

January 26, 1970

305 Rolfs Hall
University of Florida
Gainesville, 32601

MEMORANDUM

TO: Executive Board, Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society

FROM: George Cornwell, President

SUBJECT: Public Statement on the Use of DDT

You will find enclosed the work of Al Stickley's Resolutions and Public Statements Committee regarding a public statement on the use of DDT. We require your approval before we can release the statement. Would you please indicate by return mail **your** okay to go ahead and mail this to the appropriate reporters, Florida Department of Agriculture, and Florida Legislature?

Thank you. See you soon.

GC:dt

FLORIDA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

PUBLIC STATEMENT ON THE USE OF DDT

Over the years the evidence has mounted - trickling at first and now rushing - that "hard" pesticides, particularly DDT, are having detrimental effects upon our environment. It is beginning to dawn upon many of us who have seen the beneficial effects of DDT and who have in the past advocated its use in some instances, that we have fostered something for which we did not bargain. There are apparently few locations on earth where the harmful effects of this chemical are not felt; a few brief examples:

- * Almost 700,000 small coho salmon in Michigan were killed recently because of DDT residues that accumulated in the egg yolk of adult salmon and poisoned the fry when they absorbed the yolk contents. 1/
- * Eggs and chicks of the Bermuda petrel, a rare North Atlantic sea bird that has no contact with any continent or area treated with insecticides, averaged 6.4 parts per million of DDT residues. Its reproduction has declined significantly since 1958. 2/
- * Six Adelle penguins and a crebeater seal collected in the Antarctic in February 1964 contained DDT and its metabolites in amounts ranging from 1.3 to 152 parts per billion in fat and liver. 3/

DDT is being assimilated into the food chains of the world's oceans by marine plankton, which form the base of these chains. Not only does this bode ultimate harm to the top chain members which receive the chemical in concentrated doses, but DDT also reduces the photosynthetic ability of the plankton. Marine plankton photosynthesis is estimated to account for more than half of the world's oxygen supply.

Aside from interfering with egg shell formation, which has demonstrably reduced reproduction in many avian forms, DDT is producing ominous characteristics that may affect man himself in other ways; to wit:

- * Hungarian scientists examined more than 1,000 mice from five generations after adding 3 parts per million of DDT to their diets. Leukemia appeared in 12.4 percent of the DDT mice, but only 2.5 percent of the non-DDT mice; 28.7 percent of the mice getting DDT developed tumors while only 3.8 percent of the mice on clean food had tumors. 4/

- * At the University of Miami, human victims of terminal cancer were found to contain more than twice as much DDT in their fat as did victims of accidental death. The accident victims carried 9.7 p.p.m. in their fat (about average) while cancer victims carried 20-25 p.p.m. 5/

DDT residues have been found to maintain their levels in crayfish populations for 9 years without showing any signs of reduction. Even if we stop using DDT immediately, we are going to have to live with its effects for years to come.

We in the wildlife profession and associated fields, who constitute the bulk of this membership, take pride in our common-sense approach to land-use, natural resource problems and feel we have mutual ground with agricultural interests in this regard. We can understand the tremendous problems that will result if we cannot use these persistent pesticides as we have done in the past, and we are sympathetic with agriculture's position in this matter. However, we feel we must ask for a ban on the use of DDT in the State of Florida except where emergencies of the direst sort dictate otherwise. If this is not done, the future of Florida's natural resources, and indeed of her human population as well, will be darkened considerably.

Literature Cited:

- 1/ Johnson H. (1968). Press release, Mich. State Univ., March 7.
- 2/ Wurster, C. F. & Wingate, D. B. (1968). DDT residues and declining reproduction in the Bermuda Petrel. Science 159, 979-81.
- 3/ U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. (1965). Effects of Pesticides on Fish and Wildlife. Fish & Wildlife Circular 226, p. 14.
- 4/ Tsrjan & Kemeny, (1969). Fd. Cosmet. Toxicol. 7,215-22.
- 5/ Radomski, Deichmann & Clizen. (1968). Fd. Cosmet. Toxicol. 6,209-20.