

February 2019

# The Trapline

United States Department of  
Agriculture

Animal & Plant Health  
Inspection Service

Wildlife Services



*Cooperating with:*

Nevada

Department of Agriculture

Division of Animal Industry



[www.agri.nv.gov](http://www.agri.nv.gov)

775-851-4848

## Mission Statement

The Nevada Wildlife Services Program (WS) is a collaborative program involving the Nevada Department of Agriculture's Division of Animal Industry (State) and the USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services Program (federal), whose mission is to protect agriculture, 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 February, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **5.9** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$160** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$10.3** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **551** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$3,470** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$37,917** in damage to aviation, natural and agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During February, coyotes accounted for **\$21,998** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **693** 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 February, **4** samples were processed.

*The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of February, 2019.*

## Resource Protection

### State Office

During the reporting period, the State Office provided non-lethal recommendations to Nevadan's to assist in alleviating their conflicts with wildlife, particularly coyotes and raccoons. For more information about resolving conflicts with wildlife, please go to the following website: <http://agri.nv.gov/Wildlife>. Where wildlife biology and damage management methods are offered by species.

## East District

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, the Elko plane responded to a call from a northern Elko County cattle rancher near the Idaho border. The rancher reported that he had just started calving and had already lost 6 calves to coyote predation. The rancher reported seeing large groups of coyotes attacking his cows as they were birthing. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 52 coyotes in the calving pastures. Several coyotes removed were harassing calves and several dead calves were also observed. Work will be ongoing as needed. The rancher called and was amazed at the level of damage to his livestock but was pleased the plane was able to remove the coyotes responsible for the damage.



On February 1<sup>st</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from a cattle rancher and a sheep rancher in northeastern White Pine County. The sheep producer had recently lost at least 6 adult sheep, valued at \$1,500. The cattle rancher had not lost a calf yet but reported seeing 6 coyotes near a newborn calf. With the assistance of Wildlife Specialist (WS) Nathan Fowler as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 8 coyotes during the flight. No further losses have been reported.

On February 6<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from a sheep rancher in northwestern White Pine County. The rancher had recently lost 8 adult sheep, valued at \$2,000, to coyote predation. During the flight the plane was able to locate and remove 6 coyotes near the sheep. No further losses have been reported.



On February 7<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane flew on several cattle ranches and Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) Project 40. On many occasions the Wildlife Services planes will fly on both livestock ranches and NDOW projects for a cost savings. During the flight, 20 coyotes were removed.

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, the Elko plane responded to a call from several cattle ranchers in central Elko County. Several Elko County ranches are experiencing historically high losses and are just starting to calve out. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 17 coyotes in the calving pastures. Work will be ongoing as calving season continues.

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, the Elko Plane responded to a call from a cattle rancher in northern Eureka County. This rancher is also experiencing very high predation losses on his calves to coyotes and is just about to start calving out. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 11 coyotes in and around the calving pastures. Work will be ongoing as needed.



On February 8<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from a sheep and cattle rancher in northern White Pine County. The rancher has lost at least 5 adult sheep, valued at \$1,250, to coyote predation as confirmed by WS Fowler. With the assistance of WS Fowler as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 10 coyotes. Work will be ongoing. WS Fowler provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On February 11<sup>th</sup>, Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler received a call from a cattle and sheep rancher in Lincoln County concerning the loss of 3 adult sheep, valued at \$600, to mountain lion predation. On February 12<sup>th</sup>, MLS Buhler responded to the remote ranch and confirmed that all 3 sheep had been killed by a lion. MLS Buhler put 6 well trained tracking and trailing dogs on the lions track. After several hours, the dogs finally caught up to the depredating lion, treed it and removed it. The lion was an adult male that weighed approximately 135 pounds. No further losses have been reported and the rancher was very pleased with assistance he received from the Nevada Department of Agriculture and the USDA Wildlife Services program.



On February 12<sup>th</sup>, the Elko plane responded to a call from 2 cattle ranchers in central Elko County. Both ranchers recently started calving and reported very high numbers of coyotes near their calving pastures. One rancher reported that coyotes had attacked and killed 1 newborn calf and both ranchers reported seeing coyotes attempting to kill calves. During the flight the plane was able to remove 33 coyotes, bringing an end to the damage. Work will continue if needed.

