

July 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 July, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **6.3** million acres of land under agreement. Additionally, WS assisted **622** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$5,960** in damage and WS Specialists verified another **\$5,980** in damage to other agricultural resources. During July, coyotes accounted for **\$5,010** in verified losses mostly to livestock and **83** 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 July, **135** samples were processed.

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

Resource Protection

State Office

During July, 2009, the State Office trap loaning program checked out **49** cage traps. The species distribution for the traps loaned out were: raccoons (**12**), skunks (**6**), squirrels (**29**), rabbits (**1**) and pack rat (**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.

East District

On July 5th, a sheep producer, west of Ely, Nevada, contacted WS Scott Little concerning the loss of three lambs valued at \$360. WS Little responded to the location and confirmed coyotes were responsible for the predation. WS Little set several traps in the area of the kills. He also used his horse and well trained coyote decoy dogs in an attempt to remove the offending coyotes. On July 9th, two coyotes were trapped near the kill site. One coyote had recently killed a mule deer fawn and was carrying part of the fawn when it was captured in a trap. WS Little back tracked the coyote a few hundred yards and found the remains of the freshly killed fawn. On July 10th, an additional coyote was removed with the aid of WS Little's dogs. While working the area, two additional depredated mule deer fawns were observed. Both fawns had been killed by coyotes. The GPS location of the fawns and photographs were provided to Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) predator biologist Kevin Lansford. This is an excellent example of how livestock protection can benefit wildlife and how wildlife protection can benefit livestock. The sheep producer was very pleased with the service provided by WS Little. No further losses have occurred and WS Little continues to monitor the area for losses.



On July 6th, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Derril Fry checked with a sheep herder in southern Elko County. The herder told WS Fry of two lambs that coyotes had killed. WS Fry verified that indeed coyotes had killed the lambs, valued at \$200. Two days later, WS Fry called and shot one coyote within the vicinity of the sheep. No further losses have been reported from that band of sheep.



On July 7th, Assistant District Supervisor (ADS), Sam Sanders checked with a camp tender in northern Elko County. The camp tender reported that coyotes were killing lambs at a nearby band of sheep. ADS Sanders then stopped by the band of sheep and spoke to the herder who reported that five lambs, valued at \$500, were killed by coyotes. ADS Sanders was provided the location of the kills, where he verified two of the kills were caused by coyotes. ADS Sanders set several traps in the vicinity. Several days later one male coyote was removed. For a week, no more kills were reported. Then on July 16th, two more lambs, valued at \$200, were killed. ADS Sanders was able to remove a female coyote, utilizing leghold traps, the next day. WS Gilbert Temoke will continue to monitor these sheep bands in northern Elko, as ADS Sanders works farther south in Eureka County.

On July 13th, a sheep producer near Ely, Nevada contacted WS Scott Little concerning the loss of three lambs valued at \$375. WS Little traveled to the remote location and determined that coyotes were responsible for the losses. WS Little set several pieces of ground equipment near the kill sites. On July 20th, three coyotes were trapped and removed near the band of sheep. No further losses have been reported and WS Little continues to monitor the area for problems.

During the week of July 13th, WS Gilbert Temoke started working in a new area, while covering his normal range. This area includes several more bands of sheep in northern Elko County. WS Temoke has trapped and removed several coyotes that were close to two bands of sheep. No losses have been reported.

On July 13th, while checking with some sheep herders in Elko County, WS Fry verified that two lambs were killed and partially devoured by coyotes. On July 15th, WS Fry called and shot a coyote close to this band of sheep. WS Fry also set several leghold traps in the area known for historic losses. No further losses have been reported.

On July 13th, a sheep producer in Eureka County called the Elko office and reported that coyotes had killed 3 lambs, valued at \$300. Since WS Gary Garaventa has retired, ADS Sanders responded to the call and traveled to the sheep band on July 15th. After locating several coyotes, ADS Sanders called in and removed two of the offending coyotes within a mile of the sheep. No further problems have been reported. ADS Sanders will continue to monitor several bands in that area.

On July 13th, a sheep producer in eastern White Pine County contacted WS Matt Jager concerning the loss of ten lambs valued at \$1,000. WS Jager responded to the location and confirmed that coyotes were responsible for the predation. Over the next several days, two adult coyotes were trapped near the kills, bringing the damage to an end. The sheep producer was very pleased with the assistance provided by WS Jager and Wildlife Services. Technical assistance was also provided to help prevent future problems.

