

Summary

This volume continues the progression of E35.17 symposia publications (STP 625, STP 680, STP 752, STP 817). The diversity of topics attests to the widespread nature of the subcommittee's scope and the highly varied demands placed on its workers for evaluative techniques. Papers run the gamut from surveys and testing of marking and census techniques to damage and loss evaluations to considerations of specific management techniques and assessments of management programs. The editors of this volume in the Introduction have summarized significant aspects of these presentations, so I will not duplicate their efforts.

Dale Kaukeinen, editor of the fourth symposium volume (STP 817), noted that the papers in that book focused on specific treatments or management techniques rather than on presentation of general methodologies. The same dominance continues in this volume, which is understandable given a world in which we are asked (and funded) for specific answers. Beyond that, we see papers dealing with gathering and handling of information and a continued and even increasing emphasis on assessment criteria.

Vertebrate pest management requires clear understanding of the past art, the appropriate use of tools and materials, and a thorough understanding of the animals themselves in their normal environments. Traditional procedures and methods frequently limit the information obtained. Studies of the white rat in the sterile laboratory cage simply will not suffice. In this connection, Kaukeinen pointed out in the last volume that one critical need is for procedures intermediate between lab and field, so that typical reactions of target animals could be quantified; this conference added to the growing literature of such approaches.

Some papers focus on current needs of regulatory agencies. One describes tests for evaluating rodenticide bait stations; another describes the use of strychnine, one of the chemicals currently involved in reregistration procedures. Still others deal with the controversial steel traps and the use of ultrasonics. It should be clear that ASTM and authors are not responding solely to regulatory agency needs, nor are they looking over their shoulders at EPA.

While this symposium volume contains insight into current management problems, documentation of techniques, and stimuli for additional research, testing, and evaluation, the underlying theme is testing and evaluation, not the presentation of experimental results. But data are required to illustrate, document, and validate these procedures. In these many ways, we all benefit.

As did the editors, I give my word of appreciation to the authors and conference participants, the many "anonymous" reviewers of manuscripts, the editors, and the ASTM staff. Their combined effort made this publication possible.

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