

OPENING REMARKS - FOURTH VERTEBRATE PEST CONFERENCE

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I am pleased to welcome you to the Fourth Vertebrate Pest Conference. This is our second Sacramento meeting. The first was in 1962 - eight years ago. It was an historic occasion. It was the first conference devoted exclusively to vertebrate pests.

This conference is sponsored by the California Vertebrate Pest Committee comprised of representatives from the California Department of Agriculture, the University of California at Davis, Department of Animal Physiology and the Agricultural Extension Service; the U. S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Division of Wildlife Services and of Wildlife Research, the California Departments of Public Health, Fish and Game, and Water Resources, and the California Association of County Agricultural Commissioners.

Since this is a conference about vertebrate pests, it is appropriate to define what is meant by a vertebrate pest. To quote a definition used in the preceding conferences, "it is more than merely an animal where it is not wanted, it can be native or introduced, wild or feral, nonhuman specie of vertebrate animal that is currently troublesome locally, or over a wide area, to one or more persons, either by being a health hazard, a general nuisance, or by destroying food, fiber or natural resources".

It is important to recognize that any animal that may currently be an economic pest to one or more persons, may not be so to others. Whether an animal is beneficial or undesirable depends upon one's relationship with it.

It is obvious where vertebrate pests are concerned that there are some different points of view. I would like to tell a little story to illustrate those differences.

Three individuals stood on the edge of the Grand Canyon looking down into its great void. One reverently said, "Isn't this a wonderful creation of God?" The second one said, "Isn't this a grand creation of nature?" The third one, unquestionably a cowboy said, "Wouldn't this be a hell of a place to lose a cow?" It all depends on your point of view.

Proceedings of the conference comprise one of the most current and complete reference sources for information about animal control, research trends and philosophies on animal control.

The success of these meetings is not solely the responsibility of the Vertebrate Pest Committee which selects the speakers or of the distinguished gentlemen on the program. In large measure the success will be judged by the participation of the audience in the discussion periods. If any of you wish to question any speaker at the close of his presentation, all that we ask is that the questions or observations be germane to the subject of the speaker.

The general objectives of this Fourth Conference are:

1. Problem delineation
2. Idea communication
3. Exchange of methodology.

The Vertebrate Pest Committee hopes that this conference provides you with some new concepts and viewpoints, and gives you a few different approaches to vertebrate pest problems that all of us must face either as professional workers or as interested citizens. We feel that the program has a broad and interesting agenda and that it provides a selection of outstanding speakers.

We hope this conference and others to come in the future will stimulate research and bring together the existing knowledge in the field of vertebrate pests so that a safe, selective and economical control may be used when needed.