

# A History of the Vertebrate Pest Conference

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**ABSTRACT:** The founder of the first Vertebrate Pest Control Conference, Walter E. Howard, plus a group of associates were responsible for the beginning of a long-lasting series of vertebrate pest conferences of national and international significance. This historical account of the Vertebrate Pest Conference and its organizing Council highlights important and sometimes atypical events in the evolution and progress made in the more than 40 years of its existence. No history would be complete without the inclusion of a bit of nostalgia referencing the trivial. The transitions and growth in actions initiated by the Council in its conference arrangements through presentation are commented upon in their historical perspectives. Attention is given to the important experimentation with different approaches in program content, such as special incorporated workshops and associated events—including the pre-conference field trips and the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) symposia—with a reflection on their significance and outcome. The evolution of Proceedings preparation and printing is reviewed with the changes made and steps taken to preserve and maintain it as an excellent and truly outstanding and widely-used reference source.

**KEY WORDS:** history, Vertebrate Pest Conference

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## INTRODUCTION

While considering the preparation of a written history of the Vertebrate Pest Conference, I found it hard to know where to start and what to include. There are many significant components, and some less important aspects, but all have contributed to what has evolved since its inception in 1962. The Vertebrate Pest Conference (VPC) has become one of the world's best known, most highly respected, and longest-running series of informative and educational conferences on the subject of vertebrate pests and their management.

The success of the first conference and especially the gratifying reception of the first Proceedings as a "How-To" vertebrate pest control resource, as well as encouragement from several sources, led to the planning of the next—and so on. Twenty-three published Proceedings, spanning over 45 years, represent the finest collection of printed articles extensively devoted to vertebrate pests and their management plus associated topics, that exists in one series.

It is hoped that the information included here will be of interest and reflect the achievements and the efforts of an enthusiastic, forward thinking, and highly motivated educator, Dr. Walter E. Howard, and the group of interested individuals who made up the organizing committee of the first conference, as well as of all of those individuals who have followed—serving on later Councils and dedicating themselves to the success of the ensuing conferences.

To set the stage for the beginning of the conferences, remember that in 1962 annual salaries were usually below \$12,000 and few families could afford to own more than one vehicle. Conferences in general were uncommon, and for an employer to send an employee to a conference or large meeting on company time and at company expense was rare. Air travel was comparatively expensive; buses and trains were the common modes of public transportation. There were no cell phones, Xerox machines, word processors, or computers.

## FOUNDER AND FOUNDING COMMITTEE

In 1982, the twentieth-year anniversary of the Vertebrate Pest Conference, the Proceedings included an early history of the conference written by its founder, Dr. Walter E. (Howdy) Howard (see Howard 1982). In his recounting of the early meetings, he reveals the process of bringing an idea for a conference from its embryonic stage to fruition. It seems appropriate to include here major excerpts of his words:

*"How did the Vertebrate Pest Conference get started? According to my file, interest first started rolling on 12 January 1960, when, with strong support from Maynard W. Cummings of the University, I wrote Eldridge (Red) G. Hunt of the California Department of Fish and Game, James W. Koehler of California Department of Agriculture (now Department of Food and Agriculture), and John Ludeman, Branch of Predator and Rodent Control (BPRC), Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, requesting a meeting to discuss the laws and policies of bird control. This meeting was held on 10 February 1960 in Red Hunt's office. Malcolm N. Allison participated in John Ludeman's place, as John was in Oregon working on starling control. William LaMarr of Fish and Game also joined us.*

*"Considerable efforts were involved in establishing better communications concerning vertebrate pest control in 1960 and progress was made toward establishing a cooperative vertebrate pest control research program at Davis between the University, the Denver Wildlife Research Center (DWRC) and the Bureau of Vector Control of the California Department of Public Health. The DWRC Field Station now located between Davis and Dixon was at that time actually on the Davis Campus with Adolph Zajanc and James O. Keith being housed along with me in Field Station Administration, under Director J. Lowell Myler.*

*“During 1960 it became apparent that the current information pertaining to vertebrate pest control was mostly couched in in-house reports of the DWRC and other organizations, hence not available for general use or for citing. To make this information more available, it was obvious that new cooperative efforts were essential, and one method I proposed was to hold conferences. But to do this we had to organize so we could sponsor such conferences. All the involved individuals were affiliated with some state or federal organization, hence it was going to be difficult and time-consuming to attempt to obtain “official” sponsorship of such conferences. After considerable discussion, it was decided the way around this was to establish an unofficial working committee which would organize and direct the conferences. This group became the Vertebrate Pest Control Technical Committee. The first meeting was on 17 January 1961 at the California Department of Agriculture. Richard H. Dana became our secretary. Koehler, Dana and others strongly backed the idea of holding vertebrate pest conferences. Walter Ball, Chief, Bureau of Weed and Rodent Control and Seed Inspection, California Department of Agriculture, also supported the efforts.*

*“At the second meeting of the Vertebrate Pest Control Technical Committee on 3 April 1961, we laid specific plans for the first Vertebrate Pest Control Conference, of which I [Howdy Howard] served as General Chairman... In attendance at this meeting were Ball, Dana, Koehler and Rollo E. Talbert of the Department of Agriculture, Keith F. Murray and Joe E. Brooks of the Department of Public Health, Zajanc and Ludeman of the Branch of Predator and Rodent Control, USF&WS, and Cummings, Elbert M. Brock, and Howard of the University. Once plans for the first conference were underway, we received strong encouragement from Dr. Philip J. Spear of the National Pest Control Association, and the NPCA generously offered to publish the Proceedings of the first conference for us.”*

It is interesting to note that in the address entitled “Vertebrate Pest Control”, given by Howdy at the opening of the first conference, the objectives of the conference were laid out and reference to an array of problems facing the field of vertebrate pest control was made. This address in the 1962 Proceedings is well worth reading in its entirety to understand Howdy’s philosophy on vertebrate pest control and the reasoning behind the organization of the first conference.

In that paper, Howdy discussed the need for an organization interested in vertebrate pest control, and he even suggests a possible International Society. Nowhere, however, in that presentation was the possibility of a second conference or a series of conferences explicitly mentioned. It is my impression that it was the great success of the first conference, and especially the popularity of its Proceedings, that motivated the Technical Committee to plan the second and future conferences. Multiple conferences were first mentioned by James

Koehler (1964), the chairman of the second conference, when, in his opening remarks, a reference was made to the current conference and others to come in the future.

## **THE FIRST CONFERENCE AND PROCEEDINGS**

The first conference was held at the Senator Hotel in Sacramento, California, February 6-7, 1962 with a registration fee of \$1.00. The organizing committee, under the leadership of Dr. Walter E. Howard, assembled a select group of 25 knowledgeable speakers to present “how-to” type papers on biology and control of a wide group of vertebrate pests— including commensal rodents, coyotes, opossums, pocket gophers, moles, snakes, pigeons, starlings, wolves, and many others. This two-day event drew an attendance of approximately 300 from 16 states, plus the District of Columbia, Canada, and Korea.

Walter Howard, the general chairman, was assisted in the conference planning, arrangements and execution by Maynard W. Cummings, James W. Koehler, Walter S. Ball, Richard H. Dana, Keith F. Murray, Joe E. Brooks, Elbert M. Brock, John A. Ludeman, and Adolph Zajanc. Many of these individuals were intimately involved in subsequent conferences. We owe considerable gratitude to this group for their time and effort in initiating and bringing this first conference to fruition.

In Dr. Howard’s opening paper of the first conference (Howard 1962), he stated, “Without a doubt, this is the first time a conference of this nature has been held anywhere, and the publication of all its papers under one cover should provide a valuable handbook on methods of controlling most of the nongame vertebrates of North America that at times become a pest to man.”

At that time, there were few general “how-to” references on the subject of vertebrate pest management. This was prior to the publication of the California Vertebrate Pest Control Handbook (Dana 1968), or the appearance, in the late 1960s, of the first animal damage reference by F. Robert Henderson of Kansas State University. Henderson’s work ultimately evolved into the Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage volume (Timm 1983, Hygnstrom et al. 1994). Therefore, the 391-page Proceedings of this first conference substantially filled the need for a comprehensive reference on vertebrate pest control and, for many years, it served as the nationally leading general how-to handbook on the subject. The volume was also used as a text in several college courses.

Through Howdy’s outreach and the subsequent efforts of Dr. Philip J. Spear, Technical Director, the National Pest Control Association (NPCA) assumed the expense of publishing the first Proceedings and made them available throughout the United States at \$3.00 each post-paid. The NPCA also provided free copies to their entire national membership, representing well over 1,000 pest control companies. At this time, in the 1960s, Pest Control Operators (PCOs) conducted much of the for-hire vertebrate pest control, including nuisance wildlife control, in urban and suburban situations. The NPCA is now the “National Pest Management Association”.