On July 23rd, WS Fry checked with a herder who suspected that a mountain lion had killed a ewe and lamb, valued at \$225. WS Fry found the kills the next day and verified a lion had indeed killed the lamb and ewe, and may still be in the area. On July the 25th Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Tom Kilby, and ADS Sanders, arrived and hunted for the lion. MLS Kilby found a deer fawn that had been freshly killed by a lion. After trailing the lion for a time the heat finally erased the scent. For several more days MLS Kilby hunted the depredating lion but didn't cut anymore "sign". No further losses have been reported.

On July 24th, MLS Kilby traveled to Elko County regarding a lion conflict. Over the past several days, a lion had killed three lambs valued at \$300. MLS Kilby hunted the lion for several days. It was determined that the lion had left the area. On July 28th, due to prior commitments, MLS Kilby departed the location. MLS Kilby provided valuable information to MLS Jim Buhler and WS Derril Fry concerning the lion. The East District would like to thank MLS Kilby for his assistance with this lion issue as well as several others that he has helped with during the past several months in the East District.

During the week of July 27th, WS Temoke received a report of seven lambs, valued at \$700, killed by coyotes in northern Elko County. WS Temoke traveled to the location, and after locating the areas the coyotes were utilizing, placed several more leghold traps and snares in the area. WS Temoke expects to stop the losses soon.

On July 27th, Instructor Pilot (IP) Tim Keogh and Crew Member (CM) Jerred Taylor took a day off from flying and traveled to the Elko office to repair radios. As well as being an excellent aerial crew, IP Keogh and CM Taylor are very handy when it comes to radio repairs. During the day long trip, three truck radios were repaired saving Wildlife Services several hundred dollars. The Elko staff was gracious enough to provide a BBQ to their Ely comrades. Two big "Atta Boy's" go out to both

Wildlife Services employees for their diligence in execution of their collateral duties.

On July 29th, the Elko plane, crewed by Pilot Ken Baer and CM Wayne Rowley, responded to a depredation location near Jackpot, Nevada. Over the summer, a sheep producer had lost 12 lambs and four adult ewes valued at \$2,100. The sheep producer had also lost at least 21 sheep the previous year in the same location. With the assistance of District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett as the ground crew, the plane was able to locate and remove seven adult coyotes. The Elko crew did an excellent job as the location is extremely brushy and steep. Only one coyote got away in a deep canyon. No further losses have been reported and the sheep producer has been very pleased with the Elko aerial crew this summer.



During the past few weeks, a rancher in north western White Pine County had been losing domestic turkeys to an unknown predator. Ten turkeys valued at \$250 had been lost. WS Virgil Fullerton inspected the damaged location and thought that a lion may be responsible for the predation. WS Fullerton contacted MLS Jim Buhler. MLS Buhler traveled to the location and located a lion track at the kill sites. On July 15th, MLS Buhler found a fresh track. After several miles, MLS Buhler's dogs were able to tree the offending lion. The lion was an adult female in very good condition. The lion was skinned and transported to the Ely NDOW office. No further losses have been reported. MLS Buhler provided technical assistance to help prevent future problems. The rancher was very pleased with the service provided by Wildlife Services and MLS Buhler.



During the past several months, a sheep producer in Nye County reported that he had lost at least three adult rams and two ewes to mountain lion predation. The value of the sheep was placed at \$2,470. MLS Buhler had pursued this particular lion on several occasions, but was evaded due to inclement weather in the form of heavy rain fall. On the evening of July 16th, the sheep producer contacted MLS Buhler and told him that the lion had returned and killed another ram. Knowing that time was of the essence, MLS Buhler loaded his well trained dogs and mule and departed from his duty station at 1:00 am the next morning. Arriving at the location just before daylight, MLS Buhler unloaded his dogs and mule. After a short search, the lion track was found leaving the kill. MLS Buhler trailed the big cat for several hours before finally treeing it. One well placed shot brought the big toms' sheep killing career to an end. The lion was an adult male in excellent condition. The lion's weight was estimated to be 160 pounds. The cat was skinned and transported to the Ely NDOW office as required. The sheep producer was very pleased with MLS Buhler's efforts. Not only had he lost several prized rams and ewes but he had also been unable to take advantage of the excellent feed in his pasture due to the fact that he was penning the sheep close to the ranch in an effort to reduce losses.

