

June 2009

The Trapline

United States Department of
Agriculture

Animal & Plant Health
Inspection Service

Wildlife Services



Cooperating with:

Nevada

Department of Agriculture

Division of Resource Protection



www.agri.nv.gov

Mission Statement

The Nevada Wildlife Services Program is a collaborative program involving the Nevada Department of Agriculture's Division of Resource Protection (State) and the USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services Program (Federal), whose mission is to protect agricultural, natural resources, property, and the human health and safety of the citizens of Nevada from the threat of injury, damage, or resource loss due to wildlife.

Introduction

During June, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **7.3** million acres of land under agreement. Additionally, WS assisted **290** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$15,750** in damage and WS Specialists verified another **\$71,170** in damage to other agricultural resources. During June, coyotes accounted for **\$12,330** in verified losses mostly to livestock and **179** coyotes were taken with a variety of management methods to resolve these and other ongoing complaints. WS routinely collects blood samples or oral swabs from species taken or handled during normal control activities for monitoring the presence of plague, avian influenza, and other diseases. In June, **49** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of June, 2009.

Resource Protection

State Office

During June, 2009, the State Office trap loaning program checked out **51** cage traps. The species distribution for the traps loaned out were: raccoons (**15**), skunks (**4**), squirrels (**24**), rabbits (**3**), marmots (**2**), gray fox (**2**) and coyote (**1**). Information regarding baits to use, trap placement tactics, handling of trapped animals and safety precautions to take when working with the wildlife species were provided for all equipment loaned.



Way to go Matt!

On June 1st, a sheep producer in White Pine County reported that five lambs valued at \$550 had been killed by coyotes. WS Matt Jager responded to the incident. During the next several days, WS Jager hunted the area in an effort to remove the offending coyotes. Utilizing his decoy dog, WS Jager was able to call and remove one adult male coyote near the sheep. The Ely airplane, crewed by Instructor Pilot (IP) Tim Keogh and Crew Member (CM) Jerred Taylor, also removed an additional coyote near the sheep. The sheep producer was so pleased with WS Jager that he called the East District Supervisor and expressed his appreciation. No further losses have been reported in the area.

On June 1st, a sheep producer in Elko County near Jackpot, Nevada contacted Wildlife Services concerning the loss of three lambs and two ewes valued at \$600. On June 2nd, the Elko airplane, crewed by Pilot Ken Baer and CM Wayne Rowley, responded to the remote location. With the assistance of Assistant District Supervisor (ADS) Sam Sanders and District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett as ground crew, the plane removed a total of seven coyotes near the locations of the kills. ADS Sanders also removed one adult male by calling and DS Bennett removed one den that had been located by the plane. Work will be ongoing in the area.

On June 5th, WS Vigil Fullerton discovered one lamb that had been killed by coyotes. The value of the lamb was placed at \$110. WS Fullerton had already set several traps in the area to minimize predation. On June 9th, one adult coyote was trapped near the kill site. No further losses have been reported and WS Fullerton continues his control efforts near several bands of sheep in northern White Pine County.



It takes a well oiled machine to resolve a problem in only one pass.

On June 9th, the Ely airplane, crewed by IP Keogh and CM Taylor, flew for one band of sheep in northern White Pine County. WS Matt Spires had requested the plane after two lambs valued at \$200 had been killed by coyotes. The plane was able to locate one adult coyote near the location of the kills. One pass from the plane brought the damage to an end. The coyote was an adult male and had lamb in its stomach. No further losses have been reported on the band of ewes and lambs.

During the week of June 8th, WS Jager attended gunner training in Cedar City, Utah. The training involved 36.8 hours of classroom training, as well as 6.8 hours of actual training in an aircraft. WS Jager successfully passed all the required training and obtained his gunner certification for fixed wing aircraft on June 12th.

During the month of June, a sheep producer west of Ely, Nevada, experienced the loss of six lambs valued at \$600. Despite several attempts by WS Scott Little to remove the offending coyotes, the damage continued. The coyotes were killing about every four of five days. On June 22nd, the Ely airplane, crewed by IP Keogh and CM Taylor, flew over the bands of sheep experiencing the depredations. During the flight, two adult coyotes

were removed. Inspection of the coyotes revealed that it was an adult male and an adult female. Both coyotes had large amounts of lamb in their stomachs. The sheep producer was very pleased with the Ely aerial crew for their efforts. No further losses have occurred.