Because of California’s large size and extensive agricultural and forestry industries, county, state, and

federal agencies were very much involved with the state's vertebrate pest problems relative to those industries. These Proceedings were extensively used throughout California, especially by the County Agricultural Commissioners and their staffs, as well as by many other agencies— including those related to public health.

At the end of the first conference (1962), Dr. Spear, in his concluding remarks of appreciation, said “The record of this meeting will stand as a permanent tribute to Dr. Walter Howard and his associates.” That statement remains valid to this day.

## **COMMITTEE/COUNCIL**

### **Name Changes**

The organizing committee/Council responsible for the conferences has undergone several name changes. For the first conference, it was referred to as the *California Vertebrate Pest Control Technical Committee*. By the third conference, it became the *California Vertebrate Technical Committee*, dropping the word ‘control’. The word ‘control’ was also eliminated from the name of the conference. By the fourth conference, the committee name had been further shortened to the *California Vertebrate Pest Committee*. After the organization's incorporation in 1975, and to keep the name consistent with the incorporation documents, the name was modified to the *Vertebrate Pest Council of the Vertebrate Pest Conference*, or for short, the *Vertebrate Pest Council*.

### **Council Membership**

The committee/Council has traditionally been comprised of individuals from various agencies having an interest in vertebrate pest management. For much of the Council history, the University of California, Davis and the California Department of Food and Agriculture have been the mainstay, each with several members on the Council. There have always been members representing federal agencies who were either associated with predator control or who were involved in other areas of vertebrate pest management. Usually at least one member was associated with public health, such as the California Department of Health Services, and one or more from the California Department of Fish and Game. A special point was made to have a Council member from one of the county agriculture commissioner's offices because they played such an important role in California's agricultural rodent and pest bird control.

Occasionally someone from private industry becomes a Council member. Several universities have had representatives. It wasn't until September 1991 when Council member Robert Schmidt accepted a position at Utah State University, Logan, that we had our first out-of-state member. Two additional out-of-state members were added within a couple of years— John O'Brien, a vertebrate pest specialist from Nevada, and Dale Kaukeinen, of ZENECA Professional Products, Delaware. We currently have 4 out-of-state members, including the current chairperson, Kathleen Fagerstone. Desley Whisson of Australia is presently our only international member, which came about when she returned to her native country in 2004 to take a new position.

## **Membership and Participation**

For consideration to become a Council member, it is only necessary to write to the current chair to express an interest in joining, and provide sufficient information to convince the Council you would be a valuable addition. Rarely is a request denied; in many instances, members of the Council have encouraged specific individuals to apply.

The makeup of the Council, during the early conferences, was solely male— reflecting the field of vertebrate pest management at that time. Robin Breckenridge, of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, and Wendy Fitzgerald, with the California Department of Water Resources, were our first two female Council members, joining about 1987. Wendy, now Halverson, chaired the sixteenth conference (1994). Since then we have had a few other female Council members.

The occupational affiliation and widely varied experiences of this dedicated volunteer Council come together and serve well as a motivating and activating force. The ability to draw upon the natural leaders within the Council and the further ability of the members to work together as an energetic, congenial, and committed group have been the key to the success and presentation of exceptional conferences time and time again.

From the eighth conference (1978) and on, a list of the Council members and their affiliation was published in each Proceedings. These lists illustrate the varied backgrounds represented and how the Council has changed over the years, as some members dropped out and others came on board. A few members remained active and served for many years, providing a welcome continuity. Paul Gorenzel, in his opening remarks at the twenty-first conference (2004), provided interesting data on the length of Council member service. Twelve out of 20 members had been part of the Council for 10 years or more, 6 had 20 years or more of active service, and 2 had been affiliated with the Council for 40 and 42 years, respectively.

The size of the active Council has varied from about 18 to 23 members, with some more active than others, depending on their interest and the time they felt they could provide without straining their ability to fulfill the obligations of their career position. The Council meets several times each year to take care of business and to arrange for the off-year workshops and the up-coming conference. The first meeting following the conference is critical, as it establishes the chair and chair-elect of the next conference. Currently, the newly designated chair selects the new committee chairpersons. The first meeting after the conference is also important because the Council critiques the just completed conference. Shortcomings and needed improvements receive major attention. This critical evaluation is the reason we have seen a steady flow of changes and improvements in the conferences over the years. The evolution of the conferences is very much by design and considered planning. See Table 1 for a chronological history of the conferences in brief.

## **INCORPORATION**

In 1974-75, the Council decided to become incorpo-

rated and, primarily through the hard work of Charles C. Siebe and James W. Koehler of the California Department of Agriculture, along with other members, a set of bylaws were prepared. Since Charlie and Jim were also intensely involved in the California Weed Conference, the new bylaws, as I recall, were patterned somewhat after those of that organization but were modified to fit our particular needs. The Vertebrate Pest Conference became incorporated in the State of California on 18 August 1975 pursuant to the General Nonprofit Corporation Law. A number of years later, in 1987, these bylaws were revised slightly to better serve the conference.

Recently, since the bylaws were somewhat out of date, a decision was made to make the needed modifications to adjust them to better represent current needs and practices. Terrell (Terry) Salmon headed up a small working group and prepared the suggested revisions, which were adopted in the spring of 2005.

### Objectives

The objectives of the conference have always been to educate and disseminate information on vertebrate pest management. The list of objectives in the By-Laws of the Vertebrate Pest Conference (Article I) expresses these in greater depth:

- Section 1. To exchange information on Vertebrate Pest Management and related matters through periodic meetings and other appropriate means.
- Section 2. To advance environmentally safe Vertebrate Pest Management methodology.
- Section 3. To cooperate with public and private agencies in the solution of problems relating to Vertebrate Pest Management.
- Section 4. To consider and refer to the proper agencies, problems of mutual concern in the field of Vertebrate Pest Management.
- Section 5. To foster educational work on Vertebrate Pest Management through all appropriate agencies.
- Section 6. To encourage research by both public and private agencies on problems and their solutions as related to Vertebrate Pest Management.
- Section 7. To promote uniformity and coordination of activities among agencies concerned with the regulatory aspects of Vertebrate Pest Management.

### Attendee Comments

The majority of conference attendees, and probably all of those affiliated with any part of its execution, have an opinion regarding what they have gleaned from their participation. If asked to comment on what was considered to be the most favorable aspect, the responses were varied. Some examples are included below:

- They provide a venue to present some of my practical or technical oriented papers, and also have them published.
- As a participant from Europe, I am able to meet so many researchers in person and have lengthy

discussions outside the meeting itself.

- Preliminary research and new management approaches can be given exposure— for positive or negative feedback.
- I come to obtain my needed continuing education credits and if I can learn some new useful information or technique which will improve my bottom line, I'm that much ahead.
- As an about-to-graduate senior, presenting a paper, although nerve wracking, provides me with a great experience and also permits me to have a paper published. Able to meet prospective employers.
- The program keeps me abreast of what's going on and what's new in the field of vertebrate pest management.
- Researchers can meet researchers to exchange information and ideas outside of the program itself.
- So many interesting papers that there is not enough time to hear them all.
- When I leave these conferences I'm full of ideas and motivated into action.

*It's all about learning and the exchange of information— no matter how it's expressed.*

### OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

After a few conferences had been held, responsibilities and expectations for the duties of each of the committee chairs were established. A list of these duties was passed on from one committee chair to the next in order to assist in preparing for and executing a smoothly run conference. These committee chair guidelines were written and informally changed or added to as needed following each conference.

In 1992, the Council decided it was time for a formal update of these guidelines, as many arrangement and management changes were occurring— most of which were as a result of new technology. Consequently, a more formal document— *Duty and Responsibility Guidelines for Conference Officers and Committee Chairs*— was completed and adopted in 1993. The Council has always recognized the importance of the conference team knowing and fulfilling their respective responsibilities. This team effort strives to produce problem-free conferences, but, if a problem does arise, it can quickly be resolved. These formal guidelines are periodically updated as needed.

