

November 2016

# 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 Resource Protection (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 November, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **6.4** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$171.9** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$6.7** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **1,459** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$1,572** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$7,219** in damage to natural and agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During November, coyotes accounted for **\$5,803** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **791** 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 November, **73** samples were processed.

*The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of November, 2016.*

## 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 November 2<sup>nd</sup>, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Randy Evans received a call concerning a problem with coyotes. The rancher reported that just before shipping he had lost ten lambs, valued at \$1,750, to coyote predation. The damage occurred in southern Elko County. Using calling and snaring, WS Evans removed several coyotes near the area of the losses. WS Evans also requested the assistance of the Elko plane and an additional ten coyotes were removed near the band of sheep experiencing the losses. No further damage was reported and the sheep producer was very pleased with WS Evans hard work.



On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Elko plane flew on several cattle ranches in Elko County. During the morning's flight, 13 coyotes were removed. All coyotes were removed on ranches that have had historically high calf losses to coyote predation.



On November 4<sup>th</sup>, the Elko plane flew for three different cow-calf operations in Elko County to protect calves. During the morning's flight, 22 coyotes were removed. Removing coyotes just prior to calving has been shown to greatly reduce losses in areas that have experienced high losses in the past.

On November 8<sup>th</sup>, the Elko plane flew on several sheep allotments in central Elko County that have experienced very high losses to coyote

predation in the past. During the morning's flight the plane was able to remove 27 coyotes. The sheep producers have been very pleased with the assistance they have received from the Nevada Department of Agriculture and the Wildlife Services.

On November 8<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane flew for several sheep ranchers in northern White Pine County that have experienced historically high losses to coyotes in the past. During the day's flight, six coyotes were removed. Removing coyotes in the area has significantly reduced losses and the sheep producers have commented that without the help they receive from the Nevada Department of Agriculture and USDA Wildlife Services, they would not be able to stay in business due to high predation losses.

On November 9<sup>th</sup>, the Elko plane flew on several sheep and cattle ranches in southern Elko County. During the morning's flight, 15 coyotes were removed. All the cattle and sheep ranches that were worked had experienced historically high losses to coyotes in the past. Without the assistance, loss-



es would have been much higher.

On November 10<sup>th</sup>, the Elko plane flew on several sheep and cattle ranches in central Elko County. During the day's flight, 37 coyotes were removed. The ranches that were flown were very pleased with the control efforts. Removing coyotes just prior to calving has proven to greatly reduce losses on ranches that have experience high losses during the past few calving seasons.

On November 14<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to call for assistance from a sheep producer in western White Pine County. The sheep producer reported seeing and hearing several coyotes near his sheep. The location has had very high losses to coyotes in the past. During the morning's flight the plane was able to remove six coyotes. The sheep producer called the East district office and expressed his appreciation for the help he received.

On November 14<sup>th</sup>, a cattle rancher in Nye County contacted the East District office concerning a problem with coyotes. The rancher reported he had just witnessed a big coyote attack and kill a thirty day old calf. The value of the calf was placed at \$800. On November 15<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to the ranch. During the morning's flight, nine coyotes were removed. Since the rancher is calving, work will be ongoing during the next several months. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was also provided in an attempt to help prevent future losses.



On November 15<sup>th</sup>, Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) Field Assistant (FA) Allen Eldridge confirmed the loss of one ewe sheep valued at \$250 to coyote predation. The following day while setting and checking traps, FA Eldridge spotted a coyote near the location of the kill and was able to remove it with one well-placed shot. No further losses have been reported. Technical assistance was also informed in the form of non-lethal recommendations.

On November 15<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a request from a cattle rancher in Nye County. The rancher reported that he was getting ready to calve out and was seeing several coyotes in his calving pastures. During the morning's flight, the Ely plane spotted nine coyotes and was able to remove all nine. The rancher called the East District Office and expressed his appreciation for the help he received. He reported that five years ago he had lost 23 calves to coyote predation and since he started getting help from the Ely plane, his losses have been cut down to only losing a couple of calves a season. He also reported that he is seeing way more mule deer and antelope in the areas that the plane has been working.

