

Closing Remarks – Twenty-Sixth Vertebrate Pest Conference

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As the incoming Conference Chair, it is my honor and privilege to provide the closing remarks for the 26th Vertebrate Pest Conference. I think we all can agree that this Conference has been a big success. We had a record number of participants for the Conference, with 113 speakers and 20 poster presenters providing details on their perspective projects and programs. This Conference continues to draw well from international audiences, as 13 countries across 5 continents were represented by our 243 attendees.

Dr. Kathleen Fagerstone got the Conference off to an excellent start by providing an overview of how the field of vertebrate pest management has changed during her professional career. As most of you now know, Kathy is recently retired, and I am sure she's enjoying her much needed rest. I think I speak for all when I say we will certainly miss her contributions to the profession. Hopefully, she will continue to remain active in the years to come.

Our plenary session speakers helped set the stage for our three symposia topics for the 26th VPC. Invasive Rodents, Invasive Vertebrates, and Feral Cat Management are all topics of key concern in the vertebrate pest profession, and we appreciate the contributions that all speakers made to these symposia topics to advance the discussion on these challenging issues. In particular, Gary Witmer, Will Pitt, and Robert Schmidt deserve our gratitude for putting these symposia together.

I would like to extend thanks to all speakers in the general sessions who provided updates on very important issues pertaining to vertebrate pest control. We had quite the variety of topics ranging from the perception of Mexican wolves and agency staff as pests in the American southwest to the economic impact of vampire bats in Texas. It is in part this broad range of topics that makes this conference so interesting to those of us in the vertebrate pest profession.

For those of us lucky enough to take part in the conference Field Trip, we again owe thanks to Kathy Fagerstone. She spearheaded the effort to put this field trip together. The program was outstanding, and I think we can all agree that any opportunity to tour the countryside of Hawaii is time well spent.

This Conference was also enriched by the Commercial Exhibitors who attended. These exhibitors included Corvus Repellents, Critter Control, Goodnature, Motomco Ltd., Tomahawk Live Trap Company, and Van Beurden Insurance Services, Inc. Critter Control deserves additional recognition for their sponsorship of an afternoon refreshment break. Thanks to all of these Commercial Exhibitors for their participation in this conference.

Of course, a conference such as this does not come together on its own. Many members of the Vertebrate Pest Council took an active role in putting this conference together. The lion's share of thanks goes to John O'Brien, John Eisemann, and Charlie Crabb for their roles as Conference Chair, Program Chair, and Chair for Local Arrangements, respectively. These are difficult and time-consuming responsibilities, and we are indebted for your commitment to leading these important tasks. Bob Timm also deserves special recognition for serving as Editor of the Conference Proceedings. This is a very difficult task, but is one that Bob excels at. Of course others played a significant role in helping to put together the 26th Vertebrate Pest Conference. To save time, I will refer you to the Program for a list of these members of the organizing committee. If you have a chance, please extend your thanks for their hard work in putting together this Conference.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank the friendly staff of the Hilton Waikoloa Village and the Hawaiian populace as a whole. There are few places more appealing to host a conference than Hawaii. Thanks for making our time here so enjoyable.

With that, I will officially adjourn the 26th Vertebrate Pest Conference. Thanks to all of you who attended and made this Conference so successful. I wish you all safe travels back home, wherever that may be, and I hope to see you all in Newport Beach, California, from March 7-10, 2016, for the 27th Vertebrate Pest Conference.

Aloha.