### CONFERENCE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS Sequence

The second conference was held in 1964, two years after the first, but it was three years following the second before the third conference was organized and held in 1967. It was for this conference that the word "Control" was deleted from the title because it was felt that the conference had a broader scope. The third conference was well attended, and the growing interest was apparent and impressive. By now, the organizing committee had concluded that the conferences were sustainable. Research in the vertebrate pest field was expanding, both in the U.S. and worldwide, providing ample researchers

**Table 1. Chronological history of the Conferences.**

<u>Conference</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Notes on Events, Changes and Progress</u>
First	1962	The conference was conceived by Walter (Howdy) Howard and his associates as their effort toward advancing the field of Vertebrate Pest Control. Howdy chaired the two-day conference. Subject matter for the presentations was carefully selected so that the ensuing Proceedings would serve as a "How-To" reference. The only Proceedings not published and distributed by the organizing committee/Council. A banquet was held the evening of the first day.
Second	1964	Chaired by James Koehler of the California Department of Agriculture. In his opening remarks, a list of seven conference objectives were presented. While all seven were important, number five seems to stand out in its significance; it is as follows: "Improve communications between research workers and between research workers, pest control operators and industry developers of materials used in the field of vertebrate pest control." This perspective continues to have merit. A presentation on "Chemosterilants and Other New Agents in Vertebrate Pest Control" was given by Donald Balsler, which was evidence of the fact that the organizing committee was dedicated to bringing the very latest information to the attendees. This two-day conference was held in Anaheim— providing a better opportunity for practitioners from the southern part of the state to attend.
Third	1967	The word <i>control</i> was eliminated from the conference title and from the organizing committee's name. The length of the conference was extended to three days instead of two— providing time for additional speakers and topics. Chairman Maynard Cummings (1967) mentions in his opening remarks that the Second Conference Proceedings were being used as a text in special classes at several universities, which increased sales. Several reprintings of the second Proceedings were needed. This was the first and only conference held in San Francisco— attributable in part to the stance taken by local politicians embracing anti-agriculture and anti-pesticide attitudes which began to increase about that time. The <i>Arrangement Committee</i> was listed in the program for the first time.
Fourth	1970	For the first time, a scheduled conference seminar was held on Wednesday evening 8:30 - 10:00 pm. The topic was "Environmental Management" and was moderated by Robert Z. Brown.
Fifth	1972	It became necessary, at a late date, to move the conference to Del Webb's Townhouse because our original hotel in Fresno filed for bankruptcy.
Sixth	1974	Twelve foreign countries were represented— the most to date. In his closing remarks, Chair-elect Charles C. Siebe congratulated the County Agricultural Commissioners for their great continued support of the conference, as representatives from 26 counties were in attendance. He went on to say that the Commissioner's staffs were the backbone of field rodent control in California. Our early programs attempted to provide a good number of topics of interest to county commissioner personnel.
Seventh	1976	The Council had worked to become incorporated, and this was the first conference to operate under the incorporated status. The first of six symposiums on Test Methods for Vertebrate Pest Control and Management Materials was held in conjunction with the VP Conference, the day following, and was sponsored by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM). This close association between the two meetings proved to be very workable— enhancing the education mission of both. This coordination turned out to be a wise Council decision, which was continued for six consecutive conferences.
Eighth	1978	Walter (Howdy) Howard chaired the VP Conference for a second time— the first having been in 1962. Second ASTM Symposium held following the VP Conference.
Ninth	1980	Third ASTM Symposium held following the VP Conference. Twenty foreign countries were represented by attendees. Attendees were present from 33 states, plus the District of Columbia. A total of 347 people registered at this conference.
Tenth	1982	Rex Marsh chaired this conference for the second time, serving first in 1972. First conference to hold three half-day workshops on the fundamentals of control. These were: Commensal Rodent Control, Agricultural Bird Problems, and Field Rodent Control. Designed specifically for those actually working in the field, these were held concurrently with the regular conference program. All the workshops were conducted by authorities on the subject, mostly Council members. In-depth handouts were used for each workshop. In this Proceedings, Howdy Howard published an account of the very early history of the VP Conference. This conference had the largest attendance, with a total of 479 attendees— a record still standing. The ASTM Symposium was held for the fourth time following the VP Conference.
Eleventh	1984	For the second time, a series of workshops was held concurrently with the regular sessions. This time there were four, rather than three. Commercial exhibitors were invited to the conference and 12 were present and listed in the Proceedings. Chairman Dell Clark (1984) dedicated this Eleventh Conference to Warren (Bud) Johnson, who passed away in 1979. Bud had been a very active member of the Council and had chaired the sixth conference. The fifth ASTM Symposium was held in conjunction with the conference.
Twelfth	1986	For the third and last time, three workshops on the fundamentals of control were held concurrently with the regular sessions. For the first time, concurrent sessions were instituted for the regular sessions so that more speakers could be accommodated. First-ever call for papers. Bringing technology to the forefront, a computer workshop was held in a separate room for the benefit of conference attendees. A new innovation, a field trip, was held on Monday— one day prior to the conference. Area sites, as well as some of the vertebrate pest problems common to the region, were visited. These one-day field trips continue to be held with each conference. This was the year that the Animal Damage Control (ADC) program moved back to USDA and James Lee, most appropriately, gave our keynote address. Sixth and last ASTM Symposium held in conjunction with the conference.

**Table 1. Chronological history of the Conferences** (continued).

<u>Conference</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Notes on Events, Changes and Progress</u>
Thirteenth	1988	The Council experiments with holding the vertebrate pest control workshops on off-conference years. Two very-well-attended workshops were given in 1987. This was the beginning of a continuing practice. Two buses were filled for our pre-conference field trip, which provided the attendees with a close-up look at agriculture and vertebrate pest problems in the central coast region. Chairman Charlie Crabb (1988), in his opening remarks, commented on the continuing effort to provide an education display, which was started in 1982 at the tenth conference. Thanks to Robin Breckenridge, an exhibit was assembled– based essentially on the use of photographs of vertebrate pests and vertebrate pest damage. Robin Breckenridge, of the California Department of Food and Agriculture and Wendy Fitzgerald, of the California Department of Water Resources, became our first female Council members. First Proceedings to be prepared using a computer word processor– at which time we switched to a two-column format.
Fourteenth	1990	This was the only Proceedings since the first conference, to be printed outside the University of California-Davis (by Whitehall Printing Co.). A Bibliography and Index to the Proceedings, 1 <sup>st</sup> - 14 <sup>th</sup> (1962-1990) was assembled in draft form by Laurie Paulik of USDA/APHIS/ADC Denver Wildlife Research Center.
Fifteenth	1992	First Proceedings to be word processed by an outside firm. A student poster session was put together by Charlie Crabb. The Council attempted to encourage student participation through a reduced student registration fee and poster cash prizes.
Sixteenth	1994	Wendy Halverson became the first female Council member to chair a conference. Charlie Crabb takes over from Rex Marsh the task of managing and publishing the Proceedings. The two-column Proceedings format is working exceedingly well and gives a more professional appearance to the volume. A wonderful banquet was held to commemorate Rex's retirement.
Seventeenth	1996	Complimentary buffet reception held Tuesday evening in the commercial exhibit area. A special wine tasting event was held at the Wine and Visitors Center adjacent to conference hotel. For the first time, a special sightseeing tour on the Friday following the conferences was available for those interested.
Eighteenth	1998	For the first time, peer reviewed papers became an option in the Proceedings. The titles of three reviewed papers appeared on the cover. Continuing education records were handled through Pesticide Applicators Professional Association (PAPA) for the first time; the Council has continued to contract with PAPA to do this for most subsequent conferences.
Nineteenth	2000	A <i>pub crawl</i> was an experiment into a different type of conference social activity. A good time was had by all; however, the Council decided that the potential liability was too significant to further continue this event. Gerry Miller organized a quality field trip to the San Diego Zoo, Sea World Adventure Park, and Qualcomm Stadium. Each and every field trip is truly a unique event and is always well attended. Peer review of papers continues to be an option for the presenters. Five papers received review and were listed on the Proceedings cover to provide special recognition.
Twentieth	2002	First conference to be held outside of California. Maynard Cummings, a member of the Council since its inception, passed away in 2001 and was memorialized in the Proceedings. Bob Timm takes over from Charlie Crabb the task of producing the Proceedings. For the first time, all papers in the Proceedings were peer-edited, and the practice continues. For the first time, with thanks to Kathleen Fagerstone, abstracts of all the presentations were assembled and made available at the conference to all attendees. This practice has continued for subsequent conferences. First conference where registration payment could be made by credit card. An estimated 75% of the papers presented were given using PowerPoint presentations. Desley Whisson currently serves as the web master for the VPC with a new web site address: <a href="http://vpconference.org">http://vpconference.org</a> . The conference web site has existed for about 3 years.
Twenty-First	2004	Chairperson Paul Gorenzel (2004) included some interesting historic statistics about the conference in his opening remarks, as follows: The VP Conference became truly international about the mid-1970s. Over the years, participants have traveled from 46 different countries to attend the conferences. Breaking this down further, Canadians have attended 17 out of 20 conferences, residents of the UK -16 conferences, followed by New Zealand with 12, Australia with 11, and France, Germany, and Mexico– each with 10 conferences. The opening (plenary) session took for form of a topical symposium on "Conflicts Between Wildlife and Restoration Efforts". Charlie Roncelli exhibited his great collection of pocket gopher traps– the largest gopher trap collection in the U.S. and probably the world. This conference had a record number of attending students– 20. Every speaker with audio-visuals except one used PowerPoint to present their visuals.
Twenty-Second	2006	A new record number of 26 student participants– many making an oral presentation of a paper or submitting a poster. All presentations using visual aids were presented by PowerPoint. The program included a topical plenary session ("Managing Charismatic Megafauna") and two special symposia: "Advances in Fertility Control" and "Wildlife Diseases and Human Health". Bob Timm, with his UC Hopland Research and Extension Center staff, contracted to take care of the entire registration process. The Council found the task was becoming too time-consuming for all volunteers and was considering contracting it out before Bob stepped up and offered to take on the task. Registration options offered for the first time included 1-day and 2-day registration, in addition to registering for the full conference. About 40 participants chose to register for only the last day of the conference, in order to attend just the "Wildlife Diseases and Human Health" symposium.
Twenty-Third	2008	Special symposia on "Marine Mammals" and "Wildlife and Food Safety" were included within the program. Eleven subject-oriented posters were presented, as well as three informational posters from cooperating educational entities. Attendance was approximately 100 persons fewer than expected, and it was decided that this was due to the conference having been scheduled the week preceding Easter (because of hotel availability). Also, a larger-than-expected number of conference participants registered for only 1 or 2 days, rather than for the entire conference. The field trip attracted only about 40 participants, but the smaller size of the group allowed last-minute plans to permit the entire field trip to spend the afternoon aboard a charter boat, seeing unique sights that included wildlife conflicts situations from San Diego harbor and adjacent waters.