On November 17<sup>th</sup>, the Elko plane responded to calls for assistance from an Elko County cattle producer and an Elko County sheep producer. Both livestock producers reported hearing and seeing several coyotes in areas where they have experienced predation issues in the past. During the day's flight the plane removed 26 coyotes. Both cooperators were very pleased with the help they

received and said that without the assistance of the Elko plane their losses would be dramatically higher.

On November 17<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a request from a Nye County sheep producer. During the morning's flight, a four coyotes were removed near two bands of sheep. Both bands had experienced high losses to coyotes in the past. Although the rancher had not experienced any losses yet, removing the coyotes near the sheep no doubt saved them from experiencing predation.



On November 21<sup>st</sup>, FA Scott MacDonald confirmed the loss of two ewes valued at \$500 to coyote predation. FA MacDonald set several traps near the kills. On November 23<sup>rd</sup>, FA MacDonald checked the traps and removed two adult coyotes, one adult large male and one large adult female. No further losses have been reported. FA MacDonald also technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations.

During the month of November, WS Dayne Barnes continued his feral swine monitoring and control efforts. WS Barnes is using tracking and trail cameras in an effort to identify feral pig populations in Nevada. Since the project began, most if not all feral pigs have been removed in eastern Nevada, leaving elimination to be completed in western Nevada. To date, three locations have been identified as having small feral swine populations in the past. The Moapa Valley, the Paradise Valley and in Lincoln County near Panaca. Feral pigs are classified as "estrays" in Nevada, meaning they are found wandering at large and the owner is unknown. WS Barnes will continue to monitor the areas where feral swine have been declared eliminated, while looking into the sole remaining hold out in Paradise Valley. Of interest, eight feral swine were removed during the last fiscal year.



During the month of November, WS Randy Evans was busy protecting sheep and cattle as well as working a Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) project in Eureka and White Pine Counties to protect mule deer and sage-grouse. WS Evans removed ten coyotes to protect livestock and an additional ten coyotes to protect mule deer and sage-grouse. The NDOW project was started in an area identified by NDOW as needing coyote removal to protect mule deer that are experiencing lower than normal fawn survival as well as to protect sage-grouse in the area.

WS Scott Little spent the month of November protecting sheep and cattle in Nye and White Pine Counties. WS Little removed 26 coyotes using calling, trapping and snaring to prevent losses. WS Little has also developed an excellent pack of coyote decoy dogs that he uses daily to help locate coyotes in his assigned work area. Through WS Little's efforts, losses have been greatly reduced in his work area. All of his cooperators are very pleased with his hard work and dedication.





During the past several months, WS Randy Evans has served on the National Wildlife Specialist committee. The committee is tasked with meeting every month and discussing issues facing field personnel. The committee is also responsible for organizing a national meeting this coming August that will host specialists from around the country. WS Evans was selected from several hundred Wildlife Specialists to participate and represent the field personnel on this prestigious committee. All of this extra work is on top of his already busy schedule protecting livestock and wildlife in his area.

During November, FA Hunter Bodenchuk responded to a call for assistance from a landfill in Eureka County. The landfill was experiencing problems with ravens. The ravens were posing a public safety threat by defecating and spreading trash to surrounding areas. Using hard boiled chicken eggs treated with DRC-1339 FA Bodenchuk removed eight ravens at the landfill. Through a cooperative agreement with the landfill and the use of the landfills permit to remove ravens, the work will be ongoing.

## West District

On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and Crew Member (CM) Brandon VanderMay conducted a morning flight around nearly a dozen cattle producers in Humboldt County. These livestock producers had lost calves and were reporting large coyote groups around the calving areas not seen in years. The aerial crew flew around calving areas and promptly removed 61 coyotes. Each year more and more cattle producers are requesting assistance from the aerial crew and trappers in the West District. WS John Peter provided ground support during aerial operations. Several of the ranchers watched the aerial crew working and were pleased with the protection efforts.