Also on February 12<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from a sheep rancher in Lincoln County. The rancher lost at least 4 adult sheep, valued at \$1,000, to coyote predation. With the assistance of Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) Field Assistant (FA) Allen Eldridge as the ground crew, the plane was able to locate and remove 3 coyotes,

including one that was feeding on a fresh kill. Work will be ongoing as needed. FA Eldridge also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On February 14<sup>th</sup>, WS Mac Crome confirmed the loss of 2 adult sheep valued at \$500 to coyote predation. The damage took place on a band of sheep in eastern Elko County. WS Crome used trail snares to remove 3 coyotes near the kills. No further losses have been reported. WS Crome also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On February 15<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from 2 sheep producer and a cattle ranch in Nye County. The cattle rancher lost 3 calves valued at \$1,500 to coyote predation and both sheep pro-



ducers lost a total of 16 adult sheep, valued at \$4,000, to coyote predation. During the flight, 16 coyotes were removed. No further losses have been reported.

On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from a cattle rancher in eastern White Pine County. The rancher reported the loss of 2 calves, valued at \$1,000, to coyote predation. During the flight, the plane was able to locate and remove 3 coyotes near the calf kills. Work will be ongoing as needed.

On February 25<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call concerning the loss of at least 10 adult sheep, valued at \$2,500, to coyote predation. The damage took place on an allotment in western White Pine County. During the morning flight, the plane was able to remove 11 coyotes near the kills. No further losses have been reported. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses was also provided.

On February 27<sup>th</sup>, WS Randy Evans responded to a call from a cattle rancher in Elko County who was experiencing a problem with ravens. The rancher reported that 30-40 ravens were attacking his newborn calves and pecked the eyes and orifices of one calf so severely that it had to be put down. The value of the loss was \$500. WS Evans placed eggs treated with DRC-1339 and removed the depredating ravens. The rancher said he had tried several non-lethal tactics to try and prevent the damage but nothing worked. WS Evans recommended more non-lethal methods for the rancher.

On February 27<sup>th</sup>, Crew Member (CM) Hunter Bodenchuk responded to a call from a cattle rancher in Nye County that was experiencing problems with ravens. The rancher reported that ravens killed at least one calf and were attacking others and harassing the adult cows as they were giving birth. CM Bodenchuk used eggs treated with DRC-1339 to remove the offending ravens. The rancher was very pleased with the help he received. CM Bodenchuk also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from a sheep and cattle rancher in northern White Pine County. The rancher lost at least 10 adult sheep recently to coyote predation. With the help of WS Fowler the plane was able to remove 2 coyotes near the kills. Work will be ongoing as needed.

During the month of February, FA Tyler Bodily was busy removing coyotes in areas of high historic sheep losses in Eureka County. FA Bodily is quickly gaining the respect of his cooperators and supervisors with his hard work ethic. FA Bodily confirmed the loss of 3 adult sheep, valued at \$750, during the month. FA Bodily used calling, shooting, trapping and snaring to remove 17 coyotes near several bands of sheep. Work will continue as it gets closer to lambing season.

During the month of February, work began on NDOW project 40. Project 40 is a project in central Nevada designed to help mule deer and sage-grouse by removing predators that have a negative impact on both species. One adult female lion was removed by MLS Jim Buhler during the month. A





contract helicopter was also brought in and 281 coyotes were removed. An additional 8 coyotes were removed with trail snares. Work will continue as needed.

During the month of February, work began on the Overton Wildlife Management Area to protect wild turkeys and other ground nesting birds from predation. Raccoons, skunks and coyotes are the main species that are being targeted. Work will continue during nesting season into spring.

### West District

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, FA Doug Koepke checked his equipment near a calving area that had reported the loss of a cow and her calf, valued at \$1,986, the previous week. Upon inspection FA Koepke removed 3 coyotes with the use of M-44s. The cattle producer was pleased with the protection efforts and to date, no further livestock losses have been reported. FA Koepke will continue to protect livestock in his large work area.



During the month of February, FA Koepke responded to several cattle producers requests for raven removal in Churchill, Pershing and Humboldt Counties. Recently ravens were responsible for injuring calves and harassing other newborn calves. During the month, FA Koepke placed out DRC-1339 treated egg baits on 6 different calving areas, stopping any additional raven damage. FA Koepke will continue to protect livestock.



On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, District Supervisor (DS) Jack Spencer conducted a routine field inspection with Wildlife Biologist (WB) Zack Bowers at a northern military installation. During the inspection, DS Spencer inspected WB Bower's equipment and checked his border fence snare line. WB Bowers removed one problem coyote that was entering the airfield. DS Spencer will continue to perform field inspections with employees.

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several calving areas in Pershing County to reduce losses to coyotes. During the flight, 17 coyotes were removed. FA Koepke provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection work will continue.

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several winter sheep bands in Pershing County. The sheep producers had reported the loss of 14 sheep (valued at \$2,800) on 3 bands of sheep. The damage was verified to be caused by coyotes. During the flight, 5 coyotes were removed. FA Koepke provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection work will continue.