and field practitioners from which to draw potential speakers. The fourth conference was planned for 1970, three years following the third. Continued conference success encouraged the committee to move toward establishing an alternate year schedule, with planning for the next starting soon after the completion of the current conference. This alternate year schedule continues to this date.

### **Selection of Locations**

It has always been a policy to rotate the conferences around the state, excluding the very northern portion because of its more sparse population. The first five conferences were held in Sacramento, Anaheim, San Francisco, West Sacramento, and Fresno— in that order. See Table 2 for a complete location listing.

An attempt was made to select conference sites that would attract new attendees and make the travel distance for California participants more equitable over time. The conferences were traditionally viewed, at least prior to the turn of the century, as a California event since the Council members were, for the most part, individuals from various State of California entities or federal employees working in the state.

Until relatively recent times, little consideration was ever given to taking it outside the state. The Council, after significant deliberation, voted to take the 2002 conference to Reno, Nevada. This location may have kept some employees from certain California agencies from attending because of lack of out-of-state travel authorization and funding. A few members of the Council considered this possibility and expressed some objection to the decision. This most successful Reno conference, however, drew more attendees from Nevada.

### **Time of Year**

The first conference was held in early February and all others, except for two, have been held the first week or second week of March. The one exception was when the conference was held in late February because the chosen hotel could not accommodate our conference the first week of March. The twenty-third conference (2008) was the second exception, as it was held later in March— the 17<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup>. The general time period chosen has served the conference well, for it is early enough in the year for hotel conference space to be readily available, which allows for more flexible negotiation with the chosen facility. In the early years, conference facilities needed only to be booked a year in advance, but today hotel accommodations must be booked two to four years in advance.

Early March is also the time of year when there is less ongoing field work in vertebrate pest control, at least as it relates to production agriculture and forestry. This is important, at least it was in the 1960s and 70s, because many of the attendees were practitioners, i.e., people working in the field. In addition, by early to mid March, it is hoped that the most severe winter weather has passed, travel is easier, and those in the eastern and Midwestern parts of the country may have an incentive to attend the conference in a warmer climate. The California landscape in late winter and early spring, with

its beautiful green grassy hills, may be an additional inducement. Without any real evidence, we imagine these considerations may favor a larger attendance.

### **Length of Conference**

The first two conferences were two-day events, but beginning with the third conference it became three days in length. Once the planning phase was completed, it took only a little more effort to extend it to an additional day. The conference has kept this three-day schedule ever since and instituted concurrent sessions beginning with the twelfth conference (1986). This was a significant change, as it provided the attendees with more choices of topics while it also accommodated many more speakers. At this time, research in the vertebrate pest field was flourishing and the number of potential speakers was significantly increasing. The move to concurrent sessions came at a very logical time and probably helped maintain our attendance, but it did not grow.

Initially, concurrent sessions did not please all the attendees because some wanted to hear two speakers who happened to be scheduled simultaneously. This displeasure quickly disappeared when it was found that a much larger selection of topics and speakers were available to suit the interests of everyone. With the inception of concurrent sessions, the size of the conference Proceedings grew significantly because of the additional number of presenters and submitted papers. The paper of any speaker whose presentation was missed during the conference, because of the concurrent sessions, could be found in the Proceedings.

### **Adherence to Time Slots**

Keeping the conference on its schedule of speakers and to the time allotted was always a high priority. In the first few conferences this was not always easy to do. After a few conferences, the presenters became cognizant of our strict time adherence. With the addition of concurrent sessions, this became even more essential in order to allow attendees to move from one session to another in a timely fashion.

### **Presentation Length**

The length of presentations, with few exceptions, has always been limited to 25 minutes— 20 minutes for the presentation and 5 minutes for discussion. If the speaker chose to take up the full 25 minutes speaking, then no time remained for questions and answers. This allowed adequate time to present an abbreviated version of a paper, preferably with the inclusion of visual aids. This has proven to work well over the history of the conference. Exceptions are granted to keynote speakers and other special invitees fulfilling a particular program need.

### **CONFERENCE CHAIR SELECTION**

Presently, the normal progression is from chair-elect to chair of the following conference. The conference chair-elect is nominated and voted upon by the Council. It is generally someone who has previously served in several other chair positions— especially as the all-important and time-consuming program chair. This most

**Table 2. List of conferences, locations, chairpersons, and attendance.**

Conference	Year	City	Hotel	Chair	Chair's Affiliation	Attendees
First	1962	Sacramento	Senator Hotel	Walter E. Howard	University of California, Davis	300
Second	1964	Anaheim	Charter House Hotel	James W. Koehler	California Department of Agriculture	225
Third	1967	San Francisco	Sheraton Palace Hotel	Maynard W. Cummings	University of California, Davis	265
Fourth	1970	West Sacramento	El Rancho Hotel	Richard H. Dana	California Department of Agriculture	275
Fifth	1972	Fresno	Del Webb's Townhouse	Rex E. Marsh	University of California, Davis	302
Sixth	1974	Anaheim	Royal Inn	Warren V. Johnson	Calif. Department of Water Resources	299
Seventh	1976	Monterey	Holiday Inn	Charles C. Siebe	Calif. Department of Food & Agriculture	341
Eighth	1978	Sacramento	Red Lion Motor Inn	Walter E. Howard	University of California, Davis	436
Ninth	1980	Fresno	Hilton Hotel	Jerry P. Clark	Calif. Department of Food & Agriculture	347
Tenth	1982	Monterey	Hyatt Del Monte	Rex E. Marsh	University of California, Davis	479
Eleventh	1984	Sacramento	Red Lion Motor Inn	Dell O. Clark	Calif. Department of Food & Agriculture	409
Twelfth	1986	San Diego	Bahia Hotel	Terrell P. Salmon	University of California, Davis	371
Thirteenth	1988	Monterey	Monterey Sheraton Hotel	A. Charles Crabb	Calif. Polytechnic St. University, San Luis Obispo	401
Fourteenth	1990	Sacramento	Red Lion Motor Inn	Lewis R. Davis	Calif. Department of Food & Agriculture	359
Fifteenth	1992	Newport Beach	Hyatt Newporter	John E. Borrecco	USDA Forest Service	327
Sixteenth	1994	Santa Clara	Westin Hotel	Wendy S. Halverson	Calif. Department of Water Resources	318
Seventeenth	1996	Rohnert Park	Red Lion Inn	Robert M. Timm	University of California, Hopland Res. & Ext. Center	340
Eighteenth	1998	Costa Mesa	DoubleTree Hotel	Rex O. Baker	Calif. St. Polytechnic University, Pomona	409
Nineteenth	2000	San Diego	Mission Valley Hilton Hotel	Terrell P. Salmon	University of California, Davis	386
Twentieth	2002	Reno, Nevada	Silver Legacy Resort-Casino	Robert H. Schmidt	Utah State University, Logan	337
Twenty-First	2004	Visalia	Visalia Convention Center and Radisson Hotel	W. Paul Gorenzel	University of California, Davis	291
Twenty-Second	2006	Berkeley	Marina Doubletree Hotel	John M. O'Brien	Nevada Department of Agriculture	332
Twenty-Third	2008	San Diego	Westin Hotel at Emerald Plaza	Mino B. Madon	Greater L.A. Co. Vector Control District	273

often means that the incoming conference chair has served as an active Council member for many years. It wasn't until the third conference that a vice-chairman was designated, and this title was changed to chairman-elect by the sixth conference. In 1976, this designation, for succeeding conferences, was changed to 'chairperson-elect' or, the abbreviated 'chair-elect'.