On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several sheep and cattle producers in Humboldt County. During the flight, 41 coyotes were removed to reduce losses. WS Peter provided ground support. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On November 4<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several sheep producers in Lander County. During the flight, 15 coyotes were removed to reduce future losses. WS George Hansen provided ground support while locating several coyotes for the aerial crew. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On November 4<sup>th</sup>, WS Hansen checked ground equipment around several cattle and sheep producers in Lander County. WS Hansen has been very proactive placing equipment around livestock where they experience historically high losses. Because WS Hansen has been in the same area for years, he has a vast knowledge of where problems can occur before they do. During the daylong inspection, WS Hansen removed five coyotes with the use of foothold traps and trail snares. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock in north central Nevada.



On November 7<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several sheep and cattle producers in Washoe County. During the flight, 13 coyotes were removed to reduce the livestock loss. FA Doug Koepke provided ground support. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

During the week of November 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>, FA Carl Frey tracked a lion in Lyon County. This lion had killed 16 sheep (valued at \$3,600) and four goats (valued at \$800) since August. The lion had been chased by hounds on several occasions before WS Frey was asked for help. The location was bordered by the California state line and private property making capture a little more difficult than usual. On November 7<sup>th</sup>, FA Frey placed a cage trap, trail snares and several foothold traps in the vicinity of the dead sheep and captured the 125 pound male lion on November 8<sup>th</sup>. To date, there has been no additional livestock losses and the rancher was pleased that this ongoing problem was resolved. FA Frey will continue to protect livestock in western Nevada.



During the month of November, WS John Peter removed 56 coyotes from around cattle and sheep in Humboldt County by ground crewing for the plane, calling and setting equipment (including M-44 devices). Protection efforts will continue.

On November 18<sup>th</sup>, WS Hansen removed six coyotes from around cattle and sheep producers in Lander County while checking equipment. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock in his large work area.

On November 22<sup>nd</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay flew around sheep and cattle producers in Humboldt County with WS Peter providing ground support. During the morning flight, 32 coyotes were removed to reduce excessive predation. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On November 9<sup>th</sup>, District Supervisor (DS) Jack Spencer and WS Ben Miller provided ground support to the aerial crew around a herd of translocated desert bighorn sheep in Mineral County. Nevada NDOW biologists reported that coyotes had killed several adult bighorn sheep in the past few weeks. According to the biologists, the bighorn sheep herd experienced considerable weight loss because of lack of water, making them easier for the smaller coyotes to kill. This area is almost void of wildlife and only two sheep guzzlers are available for water consumption. DS Spencer and WS Miller voice howled at different locations in





the morning and could not get a single coyote to howl. The aerial crew spent four hours flying around the bighorn sheep and didn't see a single coyote! This was the first time in several years where the plane could not find a single coyote during a flight. WS Miller returned several more times calling and finally removed a large old male coyote where a bighorn ewe had been killed (estimated loss at \$2,500) a few days prior. To date, there have been no additional bighorn sheep killed.



During the month of November, FA Frey protected cattle and sheep in Lyon, Carson City and Douglas Counties. FA Frey had several locations where several smaller sheep operations lost sheep to coyotes so FA Frey placed M-44s and trail snares in the vicinity of the losses. FA Frey has been removing several offending coyotes every week around sheep, stopping further livestock losses. One cooperator had lost 60% of her lamb crop before she knew there was a trapper in her area that could help. FA Frey continues to address livestock loss complaints as they arrive in his large work area.

During the month of November, Wildlife Biologist (WB) Zack Bowers continued to deter wildlife from using/crossing the airfield at a military installation in northern Nevada. In an effort to keep these species from crossing the airfield, WB Bowers has utilized harassment with several methods. 928 birds from 10 species were dispersed from the airfield. Two species of mammals and one species of bird were lethally removed. Wildlife numbers are relatively high primarily due to large flocks of blackbirds/starlings.

During the month of November there were no reports of bird strikes or remains found on the runway. The five samples sent to the Smithsonian in October have been identified/confirmed as being one American coot, one white-crowned sparrow and three horned larks.

WB Bowers had noticed quite an increase in coyote activity on and around the airfield. In response to the increased coyote activity WB Bowers set snares in crawl holes along the perimeter fence. WB Bowers ended up removing six coyotes in a short amount of time. Five of the coyotes were removed using snares and one with firearms.