On June 17th, a sheep producer in eastern White Pine County contacted WS Jager concerning the loss of two adult ewes valued at \$300 to mountain lion predation. Due to the fact that mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler was busy on another lion call, MLS Tom Kilby responded to the remote location. Despite heavy rains, MLS Kilby hunted the offending lion for two days with no luck. Due to work in the West District, MLS Kilby left the area but did provide MLS Buhler with very good information concerning the lion. MLS Buhler started tracking the lion the next week and on June 29th, MLS Buhler was able to tree and dispatch the offending lion. The lion was an adult male. It was later determined that the lion had killed three additional sheep valued at \$450. During the pursuit, MLS Buhler also discovered a bull elk that had been killed by the lion. No further losses have been reported and the sheep producer was very pleased with the outcome.



Four to five day old kill, courtesy of a four year old lion.

On June 24th, a sheep producer near Ely, Nevada, reported that two lambs valued at \$200 had been killed by coyotes. WS Jager immediately responded to the situation. Using his decoy dog and calling, WS Jager removed three adult coyotes near the site of the kills. No further losses have been reported. Technical assistance was also provided to help prevent future losses.

June was another very busy month for WS Derril Fry. During the month, a total of nine adult sheep and 30 lambs were lost to coyotes in southern Elko County. The value of the losses was placed at \$4,350. During the month, WS Fry removed more than 10 adult coyotes utilizing calling, shooting, trapping and trail snares. WS Fry also removed two active dens near the areas of the sheep predation. Technical assistance was provided and work is ongoing.

During June, WS Matt Spires reported that six lambs valued at \$600 were lost to coyotes in north eastern White Pine County. WS Spires was able to remove three adult coyotes near the kills. The Ely airplane, crewed by IP Keogh and CM Taylor, flew the several bands of sheep experiencing the depredations. Several other coyotes were also removed by the plane in an effort to help prevent future losses. Without the assistance of Wildlife Services the losses would have been much higher. WS Spires is continuing his work efforts in his district.

During June, WS Scott Little was busy working on several bands of sheep in western White Pine County. WS Little used his horse and his well trained coyote decoy dog to remove several coyotes near the sheep. Losses were kept to a minimum due to WS Little's excellent efforts. The sheep producer was very pleased with all the assistance provided by WS Little.

WS Gilbert Temoke reported no losses during June. He was able to remove five coyotes using traps and trail snares near several bands of sheep in northern Elko County. WS Temoke also assisted as the back-up gunner on several occasions during the month.

West District

During the month of June, WS Doug Koepke was busy placing trail snares and leghold traps around a cattle producer's allotment in Churchill County that was experiencing coyote predation to calves. WS Koepke had 17 pieces of equipment out on this ranch and during the month, 14 coyotes were removed around the calving area by method of trail snares. No further livestock losses have occurred and the cattle producer was pleased with WS Koepke's ability to resolve the problem. Trapping during the summer months can be challenging, but WS Koepke has had great success.



Before.

On June 2nd, the annual Canada goose round-up was initiated in the Truckee Meadows area. The goose round-up was originally started because a large international airport in Reno had experienced several goose strikes with nearly a quarter of a million dollars worth of damage to passenger aircraft and an emergency landing. Goose Round-up time's start well before daylight and end by around 10:00 am. The early start time is tough to get volunteers, but it is easier on people and geese. West District Supervisor Jack Spencer Jr., Assistant District Supervisor (ADS) Jack Sengl, Wildlife Disease Biologist (WDB) Zack Bowers, WS Luke Barto and WS (CA) Mark Fredrick provided assistance during the round up.



After.

On June 1st, IP Keogh and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around a lamb band in Washoe County. The livestock producer reported the loss of two lambs (valued at \$250) in a remote part of his grazing allotment. During the flight, one coyote was removed near the dead lambs. WS Koepke provided valuable ground crew assistance by locating the offending coyote for the plane. No further livestock losses were reported. Historically speaking, the start of the antelope fawning season helps alleviate the lamb losses because the coyotes move from eating livestock to the now more vulnerable antelope fawns. It is common for aerial crews to see coyotes chasing, killing and packing antelope fawns during this period in this area where both antelope and sheep inhabit.