The chairperson for the first five conferences alternated between someone chosen from the University of California and the California Department of Agriculture—now the Department of Food and Agriculture. The sixth conference (1974) departed from this pattern and chose Warren (Bud) V. Johnson as chair. Bud had previously been employed by the Department of Agriculture and was intimately involved in the Council before moving to the Department of Water Resources. Since the twelfth conference (1986), the affiliation of the chairs became more varied (see Table 2). Chairs have come

from UC 9 times out of 23 conferences, 6 times from the California Department of Food and Agriculture, and 3 from other universities.

Wendy Halverson, chair of the sixteenth conference (1994), was the first female chair. Regrettably, some years later, Desley A. Whisson turned down the chair-elect position because of an expectation that she would be leaving and going back to Australia, her country of birth, before the next conference was to be held. We then were denied the opportunity to have our second female chair due to Desley's departure in 2005. However, we are pleased to have Kathleen Fagerstone, as our current Council chair and second female chair, for the twenty-fourth conference in 2010.

Several times, because of a loss of our chairperson-elect for one reason or another or because the active Council was relatively small, a past chairperson has come forward and volunteered to be the chair for a second time.

Those four individuals are Walter (Howdy) Howard (1962 and 1978), Rex Marsh (1972 and 1982), Terrell (Terry) Salmon (1986 and 2000), and Robert (Bob) Timm (1996 and 2012).

## **PROGRAM CONTENT/SPEAKERS/PRESENTATIONS**

### **Selection of Speakers**

In the early conferences, most of the speakers were invited to present papers, generally on specific topics. Some foreign speakers were also invited, while others sometimes requested participation—submitting topics they would like to present. The Council viewed international participation so favorably that speakers were nearly always accommodated. Speaker participation by invitation made it possible to shape the program and balance sessions with the desired content. It was also possible to draw on new speakers who had not previously presented a paper and who otherwise might not have attended. Prior to instigating concurrent sessions, speaker slots were so valued that presenters were not permitted to deliver more than one paper. The initiation of concurrent sessions allowed this restriction to be relaxed as many more papers could then be accommodated.

In the 60s and 70s, the Council members, as a group, were integral to the development of the program, including the recommendation of potential speakers and topics. The list of potential speakers and topics was presented to the Council by the program chair; the members approved or disapproved before any invitations to participate were initiated. This was later discontinued.

### **Foreign Participation**

Conference Chair Paul Gorenzel (2004), in his two-page opening remarks, gave an excellent account of some conference past history, especially with reference to foreign participants. To paraphrase some of his remarks—in the early conferences there were very few foreigners who participated in the program; a few may have been in attendance but they were not presenters. By about the mid 1970s, the conference had reached a point where it could be truly referred to as international in scope. Twenty foreign attendees were present at the 1980 conference. In 1988, a delegation of 16 from Japan attended the conference but did not participate as speakers. According to Gorenzel (2004), 46 different countries had been represented over the years up to that date.

Foreign University of California students, especially graduate students and visiting foreign scholars studying in the field of vertebrate pest management, often become contributing participants. Foreign graduate students from Bowling Green State University and the foreign associates and colleagues of the international consultants connected to the Denver Wildlife Research Center were welcomed contributors as well.

Howdy, with his numerous overseas consulting trips, was instrumental in stimulating foreign interest, not only as conference attendees but also as presenters. Other Council members also encouraged their foreign acquaintances and colleagues in this field to attend the conference. Word of mouth and promotional mailings assisted in attracting foreign speakers. Probably more important was

the fact that the conferences were becoming increasingly known for their content excellence and for an informative Proceedings.

### **Call for Papers**

The “call for papers” was instituted for the twelfth conference (1986); Terry Salmon was the strong proponent of this change. This coincided with the initiation of concurrent sessions, opening the way for accommodating a larger group of speakers totaling between 70 and 80—sometimes more. Some invitations may still be sent out to a few potential speakers, and typically to the keynote speaker. In recent conferences, a good portion of the program is made up of submitted papers. Noteworthy is the fact that for the twenty-second conference (2006), the program was made up largely of submissions through the “call for papers”.

### **Shaping the Program**

There was a deliberate effort in the early conferences to have at least a half dozen or more “how-to” presentations on vertebrate pest control to please the practitioners. This was to accommodate the County Agricultural Commissioner’s staffs, who were intimately involved in the field of agricultural vertebrate pest control and who made up a substantial part of the early conference attendees. This practice also favored the commercial Pest Control Operators, the staff from the County Health Offices, and several state and federal agencies who collectively also made up a significant portion of the attendance. Papers were sometimes solicited from members of these groups as a way of documenting current vertebrate pest control practices, for in the 60s and 70s very little on methodology was being published elsewhere. Following the passage and enactment of Proposition 13 in California in 1978, the activities of most county agricultural offices and county health departments were drastically reduced due to lack of funding. Addressing their specific program needs became less critical after that time. Once the “call for papers” was instituted, the submissions were widely varied in subject matter and any desired program subject emphasis needed to be so stated in the “call”.

### **Quality of Papers**

There can be little doubt that, over the years, the majority of the papers have become more sophisticated and in greater depth. Papers by practitioners have for the most part been replaced by presentations from researchers. Again, this is a reflection of the times—there are far more researchers in the field of animal damage control/management now than several decades ago. Research-oriented papers have come a long way in their depth, complexity, and analytical details because both laboratory and field research techniques and methodology have advanced so significantly through new and growing technology.

The reluctance of some presenters to submit a manuscript for the Proceedings, because they wished to receive credit for having published in a peer-reviewed journal, led to the idea of offering peer review for a limited number of papers. This was also recognized by

the Council as a way to improve the overall status of the Proceedings. Beginning with the eighteenth Proceedings (1988), three papers were peer-reviewed and were so noted on the volume's cover. In the nineteenth Proceedings (2000), five peer-reviewed papers were included. This option was discontinued because the number of authors requesting formal peer review was very low, the peer review process was time-consuming for both the managing editor and the reviewers, and there remained presenters who stated they still preferred to publish in established peer-reviewed journals. Instead, beginning with the twentieth Proceedings (2002), all papers published were subjected to a peer-editing process. This process continued under the management of now managing editor, Bob Timm. Peer editing is not as rigorous as the peer reviewing typically practiced by scientific journals, but it permits a more timely review of manuscripts and expedites the publication of the Proceedings.

## **REGISTRATION**

In the history of the conference, some of the most significant changes have occurred in handling registration. In the early conferences we had no pre-registration—attendees were registered at the conference. In an effort to relieve the long lines in the morning of the day the conference began, the registration desk opened the night before the start of the conference in order to register as many early arrivals as possible. Since registration fees were relatively low, many attendees paid in cash but, of course, there were always some checks. To avoid holding a significant amount of cash, we usually went to a local branch of a bank we did business with, to deposit the money once or twice during the first day of the conference.

For the early conferences, the inserts for identification badges were typed and issued at the registration table. At this time, typewriters did not have interchangeable fonts, so larger size bold print was not available on most typewriters. However, in setting up the early conferences we always worked closely with the Chamber of Commerce of the city in which the conference was held. This had a number of advantages, one of which was that they had special typewriters with the extra-large print, made especially for typing names on badge inserts. On occasion, the Chamber of commerce would loan or rent us two of these typewriters, and in some cities the Chamber would even provide us with one or two typists for four hours— free of charge, but this was uncommon.

Some Chambers of Commerce provided free advertising for the conference by placing notices in the local paper announcing the coming event. The Chamber of Commerce also provided the conference with colorful pre-printed covers for the conference programs. This permitted the early conferences to have some rather impressive programs that we otherwise would not have had. The programs of the first, second, third, and fifth conferences used covers provided by the Chamber of Commerce, and these artful program covers also provided an opportunity for the Chamber of Commerce to promote their city in an effort to increase tourism.

Registration methods with our conference have changed over the years, as has been true with most other

moderate-to-large conferences. Pre-payment for registration has become the norm and is highly encouraged. As an incentive to pre-pay, registration fees are lower for those registering early. Now, when participants arrive, all those pre-registered attendees have to do is pick up their pre-assembled registration packets.

For many years, Council members from the University of California-Davis drew upon their assistants and secretaries to manage the registration process and oversee the registration tables at the conference. Sydni Gillette and Dorothy Beadle were two who became known and were familiar faces to attendees.