During the month of November, WB Hunter Moyles and WS Cameron Green continued protection work on an international airport in Reno. WB Moyles and WS Green work together on the airfield because it is a joint use facility. WS Green spends all of his time there, while WB Moyles is only there once or twice a week when he is not working on the other military installations. During the month, WB Moyles and WS Green continued to deter wildlife from using/crossing the airfield property. In an effort to deter these avian/mammalian species from crossing the airfield, WS Green utilized several methods of harassment. WB Green dispersed 390 birds and mammals from the airfield. Wildlife dispersed from the airfield included 11 species of birds and mammals. Many of these birds were congregated around a drainage ditch which holds water on a year around basis. Persistent harassment is necessary as birds and other wildlife are reluctant to leave the water source located on airport property.

Throughout the month, WB Moyles and WS Green have seen an increase in raptor presence on the airfields. In response to the increase of potential threats, four American kestrels were captured and translocated. Raptor presence will continue to increase with the start of the fall migration.

Throughout the month of November, WB Moyles continued monthly surveys on offsite Military drop zones and landing strips. During the structured surveys, WB Moyles observed 183 avian and mammalian species. Surveys will continue to get a good baseline of wildlife presence and potential strike hazards to aircraft, which will determine the IWDM techniques he will deploy at the sites.



Along with several nonlethal harassment techniques, WB Moyles and WS Green also had to deploy some lethal means of control to eliminate aircraft strike potential at a large airport in Reno. Specifically, WB Moyles and WS Green removed several offending species for public safety including: one coyote, one raven, four mallards and one Canada goose by utilizing trapping, and shooting. Aircraft protection methodology will continue to be employed at the joint use facility to better minimize the potential for wildlife strikes to aircraft. Protection efforts are ongoing.

During the month of November, WB Dean Pyzik removed 37 pigeons from seven Red Flag airplane hangars at a military installation in southern Nevada. WB Pyzik will continue to monitor the hangars for pigeon activity and remove any in an effort to save the military about \$61,000 in future biohazard cleanup of pigeon feces.

The above mentioned installation reported its first bird strike for fiscal year (FY) 17 on November 1<sup>st</sup>, with no damage to the aircraft. The sample from this strike came back from the Smithsonian Institute and was identified as a perching bird from the order Passeriformes. In FY 16 the installation reported its first strike on October 7<sup>th</sup>, causing \$27,000 in damage to the aircraft. The Smithsonian identified the species in this bird strike as a mallard duck which was most likely coming or going to the pond located at the golf course on base.

WB Pyzik worked the airshow on November 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, successfully protecting all the aircraft during the event with no bird strikes reported. The air show had over 200,000 people attend the two day event.

WB Pyzik removed one badger from the installation while dispersing 3,296 birds. WB Pyzik has seen a major invasion of European starlings which accounted for 64% of the birds dispersed while patrolling and conducting perimeter checks at the installation.



## New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report



### Valuing and Investing in Employees

WB Pyzik is one out of 20 civilian employees holding a grade of GS-6 or GS-7 that the 57<sup>th</sup> Wing employs, WB Pyzik was selected as the #1/Top civilian for 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, 2016 (Aug-Oct, 2016) (pic) which he was nominated for in October. This was a significant achievement considering this was WB Pyzik's first quarter of work at the 57<sup>th</sup>.



### Information and Communication

During the reporting period, the fall waterfowl sampling goal for avian influenza was achieved. Dabbling ducks were sampled at multiple locations for detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza. Fortunately, of the 180 birds sampled, the only avian influenza that was detected was the natural occurring low pathogenic virus. Winter sampling will begin in December which will run through January. The sampling goal for the Winter phase is 170 samples.



During the reporting period, the Elko Pilot completed his required training and is now flying again protecting livestock throughout Elko and Eureka counties.

### Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report

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

Nothing to Report

### Future Meeting and Events

December 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, California Cattlemen's Association and California Cattlewomen's Annual Convention & Allied Industry Trade Show in conjunction with Nevada Cattlemen's Association and Nevada Woolgrower's Association in Reno, NV. State Director (SD) Mark Jensen, DS Bennett, DS Spencer, WB Moyles and FA Frey to attend.

USDA APHIS

# Wildlife Services

---



USDA-APHIS-WS  
8775 Technology Way  
Reno, NV 89521

