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Closing Remarks – Twenty-Fourth Vertebrate Pest Conference

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Proc. 24th Vertebr. Pest Conf. (R. M. Timm and K. A. Fagerstone, Eds.)
Published at Univ. of Calif., Davis. 2010. p. 395.

It is my duty and my pleasure to provide some brief closing remarks for this 24th Vertebrate Pest Conference. First, a bit of data regarding this Conference: we had a total of 253 persons registered, which included a total of 28 international participants who represented 9 countries (Australia, Canada, France, Germany, India, Israel, Mexico, New Zealand, and Nigeria), many of whom were speakers. We are honored by your presence. The perspectives you have brought us have widened our horizons, enriched our understanding, and no doubt have challenged some of our assumptions. We also have counted among us registrants from a total of 28 of the 50 states within our own country.

In our opening Plenary Session on Tuesday, Desley Whisson noted the importance of conferences, as this as a means of sharing ideas, and indeed we have done this throughout the week. Even in this new era of Internet communication, instant messaging, YouTube, Twitter, and virtual meetings, I think we can all agree that there is no substitute for meeting colleagues face-to-face, and making new friends. I trust the connections you have made here this week will enrich you personally and professionally. Our keynote speaker Tony Peacock challenged us to be engaged with our various audiences, particularly the public. Our hope is that is this Conference has in some way inspired you to share with others the growing knowledge, experience, and wisdom you possess that can help others to better understand and better solve human-wildlife conflicts.

Two people in particular need our thanks and recognition for their role in this Conference: Lorin Lima and Ryan Krason, from UC Cooperative Extension in San Diego County, have been our audio-visual technicians, taking on the task of making sure every speaker's PowerPoint presentation was received, loaded onto the laptop computers, and ready to go. This is not a stress-free assignment they took on... and in addition, both of them were also paper presenters. Please join me in thanking Lorin and Ryan for their efforts on our behalf.

In her opening remarks, Kathy Fagerstone thanked the specific members of the Vertebrate Pest Council who have had the responsibility for the major functions of making this Conference happen, from the field trip, to the

program, the poster session, the commercial exhibits, the continuing education credits, and the local arrangements. I echo her thanks to these Council members, and I also sincerely appreciate the support of each and every member of the Council, as each has had a role in making all the activities of the Council a continuing success and an important endeavor. Additionally, I want to recognize Kathy for her leadership of the Council during the past two years.

The Council solicits your input on ways in which we can improve your Conference experiences in future years, so find our email addresses on the conference website and send us a note, if you wish. And, if your postal address changes in the next 6 to 8 months, let us know so we can make sure that the copy of the Proceedings that you will be sent will find you.

An historical note: The very first Vertebrate Pest Conference was held here in Sacramento on February 6 & 7, 1962. There are three members of the original organizing committee who have been with us at this 24th Conference: Art Bischoff, retired from the California Department of Fish & Game, was present earlier this morning. Rex Marsh, retired from the University of California-Davis, was here all day Tuesday and Wednesday. And, Walter E. "Howdy" Howard, who we regard as the founder of this Conference, was here with his wife Betty on Tuesday and Wednesday. I'd like to note that Howdy recently authored an article that was published in the most recent issue of the Berryman Institute's journal, *Human-Wildlife Interactions*. And, I should add that in about 7 weeks, Howdy will celebrate his 93rd birthday. So, for those of us who are wondering whether it's about time to retire, Howdy's example should be an inspiration for all of us!

On behalf of the Council, I thank you for your attendance. On behalf of the state of California, we thank you for contributing to the recovery of our economy. We shall hope to see many of you in two years in Monterey, California for our 25th Conference, which coincidentally will also commemorate the 50th year of this Conference's existence.

Until then, so long, and safe travels.