With the advent of the internet and through the efforts of our business manager, Terry Salmon, and others, pre-registration is now accomplished, for the most part, with the use of credit cards for payment. Credit card use was implemented for the twentieth (2002) conference as an option, rather than use of checks, and has continued.

## **Registration Fees**

Registration fees were initially very low; in fact, the first conference charged only one dollar. Fees have gone up as the expenses of conducting the conference increased and as more amenities were provided. Initially, a copy of the Proceedings was not included with the registration but had to be purchased separately. This was changed when it was decided to raise the registration fee to include a prepaid copy of the Proceedings. With this inclusive prepayment, we were better able to predict how many Proceedings should be printed, and we had the funds in hand in advance to cover the publishing expenses.

As the conferences became more expensive to carry on, it was necessary to maintain a larger bank reserve so that we could cover unforeseen expenses. The conferences are totally self supporting with funds provided only by the registration fees and the sale of Proceedings. While we pride ourselves on our self-sufficiency, much of the credit belongs to the volunteer Council members who devote a substantial amount of their own time. Much of the credit also goes to the agencies, organizations, and enterprises willing to support the various Council members by way of providing time off and travel expenses as their contribution to the conference's educational goals. The agency in turn benefits, because the conference provides continuing education for their employees and a certain amount of prestige for being visibly active in such a worthwhile endeavor.

## **TREASURER / BUSINESS MANAGER AND FINANCES**

Terry Salmon, our current business manager, has held this position since 1983. There was no assigned treasurer/business manager for the first conference; it is assumed that Howdy Howard took care of the hotel charges with the accumulated \$1.00 registration fee. Maynard Cummings handled the funds for the second conference, as well as for the initial sales of the Proceedings of this conference. This responsibility was then turned over to me, Rex Marsh, and I took care of the printing and sales of the subsequent three printings of the

second Proceedings. At this time, we had almost no reserve funds and had to rely on Proceedings sales to pay for the typist and the printer.

James Koehler was treasurer/business manager for the third, fourth and fifth conferences, and Jerry Clark held this position for the sixth and seventh. Dell Clark was listed as business manager for the eighth, ninth, and tenth conferences. Dell turned over the task to Terry Salmon, who has been listed as such since the eleventh conference.

Just prior to Terry Salmon's acceptance of the position of business manager, the Council recognized the fact that the management of the conference business had grown into a time-consuming task and considered hiring an outside business manager. This practice had been done by other groups, such as the California Weed Conference. It was decided that changes were needed, but it was preferred that the position be kept in-house. Terry volunteered to take over the treasurer / business manager position, and the Council voted that he be monetarily compensated at a set monthly fee. Terry's responsibilities included taking care of all the official conference business, including filing the annual tax report. He also attended to the sale and mailing of the back issues of the Proceedings— from the second through the current volume. Finding ample available space to store the supply of Proceedings has always been a challenge for the business manager. Very recently, arrangements to sell our current and past Proceedings have been made with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

From an historical point of view, a significant business issue has been the fact that early conferences barely paid their way by means of registration fees and

Proceedings sales. This was because the Council wanted to keep these costs as low as possible in order to attract a greater number of attendees, many of whom were relatively low-paid practitioners. The price of the Proceedings was also kept very reasonable. It was only after the conferences were well-established that the registration fee and the cost of the Proceedings was increased enough to start accumulating some reserve funds. With sufficient funds, the Council was able to initiate some additional innovative programs, as extra conference rooms could be rented for exhibits, workshops, poster sessions etc. There are always extra expenses associated with expanding the conference programs or instituting additional innovations. The Council/conference is now on a very fiscally sound basis, with a sufficient reserve to explore further conference related ventures and to see us through any unforeseen expenses. With the exception of the first conference, for which the Proceedings was published and distributed by the National Pest Control Association (NPCA), the Council has prided itself on being a financially self-supporting.

### PROCEEDINGS

There was never any doubt about producing a Proceedings for every conference. Getting vertebrate pest information in print was crucial for educational purposes, for so little was published on the subject in these early years. With rare exception, the *Journal of Wildlife Management* refused to publish on wildlife damage subjects during this period of their history. Relevant details on the particulars of the Proceedings are provided in Table 3.

**Table 3. Conference Proceedings particulars.**

Conf. No.	Conf. Year	Total No. of Papers*	No. of Foreign Speakers	No. of Pages in Proceedings	Cost of Proceedings
1	1962	24	1	389	\$3.00 †
2	1964	23	1	160	\$3.50 †
3	1967	29	1	178	\$5.00 †
4	1970	38	6	204	\$5.00 †
5	1972	33	9	204	\$5.00 †
6	1974	47	8	299	\$7.50 †
7	1976	43	6	323	\$10.00 †
8	1978	47	16	269	\$15.00 †
9	1980	43	14	235	\$10.00 †
10	1982	46	9	245	\$10.00 †
11	1984	43	8	238	\$12.00 †
12	1986	61	18	395	\$15.00
13	1988	63	11	326	\$15.00
14	1990	78	12	372	\$15.00
15	1992	86	24	415	\$25.00
16	1994	64	16	360	\$25.00
17	1996	54	16	264	\$25.00
18	1998	77	10	433	\$25.00
19	2000	75	18	456	\$25.00
20	2002	71	12	399	\$25.00
21	2004	72	4	372	\$25.00
22	2006	99**	6	546	\$35.00
23	2008	70**	6	334	\$35.00

\* excluding opening and closing remarks  
 \*\* including published poster presentations  
 † post-paid

The papers presented at the first conference (1962) were published as submitted, without retyping, resulting in a lack of uniformity in type face and page layout. As has been mentioned elsewhere, the first Proceedings were published and distributed by the National Pest Control Association— at their expense.

The manuscripts of the second conference were all retyped and put into a kind of standard format. Maynard Cummings oversaw this process through the first couple of printings, which were done by the University's printer (i.e., Reprographics). It is interesting to note that the second Proceedings went to a fourth printing because relatively large repeat orders were received from Universities. The University orders indicate that the volume was being used as a text. The U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Branch of Predator and Rodent Control also ordered a sizeable quantity for national distribution to their personnel.

The later printings, as I recall, were in the area of 150 copies each time. As near as I can remember, there were about 700 copies total printed of the second Proceedings. Our inexperience and inability to anticipate future sales, along with a limited budget, kept these later printings to a modest number. From the third Proceedings onward, it has been unnecessary to order any reprinting.

By the third conference, the word *Control* had been dropped from its title. All the manuscripts for the third Proceedings were retyped on paper approximately 30% larger than a standard sheet of office paper. These were commonly used by the printers, as they would then photograph them, reducing the typed pages back to 8½ × 11 inches. In this way, the print size was reduced by about one-third, allowing substantially more text on a page— reducing the total number of pages and resulting in a reduced printing cost. This procedure was continued through the twelfth Proceedings (1986). For the Proceedings of the thirteenth conference (1988), a two-column layout was instituted, using a word processor that allowed the size of print to be easily adjusted. Now, papers are submitted and formatted for publishing using computer word processing software.

For the fifteenth Proceedings, the Council decided to have the volume prepared and printed by a local outside business. The firm did the word processing, but they quickly demonstrated that they could not be relied upon for accurate proofing. This task, once again, became the responsibility of the managing editor. The printing estimate was also exceedingly high, so we accepted their camera-ready copy and sent it off to our regular printers, the Whitehall Printing Company. As it turned out, this trial was neither a money- nor a time-saver; the Council has never again attempted out-sourcing.

In the early years, we prided ourselves on a speedy publication of the Proceedings; our aim was to try to have them ready to mail within five months following the conference. Often we had them out much earlier. Having the Proceedings available while the conference was still fresh in the minds of the attendees was considered a plus. This self-imposed deadline was consistently met for 24 years— through the twelfth Proceedings. Through the thirteenth Proceedings 1988, the UC Davis printer (“Re-

prographics”) did the actual printing once the camera-ready master copy was complete. The printer's staff was extremely helpful, easy to work with, and conveniently close by. Over time, we became dissatisfied with some of their work and, Reprographics, at that time, was not equipped to do wrap-around covers. The Proceedings had to be sent elsewhere for that process. Costs were also rising, making Reprographics less competitive.

For the fourteenth Proceedings, a switch was made to the Whitehall Printing Company, a commercial printer that offered excellent prices and produced a volume of acceptable quality. Early on, Whitehall required a minimum quantity printing of 1,000 Proceedings. Whitehall's printing cost was sufficiently inexpensive that, even though a full 1,000 copies were not needed, we could well afford to discard a quantity of unsold surplus copies. This requirement is no longer in effect, and for the last couple of Proceedings orders of a lesser quantity have been possible. We continued to use Whitehall Printers through the twenty-second Proceedings.

Once we no longer used the University printer, this short production duration was no longer feasible, and the fairly recent introduction of peer editing adds considerably to preparation time, as does any increase in the number of published papers. Currently, the Proceedings typically comes off the press 10 to 12 months following the conference.