West District

The month of July was a slow month for aerial hunting in the West District as lamb bands have moved high on the mountain in areas not conducive for aerial hunting activities. Field Specialists' have to hike into road-less areas to place equipment around sheep bands. The absence of a Pilot has made protection efforts tougher on Field Specialists, but the use of trail snares, M-44's and leg-hold traps have provided protection efforts during the reporting period.

On July 27th, the West District hired a new pilot for the Winnemucca pilot position. Wes Gossard accepted the position and has begun mandatory pilot training at the aviation training center in Cedar City, Utah. Pilot Gossard has over 10,000+ hours of low level flying experience that should be instrumental in becoming a proficient Wildlife Services Pilot. Pilot Gossard has had excellent ratings to date, and should be finished within a month at the training center.

During the week of July 6th thru July 10th, WS George Hansen was busy protecting several lamb bands located in Lander County. During the week, WS Hansen removed three coyotes utilizing leghold traps. WS Hansen has reported no lamb losses for the past month on four lamb bands. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock in his ever expanding work area.



During the month of July, WS Miller was busy checking equipment on the Washoe County Mule Deer Project (Hunt Unit 014). WS Miller has been removing 2-3 coyotes per week up near the top of the mountains (9,000 ft) as that is where most of the mule deer are now located. Everyday WS Miller is going for long hikes with a backpack loaded with equipment to keep his wildlife resources protected. Of interest, WS Miller is observing a higher number of juvenile mule deer and antelope fawns in the protection area than during the previous year. This protection area is experiencing one of the highest mule deer fawn survival rates in the State. On some days, WS Miller covers more miles on foot than on his vehicle to maintain a safety net around the deer. WS Miller will continue to protect mule deer in this protection area.

WS Miller has been removing 2-3



The West District has had minimal livestock losses during the month of July. The daytime temperatures have been near the century mark and everything has slowed to a crawl. Fat calves and lambs are high on the mountains not being killed by toothy critters. This is a comfortable feeling for both livestock producers and Field Specialists.

On Saturday July 25th, CM Brandon VanderMay was on vacation in Idaho when an Idaho Pilot received a complaint that several cows were killed by a pack of wolves. The Idaho Pilot was without a gunner, so CM VanderMay assisted during an early morning aerial hunt around the cattle experiencing wolf problems. The aerial crew located a pack of wolves near the sheep; however, the wolves were down in a heavily forested canyon so they could not be removed. On the way back from aerial hunting they did find another pack of wolves, but they were not allowed to remove any of the animals. There hasn't been a confirmed wolf presence in Nevada for nearly a 100 years and because

of undesirable wolf habitat between Idaho and Nevada it may be some time before any wolf populations exist in Nevada.



On July 17th a livestock producer from Washoe County reported that two lambs (valued at \$450) were killed by predatory animals. On July 17th, West District Supervisor Jack Spencer Jr. conducted a necropsy on the dead lambs and confirmed that coyotes were responsible for the lamb's death. DS Spencer inspected the area and found a good location for some snares and dutifully placed them. On July 22nd, the livestock producer reported that the offending coyote was captured in a snare. No further livestock losses have occurred, since the removal of the coyote.



During the month of July, CM VanderMay was busy placing equipment around several calving and lambing areas in Humboldt County. CM VanderMay has been placing leghold traps out to remove offending coyotes. During the month, CM VanderMay removed several coyotes by method of leghold traps and calling. CM VanderMay will continue ground efforts when he's not aerial hunting.

During the month of July, the State Office has constant bobcat calls in urban areas around Reno, Sparks and Carson City. The bobcat population seems to be rebounding rapidly with added moisture and food availability. Technical assistance is given to residents to deal with problems, but occasionally live traps are loaned out to deal with bobcats killing livestock and pets.



During the week of July 13th, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Luke Barto received a call regarding two large packs of coyotes frequenting a large community and acting boldly toward residents. WS Barto provided technical assistance to representatives of the community on reducing coyote attractants throughout neighborhoods. WS Barto will continue to monitor human health and safety issues in the area.

Also throughout the week of July 13th, WS Barto conducted a site visit at a resort and casino outside the Las Vegas Valley, where 30-40 wild mallards were causing property damage and contaminating pond water. The situation prompted a return visit during the week of July 20th, in which WS Barto removed 27 depredating mallards utilizing the drug Alpha Chloralose. The mallards were transported to a Wildlife Management Area (WMA) where they were released.



