

Regardless of what management practice is used to reduce or eliminate wildlife damage or health hazards, there are some general guidelines that can increase the success of a wildlife damage management program. Be absolutely positive that you have correctly identified the type of wildlife causing the damage. An integrated wildlife damage management program is strongly recommended, meaning the combination of two or more wildlife damage management practices. Wildlife are very much creatures of habit, and will get used to a foreign object in their area the longer that object is left there (this is called habituation). The more diverse and varied the management techniques used, the less chance for habituation to occur and the more successful the wildlife damage management program. Another factor that will increase the success of a wildlife damage management program and combat habituation is randomness. The more random the application of the wildlife management techniques, the more the successful one will be in reducing or eliminating damage because the wildlife will never be sure when it is safe to be in the area. Not all wildlife damage management practices are equally effective or applicable in all areas; many times it is necessary to develop a wildlife damage management program specific to the area where the problem is occurring. And finally, make sure you know all of the local, state and sometimes federal laws that regulate the wildlife you are trying to manage, especially when using lethal management techniques.

Wildlife damage management may be recommended in addition to the practice of increasing bag/creel limits if individual animals are causing damage or health hazards.

- Predator control techniques like relocation, trapping, toxicants on livestock collars, and selectively shooting only problem animals are commonly used and are effective.
- Non-lethal methods of predator control include livestock confinement and herding, use of guard dogs, and the use of exclusion fences.
- Methods of controlling herbivores (deer, rabbits, etc.) include exclusion, taste and odor repellents, harassment techniques, habitat modification, changing human behaviors that attract problem-causing wildlife, and shooting. Trapping and relocating large animals like deer and elk is not cost-effective.
- Methods of bird control include exclusion, taste and visual repellents, harassment techniques, habitat modification, changing human behaviors that attract damage-causing wildlife, trapping and relocating or euthanizing, and shooting.

### **Knowledge Area No. 3: Wildlife Species and Habitat Needs**

Participants need to know as much information as possible about the species whose habitat they will be evaluating. Refer to *Activity 1: Wildlife Identification* and the detailed information for each species. Each species has information on habitat preferences and requirements, as well as some incidental facts.

Some coaches indicate contestants have found it helpful to prepare index cards with species photos and habitat requirements in preparation for the contest. Others have worked as a team to prepare PowerPoint presentations, interactive quizzes or other learning tools.

### **Knowledge Area No. 4: Interpreting Wildlife Habitat from Aerial Photographs**

Learning to interpret aerial photos allows participants to view areas of the state where they may not have a chance to visit personally. From topographic maps, aerial photos and satellite images they can see land forms, get an idea of the amounts and kinds of cover available, and see the availability of water. Looking closer at the maps, photos and images can show the amount and type of edge available, any barriers that might exist, agricultural fields, grassland and forest lands. Use of aerial photos before arriving at a contest site allows participants to