On June 2nd, IP Keogh and CM VanderMay flew over two lamb bands in Humboldt County. The livestock producer reported that three lambs (valued at \$275) had been killed up high on a road less mountain. The aerial crew located six coyotes and removed all of them on the first pass. This is a true testament of a highly effective pilot and gunner team. The aerial crew also located one coyote den and reported the den location to the ground crew. WS John Peter provided ground support by locating most of the coyotes for the plane. No further livestock losses have been reported since the removal of the coyotes.

On June 3rd, IP Keogh and CM VanderMay flew the Washoe County Mule Deer Project (hunt unit 014). During the early morning flight, a total of five coyotes were removed in the upper elevations around fawning

mule deer. WS Ben Miller provided ground support for the aerial crew. During this time of year the ground crew may locate most of the coyotes for the plane by voice howling and directing the plane to the coyote's location.

During the first two weeks of June, the 24th annual Canada goose round-up was completed by DS Spencer, ADS Sengl, WDB Bowers, and WS Barto. The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) also had several Wildlife Biologists working side by side with Wildlife Services employees capturing non-migratory Canada geese from Washoe, Douglas and Carson City Counties. Also a couple dozen volunteers assisted with the round-up including staff from the Washoe County Vector Control. A total of 399 Canada geese were translocated to wildlife management areas in eastern Nevada by NDOW. The first three weeks in June is about the only time geese can be captured in corral traps, as this is the period when birds are molting, thus unable to fly. Boats and Jet Ski's were employed to help herd the geese into the corral traps when they were in open bodies of water. On June 11th, captured geese were taken to an elementary school for the education and entertainment of 85 excited children. Each year during the goose round-up we receive requests by teachers to see the geese before they are translocated. Investing in Nevada's youngest citizens is very rewarding. The teachers were very pleased with the onsite field trip and had high praise for the employees making this happen. The ultimate reason for the goose round-up is to protect aviation safety in the Truckee Meadows area. Next year it is not known if NDOW will take the geese for translocation. If there is no appropriate place for the geese, they may have to be euthanized.



"No, they don't bite hard."



"Right this way kids!"

On June 11th MLS Kilby inspected several sheep bands that experienced reoccurring losses in Lander County. After MLS Kilby finished assisting the East District for 14 days, MLS Kilby came back to the West District to respond to yet another lion complaint. MLS Kilby rode horseback around the sheep band resulting in his trailing hounds treeing a large male lion (170 pounds). No further livestock losses have been reported since the removal of the stock killing lion. The livestock producers were very pleased with MLS Kilby's protection efforts. MLS Kilby is a hard working employee who worked 18 straight days in the field.

During the week of June 8th thru June 12th, WS Frank Homan was busy protecting several lamb bands in Lyon County. During the week, WS Homan removed four coyotes around the lamb bands by method of calling and shooting. WS Homan reports no livestock losses but plenty of rain in his work area. WS Homan will continue to protect livestock in Lyon County.

On June 10th, a livestock producer from Pershing County reported that three lambs (valued at \$375) had been killed by a predatory animal. WS George Hansen inspected the dead lambs and confirmed that coyotes were responsible for the lamb's death. WS Hansen placed leg hold traps in the vicinity of the dead lambs. On June 12th, WS Hansen removed one adult coyote by utilizing leg hold traps. No further livestock have been lost, but as sheep move into new coyote territories, new livestock losses will naturally occur. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock in this high mountainous area.

Sheep producers have reported good lamb production in the West District this year. The unusually wet weather has also provided an abundance of feed for both livestock and wildlife. This June was the second wettest June ever recorded in western Nevada according to meteorologists'.

During the week of June 15th thru June 19th, WS George Hansen was busy working for two livestock producers in Lander County. During the week, WS Hansen removed a pair of coyotes around a lamb band by utilizing decoy dogs and shooting. So far this year, WS Hansen has been successful in protecting livestock; however, with the loss of one trapper in Lander County, livestock protection efforts will no doubt be less effective in the future. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock with his now ever growing work load.

On June 23rd a livestock producer from Humboldt County reported that one lamb (valued at \$90) had been killed by a lion. MLS Kilby immediately responded to the call and on June 24th, MLS Kilby treed an adult female lion and promptly dispatched the offending predator. The lion fell a short distance and remained lodged high up in an aspen grove. MLS Kilby tried to recover the dead lion; fortunately MLS Kilby applied a proper cost/benefit ratio to the situation and reasoned that being hung up in a tree with the lion would not benefit either party. MLS Kilby recorded the GPS location of the "irretrievable" lion and turned it over to NDOW's Furbearer Biologist. Every fresh lion is skinned and the head and hide are given to NDOW as per their request. Every few years a downed lion gets caught in trees or falls into a rock crevasse and the Mountain Lion Specialist's are unable to retrieve them. To date no further livestock losses have occurred since the removal of the lion.