I, Rex Marsh, took care of editing and managing the preparation of the Proceedings and seeing them through printing from the third conference (1967) through the fifteenth conference (1992). At that time, Charles (Charlie) Crabb took it over and managed the preparation of the Proceedings from the sixteenth (1994) through the nineteenth (2000). Robert (Bob) Timm took over the task from Charlie in 2002 and turned out the twentieth Proceedings as his first production. Bob continues in this capacity and has taken on and expanded the peer editing component as well.

A chronology of the evolution of the Proceedings preparation and printing is provided in Table 4. It well illustrates the improvements and/or transformations made in virtually every subsequent Proceedings.

## **INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS AND NOTEWORTHY EVENTS**

There were experiments and innovative undertakings by the Council that do not fit well under the previous headings, yet these were important events that have contributed to the continuing success of the conference and are, therefore, worthy of mention. They kept the conferences interesting and up-to-date— relative to other meetings. Further, these noteworthy events reflect on the creativity and innovative efforts of the Council to bring about progressive change.

Conferences followed by ASTM symposia, pre-conference field trips, vendor displays, and program workshops, which led to off-year workshops, are all examples of these special events in the history of the conference. Others include student poster sessions, special educational displays, such as photo exhibits and the world's largest gopher trap collection. Although less connected, the “Index to Proceedings” compiled by the

**Table 4. Chronological history of the Proceedings.**

<b>Proceedings</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Notes on Changes and Events</b>
First	1962	Only Proceedings published and distributed by the National Pest Control Association. The presentations were printed just as they were submitted by the speakers, without retyping.
Second	1964	Maynard Cummings managed the preparation and printing process. The presentations were retyped, using a standard format. Retyping of papers became the normal practice thereafter. Four relatively small printings were made because of unanticipated demand. The Proceedings were printed by the University of California, Davis printers.
Third	1967	Rex Marsh took over the task of managing the preparation and printing of the Proceedings. He continues this task through the fifteenth 1992 Proceedings. The word <i>control</i> was dropped from the title and name of the technical committee. Through the use of "reduction paper" the size of print used in Proceedings was reduced by about 30%, allowing considerably more text on each page and reducing the printing cost. This method was used until we moved to a two-column layout for the thirteenth (1988) Proceedings. The University printer continued to print the Proceedings through the thirteenth volume. The list of the registered attendees was moved to the back of the volume.
Fourth	1970	First Proceedings to have a designated editor. As a courtesy, the conference chair, Richard Dana, was the designated editor. Abstracts were included for some papers.
Fifth	1972	Eight presentations were given by foreign participants—the most to date. A growing number of papers had abstracts.
Sixth	1974	Forty-seven papers appear in this 299-page Proceedings, the largest to date.
Seventh	1976	The first of six symposiums on Test Methods for Vertebrate Pest Control and Management Materials was held in conjunction with the VP Conference, held the day following and sponsored by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM). ASTM published a separate Proceedings for their symposium, so this had no impact on the conference Proceedings.
Eighth	1978	The first time the names of the full Council membership are included in the Proceedings. Eighteen of the included 47 papers were presented by participants from outside the United States.
Ninth	1980	Twenty foreign countries were represented by participants, but only 10 countries were represented in the speaker lineup. This was the most foreign representation to date.
Tenth	1982	First Proceedings to have a wrap-around cover with a printed spine. A list of conference assistants, i.e. projectionist, light and sound technicians, was included for the first time. At 479, this Tenth Conference had the largest registered attendance to date.
Eleventh	1984	The leaders and contributors to each of the four formal workshops were listed in the Proceedings. Twelve exhibitors participated and were listed in the Proceedings.
Twelfth	1986	For the first time, concurrent sessions were instituted for the regular sessions so that more speakers could be accommodated. Sixty-one papers were published in this 395-page Proceedings— the largest to date.
Thirteenth	1988	First Proceedings to be switched to a two-column format and prepared using a computer, i.e. word processor. This was an advancement, as a number of type sizes could easily be used and format options were nearly unlimited. No longer was it necessary to use reduction paper, and our IBM Selectric typewriters could be abandoned. This switch to a word processor and working out a suitable two-column format was more involved than anticipated. The submitted papers at that time required retyping. As the years went by, more and more papers were submitted on a disk and now only disk submissions are accepted. At this time we also began identifying each paper with volume, pages, and date. For the first time, it took longer than six months to produce the Proceedings. Animal drawings were inserted in open spaces below the text to enhance the general appearance. With some exceptions, this practice continues.
Fourteenth	1990	First time the Proceedings was printed by Whitehall Printing Co., as we had become somewhat dissatisfied with the University's printers. Problems had occurred with the binding of the Thirteenth Proceedings—the pages became loose. We were most pleased with the switch to Whitehall and have continued with them since that time.
Fifteenth	1992	As a trial, we contracted with an outside firm to type and format the Proceedings. It did not save any time or money, so it was never again out-sourced. First proceeding to have an assigned ISBN number.
Sixteenth	1994	Wendy Halverson was our first female chairperson and, therefore, our first female designated co-editor. Charlie Crabb took over the management and printing of the Proceedings from Rex Marsh.
Seventeenth	1996	A 246-page Proceedings edited by Chairman Robert Timm and Managing Editor Charles Crabb. Of the 54 papers, 12 were by individuals from other countries.
Eighteenth	1998	For the first time, peer reviewed papers became an option in the Proceedings. The titles of these three reviewed papers appeared on the Proceedings cover. Largest volume to date, containing 433 pages.
Nineteenth	2000	Peer reviewing continued to be optional for submitted papers. Five papers received reviews and, again, the titles appeared on the front cover.

**Table 4. Chronological history of the Proceedings** (continued).

<u>Proceedings</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Notes on Changes and Events</u>
Twentieth	2002	Bob Timm took over the management and printing of the Proceedings from Charlie Crabb. Charlie had managed four Proceedings through the production process. For the first time, all the papers in this Proceedings were peer edited; it was no longer optional. "In Memoriam" for Maynard W. Cummings appears in the front of the Proceedings. An "Index of Authors" and an "Index of Key Words" is included for the first time and is located in the back of the volume. The listing of the editors differs now from what has been shown in the past. As coeditors, the managing editor of the Proceedings is listed first, and the conference chairperson second. This is now the new practice.
Twenty-First	2004	The process of peer-editing all papers continued. The list of attendees was not published– a first. New "privacy policy" was Council-approved. In accordance with new state laws and the climate of the times, this was thought to be prudent. For the first time, to conform with this new policy, the Proceedings did not include a list of attendees.
Twenty-Second	2006	Web site is listed. Largest Proceedings to date, with 546 pages and over 90 presentations. Most conference presentations were as a result of the "Call for Papers". Nine poster presentations were published in the Proceedings. First time individual Proceedings have been plastic shrink-wrapped by the printer for greater protection for mailing.
Twenty-Third	2008	Poster presentations were again published in the Proceedings. Conference attendees were given the option of ordering a copy of the Proceedings on CD (containing each paper in pdf format) in addition to the printed volume, for an additional \$5 fee, but only 20 attendees ordered the CD.

Denver Wildlife Research Center was a very useful undertaking and also an event worthy of note.

Several of the more relevant events are discussed from a historical perspective:

#### **ASTM Symposium Joins the Conference**

Beginning with the seventh conference in Monterey in 1976, the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), located in Philadelphia, joined with the VP Conference to hold their first Symposium on Vertebrate Pest Control and Management Materials. ASTM had become involved in establishing a variety of consensus test methods for the evaluation of efficacy for products registered and sold under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act. This provided an ideal opportunity to have some positive influence on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) rodenticides test protocol.

The Rodenticide Committee established by ASTM was an active committee that prepared a number of consensus test methods that were passed and adopted by ASTM. It was during this period that the Rodenticide Committee members discussed the possibility of having a symposium on the subject, primarily for the exchange of test methods information and to see that this information was put in print– making it widely available. I happened to chair the first ASTM Rodenticide Committee, so along with committee members William Jackson and John Beck, we arranged to hold the first ASTM Symposium. It seemed very logical to somehow connect this Symposium with the VP Conference because many of the conference attendees would be the same individuals attending the ASTM Symposium. This idea was brought before the Vertebrate Pest Council, which agreed with such an arrangement so long as it followed, not preceded, the conference. In cooperation with ASTM, the Council arranged for the meeting room, refreshments, etc. but these were paid for by a separate registration fee.

