

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Immediate Release August 6, 1975

Levitt 202/343-5634

COYOTE DAMAGE CONTROL PROGRAM CLARIFIED

"President Ford's recent modification of Executive Order 11643 allowing the experimental use of sodium cyanide in predator control for a one year period will not open the floodgates for large-scale use of toxicants," Lynn A. Greenwalt, Director of Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said today.

Responding to concern expressed by certain environmental groups over the Presidential order, Greenwalt issued a statement that clarified how it would affect the Service's predator control program.

"The order allows the closely controlled use of only one poison--sodium cyanide--for the control of coyotes on Federal lands and in Federal programs. Very strict regulation of its use would remain in effect. Furthermore, the use of this poison is only one part of the accelerated effort requested by the President to reduce coyote depredations of livestock in the Western States.

"The overall emphasis of this program will still be on the use of mechanical control methods. It has been shown that these techniques are especially effective at preventing livestock depredations. The techniques to be employed include aerial hunting, steel traps, den hunting, calling and shooting, as well as the use of sodium cyanide. The increased effort will be directed toward those areas where current attempts at coyote damage control have not been effective. Particularly troublesome areas are high mountain pastures with steep terrain and other areas with heavy

(over)

ground cover where aerial hunting and the application of other mechanical methods are difficult or excessively time consuming. In addition to increased aerial hunting, the Service will also recruit temporary trappers to provide more manpower on the ground in problem areas.

"In most instances, the poison will be used in a spring-loaded cyanide ejecting tube called the M-44 which is scented to attract coyotes. We're also experimenting with a toxic collar developed by Service researchers. It is fitted around the sheep and made of 10 pillow-shaped plastic packets filled with cyanide. These devices are quite selective and are a humane weapon against the coyote, as death is almost instantaneous. Cyanide, by the way, breaks down into a harmless chemical and does not linger in the environment. The Service has used the M-44 device for coyote damage control since June of 1974 under an emergency provision of Executive Order 11643. In the last year about 750 authorizations for M-44 use were issued for 10 States. The toxic collar is presently in the advanced experimental stage and is being given tests under field conditions.

"The use of the M-44 device will conform to all applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations. It will be placed in spots where minimal encounter with humans, pets, and other animals is likely. Signs will be placed in the general vicinity of M-44 use and each device will be clearly marked with an elevated sign warning people not to handle it.

"The M-44 device will be used only by Fish and Wildlife Service employees who have received careful training in its use. Each device will be regularly inspected in the field.

"The M-44 will not be used in National Parks and Monuments under any circumstances nor will it be used in areas where endangered species might be affected.

"The coyote faces no danger whatsoever of extinction in spite of man's efforts to control its numbers. It is expanding its range from the Plains States through the highly populated Midwest and on to the Virginias, Pennsylvania, New York, and the New England States."

The Service is proceeding with immediate implementation of the new program to head off losses which may occur in the most difficult areas before lambs are shipped this fall.

X X X