During the week of June 22nd thru June 26th, WS Koepke was placing equipment around three lamb bands in Pershing County. The sheep have moved high on the Humboldt range and WS Koepke has been following them up to the 9,000 ft. peaks. WS Koepke is very familiar with this range as he used to trap there when he was a Wildlife Specialist in the 1980's. To date, only minimal lamb losses have occurred and WS Koepke will continue to place equipment out to target offending coyotes located near the sheep. This area has experienced considerable coyote removal and WS Koepke reports more deer on this range than he has seen in the past twenty years. NDOW surveys have also shown a large mule deer population on this range.

During the week of June 22nd thru June 26th, WS John Peter was running equipment with his mules around two lamb bands in Humboldt County. Livestock losses have been minimal but WS Peter continues to place equipment out to protect livestock before coyotes have time to kill them. WS Peter will continue to protect livestock in this area.

During the month of June, WS Ben Miller continued to place equipment in the Washoe County Mule Deer Project (hunt unit 014). The aerial crew also flew the protection area several times with very few coyotes seen or removed. WS Miller pressed on, locating several coyote dens with the aid of his decoy dog. WS Miller has not seen a single lion track for nearly two months in the protection area, but has equipment out in case any show up and starts killing wildlife. WS Miller continues to see robust populations of deer and antelope, with a huge increase of big-horn sheep sightings since the start of the protection efforts'. WS Miller will continue to protect mule deer in this area.



Ben & his decoy dog located several coyote dens while protecting mule deer.

The West District would like to thank IP Keogh and Pilot Ken Baer for assisting the West District while we still look for a qualified pilot to fill the Winnemucca position.

During the month of June, CM VanderMay was placing equipment around several livestock producers in Humboldt County. During the month, CM VanderMay removed a total of five coyotes by utilizing leg hold traps. CM VanderMay is not only an expert aerial gunner but also a good coyote trapper. CM VanderMay will continue to protect livestock when called to do so.



Pilot Baer assisted the West District while we were short a pilot.

Throughout the week of June 1st, WS Barto removed a depredating raccoon from a local resort and golf course. The removal of the raccoon will aid in the reduction of possible human health and safety risk as well as property damage.

Throughout the weeks of June 15th and 22nd, WS Barto received a call of a brazen coyote frequenting an urban neighborhood with small children and pets. WS Barto set equipment and removed one adult female coyote from the area. The removal of the coyote will reduce the risk to human health and safety as well as protection of property. WS Barto also translocated 16 depredating mallard ducks that commonly consume exotic bird feed and contaminate swimming areas at a local resort and casino. The removal of the ducks will reduce the risk to human health and safety as well as property damage.

Developing Methods
Nothing to Report.

Valuing and Investing in People

On June 30th, WS Gary Garaventa retired from the Nevada Wildlife Services program. WS Garaventa has worked for the WS program in Nevada for more than 35 years. WS Garaventa's work area included Eureka County. Throughout the years, WS Garaventa has gained the respect of both his supervisors, peers, as well as the many cooperators he has provided service to. WS Garaventa has done an excellent job during his many years of service and will be greatly missed. The Department of Agriculture and the USDA wish Gary Garaventa the very best in his well deserved retirement.

Information and Communication

On June 12th, the annual goose round-up had a media day where local TV news crews, newspapers and radio personal come out and watch the goose round up at a nearby park. DS Spencer conducted several newspaper interviews and NDOW conducted a TV interview about why we conduct the annual round-up. The media coverage was very positive for both agencies.



District Supervisor Jack Spencer Jr. explaining the importance of the Annual Goose Round-up.



WDB Zack Bowers holding a couple of "Fuzzies" prior to trans-location.

During the week of June 26, State Director (SD) Mark Jensen, DS's Bennett and Spencer attended the Nevada Department of Wildlife Commission Meeting (Lovelock, NV), of which Texas SD Mike Bodenchuck provided a power point presentation on the positive effects of predator management for mule deer, antelope and bighorn sheep protection.

Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report.

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report.

Future Meetings and Events

Nothing to Report.



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