During the week of February 4<sup>th</sup> through February 8<sup>th</sup>, WS George Hansen checked and set foothold traps and trail snares around several calving and winter sheep bands in Lander County. Despite -15 degree temperatures, WS Hansen removed 5 coyotes during a trap check. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock in Lander County.

On February 12<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several calving areas in Humboldt County. During the morning flight, 26 coyotes were removed. The aerial crew also saw 7 coyotes in one group feeding on a young calf. WS Peter provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection work will continue.

On February 15<sup>th</sup>, DS Spencer conducted a routine field inspection with WS Ben Miller on NDOW Project 22-01, a California bighorn sheep project in northern Washoe County (hunt units 011-013) designed to relieve populations of wild sheep from lion predation. DS Spencer inspected field equipment. DS Spencer will continue to perform field inspections with employees.

During the week of February 19<sup>th</sup> through February 21<sup>st</sup>, DS Spencer spent several days introducing a new airport Wildlife Biologist (David Carrasco) to his military cooperators in southern Nevada. DS Spencer will continue to perform field inspections with employees.

On February 19<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several calving areas in Humboldt County provide some relief to the vulnerable calves and birthing cows. During the flight, 19 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection work will continue.



On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several calving and winter sheep bands in Lyon County. During the flight, 17 coyotes were removed. WB Carl Frey provided ground support during aerial operations by locating several of the coyotes for the aerial crew. WS and NDA are hopeful that this position will be backfilled quickly. Protection work will continue.

On Saturday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several calving areas in Humboldt County. During the flight, 13 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection work will continue.

During the week of February 25<sup>th</sup> through February 28<sup>th</sup>, WS Miller began work on NDOW projects 21 and 21-02, removing ravens with DRC-1339 treated egg baits to protect sage-grouse nesting areas across several counties in western Nevada. Project 21 is conducted in both western and eastern Nevada, while Project 21-02 is a research oriented project in Washoe County. The goal of the projects is to prevent raven predation of sage-grouse eggs and chicks so that they can be recruited into the population. WS Peter has also worked weekends in his area to also help on Project 21.

Record snowfall and water accumulation in many parts of western Nevada have proved challenging for aircraft and field specialists to conduct regular duties, as cloudy and windy days make flying difficult and deep snows and muddy roads make travel difficult for field specialists.





WB Frey and WS Cameron Green continued implementing a wildlife hazard management plan (WHMP) at a joint use facility in Washoe County. Major point of interest were the trapping and translocation of 10 birds of prey and harassment of hundreds of Canada geese.

During the reporting period, WS Green also resolved wildlife issues at a military facility in southern Nevada.

## **New and Developing Methods**

Nothing to Report

## **Valuing and Investing in Employees**

On February 11<sup>th</sup>, WS Peter was selected as the **2018 WS Western Region Wildlife Specialist of the Year**. WS Peter has 34 years of dedicated service to the USDA-Wildlife Services Program in Nevada. WS Peter is considered an icon, expert trapper, highly regarded mule man and decoy dog trainer in the trapping world. WS Peter is always willing to help anywhere he can in the program and always performs his duties above and beyond. The Western Regional Director will present WS Peter with an appreciation plaque this August at the West District meeting. Our congratulations to WS Peter for this coveted award!



## **Information and Communication**

On February 19<sup>th</sup>, WB David Carrasco was selected for an Airport Wildlife Biologist position at a military facility in southern Nevada. WB Carrasco has been in the USDA-Wildlife Services program for 5 years, previously working for the New Mexico and Arizona programs. We expect great things from WB Carrasco as he has gained knowledge from multiple programs.



On February 27<sup>th</sup>, WS Green hosted a trainer (Adam Tullos) from the Mississippi State Training Academy, to observe our efforts implementing a WHMP.

On February 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, WB Frey provided a presentation to the Youth Wildlife Conservation Experience at the Wild Sheep Show in Reno, NV. Primary focus was airport safety as related to Red-tailed Hawk presence on/around the airfield.

## **Emerging Trends/Issues**

Nothing to Report

## **Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)**

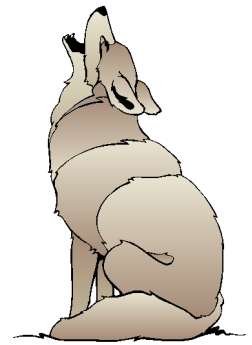
Nothing to Report

## **Future Meeting and Events**

April 4<sup>th</sup>. N-3 Grazing Board in Fernley, NV. State Director (SD) Mark Jensen and DS Spencer to attend.



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