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Closing Remarks – Twentieth Vertebrate Pest Conference

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Proc. 20th Vertebr. Pest Conf. (R. M. Timm and R. H. Schmidt, Eds.)
Published at Univ. of Calif., Davis. 2002. Pp. 383-384.

It is my responsibility now to provide the closing remarks for this, the 20th Vertebrate Pest Conference (VPC). Let me start by telling you about this conference. We had a total attendance of 337 with attendees from 37 states in the United States and 8 foreign countries. Our international participants hailed from Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Israel, Mexico, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.

In a number of ways, this has been a conference of firsts. This is the first VPC to be held outside of California. With a long tradition of 19 conferences over 38 years being held in California, the idea of a conference in Reno, Nevada, generated much discussion and some concern among the Council members. I think that from the standpoint of attendance, Reno has proven to be an attractive destination and attendance has not suffered. Other firsts may not be as obvious and may even seem rather mundane, nonetheless they contribute to the overall quality and functioning of the conference. This is the first VPC to make available the option of computer-generated presentations in every session. I estimate that 75% of the papers presented at this conference were given as PowerPoint presentations. That percentage is certain to increase in future years. While on this topic, I might add it is also a first that the concluding remarks are given as a PowerPoint presentation. This is the first VPC where we have provided abstracts for all the papers, in part to help you determine which papers to attend and in part to provide you with information for those papers you didn't attend. Also, you will be able to take the abstracts back to the office to share with your colleagues. This is the first VPC where payment could be made by credit card. While adding convenience for everyone, it undoubtedly was greatly appreciated by the international attendees who formerly had to pay with a check drawn in U.S. dollars. Finally, this is the first VPC where you have a chance, and I emphasize chance, to leave with more money than you came here with.

A conference of this size and complexity does not happen all by itself; it is the result of much individual effort and teamwork. There are many thanks to give. I would like to thank the members of the Vertebrate Pest Council, particularly those who worked on the various committees. Terry Salmon and Rex Marsh teamed up to organize an excellent and diverse program, which included over 70 papers. Desley Whisson reorganized and updated the registration procedures, hopefully making registration a seamless process for all of you. Desley was assisted with registration by Joanne Lee, a student assistant at the University of California in Davis. She was also assisted on-site by Peggy McKie, Lisa Jacobson, and Ed Foster. Desley also served as webmaster for the VPC, and I hope that many

of you took advantage of our excellent website and the useful conference information found there. Robert Beach and John O'Brien put together an outstanding field trip, a full day that gave us a good taste of wildlife damage management issues in Nevada, but no taste of barbeque salmon. Pierre Gadd and Charles Smith coordinated the commercial exhibits and provided us with the opportunity to learn about available control products and have some informal, social interaction at the buffet. Kathleen Fagerstone, as abstracts coordinator, was responsible for the assembling the abstracts of the papers, which was a new and very useful addition to the conference. Terry Mansfield handled the publicity duties effectively, and Bob Timm as arrangements chairperson worked with hotel officials to take care of all the details to ensure a smooth-running conference. A special thanks to Bob Schmidt, as conference chair, for his leadership and guidance in making this conference a success. Bob had the inspiration and the courage to break the mold and take the VPC to a new location, opening the door for other new conference locations in the future.

Continuing on this theme of individual effort and teamwork, I have to thank the many people who coordinated the lights and slide projectors during the sessions, and the session chairpersons for keeping the sessions on time and running smoothly. I thank PAPA, represented by Charlotte Carson, for efficiently handling the continuing education credits. Thanks to the vendors for bringing your displays and telling us about your products. Finally, many thanks to the speakers, and I include in this group those who spoke to us on the field trip. I really appreciate your time and effort in preparing and presenting your papers or demonstrations.

The *Proceedings* from this conference, to be edited by Bob Timm, should be available in 8 to 10 months. A copy will be mailed to each attendee. To avoid any delays in receiving your copy, if you move during that period, please send us an email with your new address. The VPC email address can be found at our website, which is listed in your program.

By the way, we have a new website address: <http://vpconference.org>. A reminder to the speakers— if you have not yet turned in your manuscript, please do so as soon as possible.

As chair-elect for the next conference, I invite you to join us at the 21st VPC to be held on March 1-4, 2004 at the Radisson Hotel and the Convention Center in Visalia, California. Visalia is another new location for the VPC. It is located in the San Joaquin Valley, about halfway between Los Angeles to the south and Sacramento to the north. Even though Visalia has a population over 100,000, compared to

Reno, Visalia will have a small-town atmosphere. However, the facilities are first-rate and the surrounding countryside is rich with agriculture. The Sierra Nevada mountains, including scenic Sequoia and Yosemite National Parks, are just a short drive away.

Thanks again to everyone for attending this conference. I hope to see you all at the next conference in Visalia, and please have a safe trip home.