Also throughout the week of July 20th, WS Barto removed 27 wild mallards from a local resort and casino using Alpha Chloralose. The mallards were transported to the above mentioned WMA where they were released.

WS Barto also noted during the mallard relocation, the success in recruitment of the Rio Grande turkey at the above mentioned WMA (picture on

next page). Control methods were utilized in 2008 to reduce predation by ravens on nests and chicks throughout the WMA. Officials have also noticed recruitment of young since the protection efforts were conducted.



Throughout the week of July 27th, WS Barto made several site visits to the above mentioned community to observe the coyote activity and educate home owners on how to reduce potential attractants that draw coyotes into neighborhoods. WS Barto set capture equipment for the offending coyotes to provide immediate assistance.

Developing Methods

Nothing to Report.

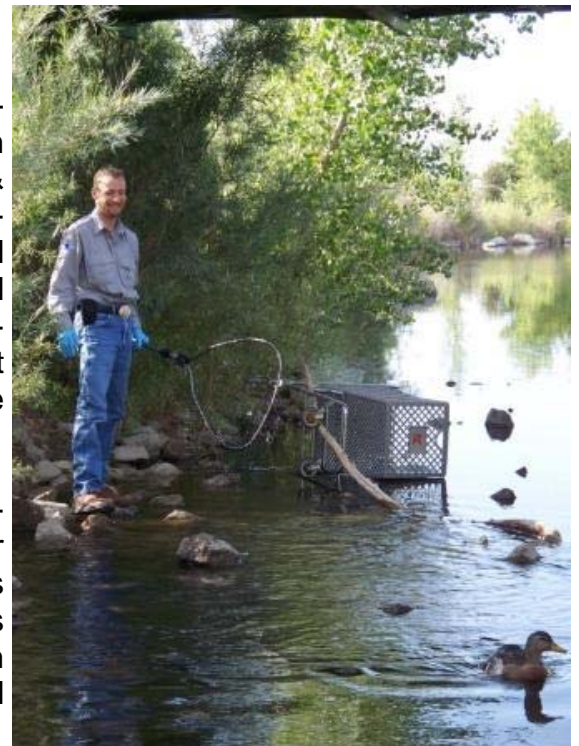
Valuing and Investing in People

Nothing to Report.

Information and Communication

On July 20th, Wildlife Disease Biologist (WDB) Bowers traveled to Fallon, NV to collect avian influenza (AI) samples from mallards. The mallards were being captured by the US fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), and NDOW for routine banding activities. NDOW has been utilizing an air cannon borrowed from the Nevada Wildlife Services (WS) program for a wood duck project and also for annual banding activities. As a result WDB Bowers will continue to have opportunities to collect AI samples in the future. WDB Bowers sampled 40 of the mallards for AI.

On July 24th, WDB Bowers traveled to Churchill County to collect AI samples. NDOW and the USFWS were utilizing air boats and nets for a night capture in which dabbling ducks were targeted for banding purposes. The night capture was very successful and WDB Bowers collected 69 samples from cinnamon teal, gadwalls, mallards, northern shovelers, and American green-winged teal.



On July 7th, WDB Bowers provided training to airport operational staff at a large airport in Reno, NV. The training covered species identification, species specific management, and methods used for harassment/hazing specific species from the airport. WDB Bowers completed a Wildlife Hazard Assessment for the airport in 2007; WS also completed a Wildlife Hazard Management Plan for the airport in 2008. WDB Bowers and other WS staff continue to assist the airport with training, technical assistance and direct control.

On July 16th, WDB Bowers provided technical assistance to a representative of a housing development that is experiencing problems with coyotes. The representative reported that the coyotes were demonstrating a pattern of increasingly bold and aggressive behavior. WDB Bowers provided advice on how to make the neighborhood less attractive to coyotes as well as other wildlife. WDB Bowers also advised the representative to inform the people in the housing development to keep an eye on small children and pets. WDB Bowers sent information about coyotes to the representative, who distributed it to the nearly 500 households in the development.

Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report.

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report.

Future Meetings and Events

NDOW Meeting, Aug 13 and 14 in Elko, NV. State Director Mark Jensen, DS Joe Bennett and ADS Sanders to attend.



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