an important source of food and fiber, they often competed with man's interests. Predation of livestock and destruction of agricultural crops was then, and continues to be, a difficult problem. Man, in his struggle for survival, and the subsequent development of an agricultural industry, has been forced to control those animal populations which compete with him. In many instances, the exploitation of our Nation's natural resources, including wildlife, has been unnecessarily harsh.

We have reached a turning point in our philosophy of wildlife values. The people of this country are expressing greater interest and new appreciation in all phases of our wildlife resources. We recognize that in the complexity of this present modern-day civilization, attitudes and perspectives are changing rapidly. We must accept the fact that wildlife is to be managed not only for the consumptive segment -- the sportsman -- but also for the ever-increasing number of our people who simply enjoy seeing and hearing wild animals in their native habitat and knowing that a wildlife heritage exists. In short, we have recognized officially the esthetic value of all our wildlife resource, even some of the so-called pest species.

The terminology used in the past regarding animal control is archaic and no longer acceptable nor appropriate. The Bureau recognizes that animal species cannot be categorized as being either beneficial or injurious, but rather that any animal can be either or both, depending upon a number of factors at any given time. Haphazard observation, personal beliefs, and prejudice should not be criteria for justifying animal control.

But, by the same token, the "balance of nature" concept, which has been the hue and cry of the non-professional naturalist, is also unacceptable in this modern era. We live in an environment modified drastically by the activities of man. We must accept predators, birds, and the so-called nuisance species as important and valuable members of our native fauna; but, with full realization that there are situations in which their numbers must be controlled.

The Bureau considers animal control as an essential wildlife management function. The reduction or suppression of animal numbers is a means rather than an end; it is a means of accomplishing specific management goals, such as: preserving public health and safety, improving agricultural production, protecting natural resources, and protecting urban and industrial interests.

Like all other wildlife management techniques, animal control must be used judiciously. The Bureau's aim is to control animals when and where necessary, in the most intelligent and responsible manner possible, using the best methods currently available and with full recognition of all ecological relationships involved.

In addition to animal control responsibilities, the new Division of Wildlife Services has been assigned responsibilities in (a) pesticides surveillance and monitoring, and (b) wildlife enhancement. These activities give the Division a broader range of responsibilities in animal management than it has ever had before. Although Wildlife Enhancement activities are probably not related to your professional sphere of interests, the Pesticides Surveillance function is one in which you may be particularly interested.

The fish and wildlife biologists we have assigned to pesticides surveillance operations, by the way, are available for consultation regarding potential hazards of pesticides to fish and wildlife resources. We hope that members of your Association will contact these biologists before using chemicals in or near aquatic sites if there are any questions regarding the hazards of pesticides to aquatic animal life.

We are currently evaluating Federal pesticide programs throughout the Nation, in cooperation with the Forest Service, the Plant Pest Control Division of Agriculture Research Service, the Air Force and mosquito abatement districts. These include forest spraying operations with insecticides and herbicides in the far West and the northern Midwest regions, a range caterpillar control program in the Southwest, and Mosquito control projects in the East and Southeast. All Federal agencies which are major users of pesticides are being advised of our surveillance program as rapidly as meetings can be made. Reports from the field indicate a willingness to cooperate with us in evaluating pesticide effects on wildlife under operational conditions.

One field study involved the evaluation of a new mosquito larvaecide, a product as yet unregistered, and was conducted in cooperation with the Dow Chemical Company. We anticipate closer cooperation with industry in field studies of this nature. This should prove to be mutually advantageous.

We are planning a series of Regional pesticide workshops. These will be invitational, and will include representatives from Federal agencies, Fish and Game Departments, State agricultural groups and pesticide researchers. These will be working meetings, not seminars, for the purpose of discussing the effects of agricultural chemicals on wildlife, and the direction which laboratory and field studies need to take to be most productive. Also, field study techniques must be improved, and methods for evaluating immediate chemical effects on wildlife under field conditions must be developed.

These new functions of the Division of Wildlife Services also include participation in the National Pesticide Monitoring Program, through collection of wildlife samples from designated sites at periodic intervals, for residue analysis. This is a companion project to our fishery program of aquatic species sampling.

The other new program in the Division of Wildlife Services which I mentioned is the one for Wildlife Enhancement. This program is being developed to cope with increasing pressures generated by an expanding population and the accompanying complex and competitive demands for incompatible uses of land, water, and other environmental resources. It has come to be recognized that the diversity of wildlife is also a sensitive indicator of a healthy environment for man himself in both urban and rural settings.

As the natural face of the Nation changes, the future of our renewable wildlife resources will depend largely upon the success of the responsible public agencies in influencing these vast environmental changes, and in influencing the attitudes of our citizens toward these changes.

We shall carry on our Wildlife Enhancement activities, providing advice and technical assistance primarily on Indian lands, military lands, and, in some cases, on private lands.

In all of these problems, wildlife enhancement can be a constructive influence on environmental change and its socio-economic impact.

A major goal must obviously be to develop not only a public understanding of wildlife, how to gain from it and enjoy it, but a "national ecological conscience."

We believe that it is important for members of this Association, and personnel of our Bureau to develop a greater degree of cooperation and mutual assistance than exists at the present time. We have no desire, and see no need to compete with competent pest control operators. Rather, we would like to be in a position to advise, enhance, and further the capabilities of your industry and its people by providing assistance whenever and wherever possible.

We in the Bureau hear complaints of various types about pest control operations expressed to Congressmen, to the Secretary, and even to the White House. We all know that no matter how carefully a pest control operation may be conducted, some will object. Although there is a tendency to dismiss such objections, some of them may be justified. They can -- and do -- stimulate proposed legislation against pest control tools or techniques. Strict adherence to the rules, the use of common sense and a high degree of professionalism and ethics in conducting pest control operations must be foremost for all of us. To be short and trite, we must all improve our image.

The demands for bird control programs are enormous. Moreover, with considerable expansion of commensal rodent control programs looming on the horizon, the need for close working relationships between our two groups is greater today than ever before.

The Bureau is in a position to conduct research and field testing, but cannot furnish all of the personnel required for control operations. This generally should be the role of private industry.

It is important that we find a way to ally the personnel of our two organizations. The need for rapport exists not only at the National level, but also it must be fostered at the local level. As many of us have learned through the years, a meeting of the minds comes only through personal contacts and development of respect for the functions and capabilities of the other.

We have enjoyed a close relationship between our Central Office and the National Pest Control Association's leaders. We hope to make it closer.

Further, to assist with this, we plan to develop and conduct a series of training courses which will include subjects common to both of our groups. Presently, this is only in the formulative state, but we hope that within the coming year a concrete proposal can be made to your association.

I would like to close this discussion with a comment about our personnel operating in this field. Our people look forward to the challenges presented to them. They are confident and willing. We have the most important ingredient for success -- willing and highly trained personnel. A high percentage of people in this work have degrees in resource management, and, despite the youth of our supervisory personnel, many years of field experience in animal control is behind them.

We are attempting to create a climate that will stimulate individual and collective excellence and a high degree of professionalism. We propose, by providing the challenge, and through training, continuing education, persuasion and encouragement, to develop to the fullest extent possible, the full capabilities of every man in our Wildlife Services Division.

We shall bring this capability and talent to bear in discharging an intelligent and responsible animal control program. We want and welcome your ever closer cooperation.