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Closing Remarks: Twenty-Seventh Vertebrate Pest Conference

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As the incoming Chair of the Vertebrate Pest Conference, I am excited to provide the closing remarks and a summary of the 27th Vertebrate Pest Conference held this past week at the Fairmont Newport Beach, in beautiful Newport Beach, California. With the exception of a bit of rain and cooler temperatures than one would expect in Southern California, the Conference was a rousing success.

Conference registration records showed that 312 people attended the Conference this year. Conference participants came from 27 states, Washington D.C., Guam and 7 countries outside the United States. Sixty-seven people took part in the field trip held on Monday, the day before the Conference officially opened. Thirteen students presented papers or posters this year and many were recipients of Conference travel scholarships. This level of participation once again demonstrated that the Vertebrate Pest Conference is a cornerstone in the U.S. and international field of vertebrate pest management. I thank each and every one of the attendees for making the Conference a success.

The Conference this year included 10 posters and 86 individual talks in organized into 5 topical sessions (Vertebrate Pesticides, Vertebrate Management Tools, Non-Lethal Vertebrate Control and Field Rodents) and 3 special symposia (Urban Coyotes, Bird Management, and Wild Pig Management). Due to the anticipated popularity of the urban coyote symposium, all talks in the symposium were videotaped, a first for the Conference, and will be posted on the VPC website (www.vpconference.org). The Council is also discussing including all the manuscripts in a special issue of *Human-Wildlife Interactions*. The Conference field trip included 5 separate stops, each stop highlighted vertebrate pest management issues in the southern California area. Presentation topics included seagull management, Orange County's vector-borne disease management, wildlife fences and mountain lions, falconry, and rodent management on flood control structures. I would like to thank all of the people who provided posters and presentations at the conference, and all the people who made presentations during the field trip. The names of those who made presentations during the field trip are found on page *iii* of this *Proceedings*.

The Vertebrate Pest Council initiated a new program this year where organizations could help defray the cost of the Conference by becoming a Sponsor. This new program offers multiple Sponsorship levels. I would like to thank our Gold Sponsors Liphatech Inc., and EcoClear Products, and our Silver Sponsors Bird Barrier, OvoControl by Innolytics LLC, and the National Wildlife Control Operators Association (NWCOA). Your support and participation is greatly appreciated.

I would also like to thank the 11 commercial vendors who set up and staffed booths. Your support and presence at these Conferences made break time even more enjoyable. I hope the time and expense of representing your companies was as valuable to you as it is to the Conference. The commercial vendors at this Conference included:

Avitrol Corporation	www.avitrol.com
Bird Barrier	www.birdbarrier.com
OvoControl by Innolytics	www.ovocontrol.com
California Association of Pest Control Advisors	www.capca.com
California Department of Pesticide Regulation	www.cdpr.ca.gov
Inert Gas Injection, LLC	www.eliminatorbyigi.com
Liphatech Inc.	www.liphatech.com
Motomco LTD	www.motomco.com
Tomahawk Live Trap Company	www.livetrapp.com
RCO International	www.rodent-baits.com
W-W Livestock Systems/Boar Buster	www.boarbuster.com

Organizing a conference of this size is quite frankly a lot and would be virtually impossible without a small army of people. Fifteen people, and in some cases their organizations, volunteered countless hours to organize and this Conference. Their names appear on page *iii* of this *Proceedings*. They deserve a special round of thanks for their efforts and contributions. These unsung volunteers ensure that the highly visible things like arranging high quality general sessions, currently relevant special symposia, an engaging poster session and field trip and lunches and snacks are exceptional and memorable. However, equally important but less visible are the hours volunteers spent behind the scenes tending to details such as working with the Program Committee, PAPA, and the California Department of Agriculture to ensure attendees receive the maximum number of continuing education credits, ensuring that commercial exhibitors have adequate and highly visible display areas for maximum contact opportunities, and seemingly minor details such as preparing computers with speaker presentations and preparing Conference programs and handouts. One volunteer who deserves separate recognition is Robert Timm, who has diligently, doggedly, and professionally prepared the Conference *Proceedings* – a thankless job that he has undertaken for many, many years. Thank you to *all* the volunteers who make the Vertebrate Pest Conference a success.

I have been actively involved in most of the Vertebrate Pest Conferences over the last 18 years. As I matured in

my position at the National Wildlife Research Center and became more thoroughly established in our profession, I have assumed more and more responsibility in the Conference organization. Every Conference has been a great experience, and I truly thank Kathleen Fagerstone for introducing me to this Council. My closing of this Conference signals that I have reached the apex of elected Council positions, and will serve as Council Chair for the next 2 years. I appreciate and am humbled in your confidence in my abilities and I look forward to serving the Council, and you my peers in wildlife damage management, in all ways necessary. I am excited to lead the Council, this group of steadfast volunteers, as we organize the 28th Vertebrate Pest Conference.

With that, I close the 27th Vertebrate Pest Conference. I hope to see each and every one of you and all your professional colleagues at the 28th Vertebrate Pest Conference, to be held February 26 through March 1, 2018, in Rohnert Park, California.

Thank you.