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OPENING REMARKS -- THIRTEENTH VERTEBRATE PEST CONFERENCE

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As the chair of this year's conference, it is a great honor to be able to represent the 23 hard working members of the Vertebrate Pest Council. On behalf of the Vertebrate Pest Council I would like to welcome all of you to the 13th Vertebrate Pest Conference.

I am glad to report that this year's program will be a continuation of our past traditions. It was over 14 years ago when I joined the Vertebrate Pest Council. The Council had already sponsored five conferences since 1962 with a common theme of providing up-to-date information about vertebrate pests and their control. In the past 26 years the conference has provided an opportunity for vertebrate pest control specialists from around the world to join together to share their experiences about vertebrate pest ecology and control. The exchange of information and the establishment of professional relationships between people interested in vertebrate pest management certainly makes the efforts necessary to put on this conference a worthy endeavor. By relying in part on a call for papers and suggestions from vertebrate pest control professionals, the Council has put together another outstanding program. Again this year, California Pest Control Advisors, Structural Pest Control Operators, Certified Foresters, and members of the Wildlife Society will be able to get continuing education credit for attending the conference.

To continue to allow for the maximum number of speakers and the greatest diversity of topics we again this year have concurrent sessions during most of the conference. We have tried to group the papers together by topics and will make an effort to hold all speakers to the schedules to assure that you will not miss any of the papers that are of interest to you. With the exception of this morning's program, all of our sessions will be across the street in the Sheraton's conference facilities so you will be able to easily move from session to session.

Continuing an effort that was started eight years ago here in Monterey, we will have an educational display. This year

the display has been set up by various Vertebrate Pest Council members and is meant to give all of you an opportunity to view many of the tools and resources that are available to those involved in vertebrate pest control. In addition to the materials on display there will be a demonstration of some computer programs that can provide better understanding of some vertebrate pests. For the first time we have included pictures of common vertebrate pests and their damage in the educational display. We would certainly like your feedback about the value of the display and the additions of the pictures. If there is interest, in the future we hope to expand the photographic exhibit to include pictures of vertebrate pests or vertebrate pest damage that many of you may be willing to share.

Some of you might have noticed that this year there are no vertebrate pest control workshops, a change from the practice followed during the past three conferences. Last year the Vertebrate Pest Council experimented by holding the workshops in two locations in the state during the off year. The attendance at the off-year workshops was excellent and we will probably continue with this format in the future.

Yesterday, many of you took advantage of our third pre-conference field trip. As in San Diego we filled two buses and provided many conference attendees with an opportunity to get a close-up look at agriculture and vertebrate pest problems characteristic of the Central Coast of California. Your interest in the field trips will assure that field trips will continue to be a part of the Vertebrate Pest Conference in the future.

Plans are already under way for the 14th Vertebrate Pest Conference. Please keep in mind that the desire of the members of the Vertebrate Pest Council is to put on the type of conference that you want. If you have any input concerning possible topics, speakers, or conference format changes please share them with any of the Council members.

With that, I welcome you to Monterey and begin the 13th Vertebrate Pest Conference.