The well-attended and successful first conjoined conference and symposium, and the hardbound symposium Proceedings produced and sold by ASTM, provided the incentive to continue the arrangement. The

ASTM Symposium was sponsored and arranged by the ASTM Rodenticide Committee and was held on the Friday following the VP Conference. This continued for six consecutive conferences, ending in 1986 with the twelfth Vertebrate Pest Conference in San Diego. This joint venture is believed to have helped our conference attendance; three out of the six paired meetings drew over 400 attendees to the VP Conference. The tenth conference (1982) recorded 479 attendees– the largest ever to date.

The union of the two meetings was discontinued for several reasons; ASTM management became increasingly difficult to work with, and it was becoming more difficult to fill that program. This series of symposiums resulted in the production of six excellent symposium Proceedings (see Jackson and Marsh 1977, Beck 1979, Schafer and Walker 1981, Kaukeinen 1983, Shumake and Bullard 1988, Fagerstone and Curnow 1989), which serve as great references on test methods and related subjects for vertebrate pest management materials.

#### **Conference Workshops**

The addition of practitioner-oriented workshops to the conferences was a departure from the norm and was an experiment of a sort. It was aimed at providing information on specific topics and at the same time offering continuing education credits for those who needed it for maintaining their certification or renewing their licenses. Continuing education credit requirements were relatively new at that time and were increasingly mandated.

At the tenth conference (1982) in Monterey, workshops were included but were separated from the regular program in that they were self-contained with their own core of speakers, mostly drawn from Council members. Three half-day workshops encompassed the Fundamentals of Commensal Rodent Control, Solutions to California Agricultural Bird Problems, and Fundamentals of Field Rodent Control. Prepared, in depth, handouts were provided for each workshop so that every attendee had a good take-away reference. Workshop presentations were, thus, not included in the Proceedings. These workshops

ran concurrently with the regular conference sessions.

Four workshops were included in the eleventh conference (1984), held in Sacramento. Besides the initial three subjects, a fourth entitled "Fundamentals of Predator and Aquatic Rodent Control" was included. At the twelfth conference (1986, in San Diego), the fourth workshop was Urban Wildlife Problems.

These workshops initiated as part of the conference were met with a good deal of enthusiasm and attracted many attendees, especially pest control advisors, pesticide applicators, and other practitioners who work in the field and need a certain number of continuing education credits.

As a result, the conference attendance became a somewhat divided or split group— the practitioners and field level employees made up one portion, and the researchers and more academically-oriented individuals made up the other. This resulted in a lot of individuals standing in the foyer waiting for the portions of the program that interested them, and those interested in only obtaining educational credits often left the conference for part of the day. The Council felt that this lack of cohesiveness was not in the best interest of the conference. The Council, after considerable deliberation, decided that these workshops on practicalities and fundamentals of vertebrate pest control would best be offered outside the scope of the conference— in a separate venue.

### **Off-Year Workshops**

Similar workshops on the principles and fundamentals of vertebrate pest management were then established as one-day events, covering the laws and regulations and a variety of pests— depending on where in the state the workshop was scheduled. Each spring, of those odd-numbered years beginning in 1987, a series of two or three one-day workshops were established— each in a different area of the state. These multiple off-year workshops were arranged and managed by the Council, with many of the Council members serving as instructors.

After several years, the Council determined that an excessive amount of time was being devoted to the organizational and logistical tasks associated with these workshops. In an effort to reduce our work commitment, our business manager, Terry Salmon, negotiated with the Pesticide Applicators Professional Association (PAPA) to handle the promotional work, select the locations, and make the arrangements for meeting room and included lunch. In this shared arrangement, the Council prepared the workshop programs and arranged for all the volunteer program speakers. PAPA registered the attendees and reimbursed the speakers for their out-of-pocket travel expenses. After meeting the immediate costs of the workshop (room rental, lunch costs, handouts, etc.), the remaining funds are shared between PAPA and the VPC to offset costs of developing the programs.

The workshops are very popular and well attended by practitioners, especially those needing their continuing education credits. Attendance increased after we partnered with PAPA (probably due to better publicity); in some years, we drew 300-450 per location. These one-day workshops, with a modest registration fee, are packed with pertinent information relevant to the region of the

state in which it is held; they continue to be held in odd-numbered years, typically at three (north, central, and south) locations within California. The dates, locations, topics, speakers, registration fee, and attendance would be a topic for another historical compilation. As a spin-off of the conference, these off-year workshops are a major success, and the total workshop attendance is approximately two to three times the attendance of the VP Conference.

### **Field Trips**

Day-long pre-conference field trips have become a regular event since the twelfth conference (1986). These are designed to expose the participants to some of the local points of interest and to vertebrate problems indigenous to the area. Several stops are planned, with speakers at each stop to provide information and often include demonstrations. Knowledgeable tour guides aboard the buses provide a running commentary of the area being traveled. The participation has been consistently good, usually filling two buses. A separate fee is charged for the field trip, which takes place on the Monday preceding the conference. Lunch is provided— usually at some local eatery enroute.

The field trips take considerable effort and time to plan and implement. Several Council members combine their thoughts and efforts to organize the field trips— making all the necessary arrangements and then executing the event with the assistance of a number of additional volunteers. The field trips have their own interesting history, which is not included here.

### **Product Vendor Displays**

A few of the early conferences occasionally accommodated some vendors, but it wasn't until the sixteenth conference (1994) that it became a truly organized and regular part of the event— with a committee chair assigned to handle the arrangements. A separate room or area was set aside for the vendor displays. Vendors were charged for each display table— which included registration for the conference for two persons.

One evening during the conference, vendor fees are used to finance a light buffet or an assortment of hors d'oeuvres— depending on the income generated. These refreshments are made available in the same room as the vendor displays, or in very close proximity. This encourages attendees to spend more time interacting with the vendors. Vendor participation and displays now have a relatively long history with the conference and are to be continued.

### **Index to Proceedings**

While several Council members had proposed an index, little action toward that end had been undertaken. In 1995, however, Laurie Paulik, librarian at the USDA APHIS Denver Wildlife Research Center (DWRC), produced and published a most useful bibliography and index for the first (1962) through the sixteenth (1994) conference Proceedings. This excellent 8½ × 11-inch, 58-page compilation was offered by DWRC to anyone, free of charge. The Council is very appreciative of Laurie's significant efforts and very grateful to Mike

Avery, who was instrumental in initiating the project. This bibliography and index has proven to be immensely useful.

While the hard copy of the index has not been updated since that time, in about 2000 the National Wildlife Research Center, formerly the Denver Wildlife Research Center, made a fully searchable index of the VPC Proceedings, Volumes 1 through 20, available on the NWRC's website. The availability of this searchable index continued until about 2000, when the NWRC switched their website architecture to a new USDA APHIS system, which created firewall and database problems that were not easily resolved.

Concurrently, the Internet Center for Wildlife Damage Management, grant-funded and managed by a consortium of Universities based at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, began making available any published wildlife damage control information that could be obtained. The Council arranged for the ICWDM (web site: <http://icwdm.org>) to create electronic copies of the entire VPC Proceedings volumes 1 through 18 (1962 through 1998) and make these available for download from that web site. This arrangement is anticipated to continue, and the Council will continue to make additional volumes (past Volume 18) available via the Internet. However, the more recent Proceedings will likely be withheld from electronic availability for perhaps 6 or 8 years, so as not to directly compete with the sale of available stock of printed Proceedings. Additionally, Council contracted with the ICWDM to exclusively market copies of past VPC Proceedings through the University of Nebraska's online web store.

## SUMMARY REMARKS

There is little question that Walter E. (Howdy) Howard's original idea of bringing together prominent individuals from the various agencies having an interest in vertebrate pest issues was the key stimulus for the events that followed. Howdy's enthusiasm and energetic leadership led to the formation of the loosely-organized informal Technical Committee, from which the first conference took shape. Howdy's dedication and near total immersion in the field of vertebrate pest control—coupled with his natural ability to enunciate and promote his ideas to his associates—did much to inspire his fellow committee members.

Key members of the Technical Committee organized and executed the first conference, with Howdy as its chairman. The interest shown and support given to the first conference was outstanding and reflective of the great need for vertebrate pest information—making the conference most timely.

The wide acceptance of the first Proceedings as the most up-to-date "how-to" information on vertebrate pest management provided a strong impetus for the Technical Committee to move toward establishing a second and then a third conference—the series was well on its way.

The conferences quickly grew in national stature and then soon received international recognition. These self-supporting conferences, although having struggled a bit, now operate on a financially solid basis. For decades, the Proceedings have served as one of the most valuable

sources of information on vertebrate pest management. Proceedings papers have been cited countless times over the decades.

A goal-oriented and highly motivated volunteer Council evolved that strived to carry on a tradition and make every conference better than the last. They were undaunted by challenges—keeping the conferences interesting and striving to upgrade procedural techniques to keep abreast or ahead of current educational conferences practices. In addition and equally important, there is no shortage of leadership ability among the Council members.

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