

January 2011

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

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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 January, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **15.9** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$110** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed. Additionally, WS assisted **54** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$5,935** in damage and WS Specialists verified another **\$43,125** in damage to other agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During January, coyotes accounted for **\$5,575** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **959** 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 January, **62** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of January, 2011.

Resource Protection

State Office

During January, 2011, the State Office trap loaning program checked out **12** cage traps. The species distribution for the traps loaned out were: raccoons (**4**), ground squirrels (**3**) and striped skunks (**5**). 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 January 3rd, the Ely airplane, crewed by Instructor Pilot (IP) Tim Keogh and Crew Member (CM) Jerred Taylor, flew in Nevada Department of Wildlife's (NDOW('s)) hunt unit 222, south of Ely, Nevada. With the help of Wildlife Specialist (WS) Billy Taylor, the plane was able to remove ten coyotes near several mule deer concentrations. With excellent snow conditions, aerial operations will continue on NDOW Project 22 to help protect Nevada's mule deer.



On January 4th, the Ely airplane, crewed by IP Keogh and CM Jerred Taylor, flew in NDOW's hunt units 144 and 145 near Eureka, Nevada. With the help of WS Billy Taylor and Assistant District Supervisor (ADS) Sam Sanders as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 24 depredating coyotes. Several wintering groups of mule deer were observed during the flight and several coyotes were removed in close proximity to the deer.



On January 5th, the Ely airplane, crewed by IP Keogh and back-up CM Matt Spires, flew for a sheep producer in eastern White Pine County. The sheep producer has experienced very high losses in past years. In an effort to help reduce these historic losses, the plane flew around several bands of sheep, south of Baker, Nevada. With CM Jerred Taylor as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 25 coyotes near several bands of wintering sheep. Information was also provided to the sheep rancher concerning the well being of the sheep since very heavy snowfall hit this area a few weeks earlier. The sheep producer was very pleased with the coyote removal, as well as the information concerning his sheep, and stopped by the East District Office to express his appreciation.



On January 7th, Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler received a call concerning the loss of three adult ewe sheep to lion predation. The value of the ewes was placed at \$450. Not wanting to wait until Monday, MLS Buhler responded to the location in Nye County the next morning. After confirming the sheep were killed by a lion, MLS Buhler placed six of his well trained hounds on the track. After about two miles, the lion was treed. MLS Buhler dispatched the four year old male lion with one well placed shot. The lion was skinned and later turned into the Ely NDOW office. No further losses have been reported and the sheep producer was very pleased with the outcome.



On January 18th, the Elko plane, crewed by Pilot Ken Baer and CM Wayne Rowley flew a large cattle ranch in Elko County. The rancher had reported that he has observed more coyotes on his property this year than he has seen in the past 20 years. Coyotes have killed several calves in the past, at the location. Many of the coyotes had been observed in close proximity to the cattle. With calving season just around the corner, the rancher was very concerned for his livestock. Being careful not to disrupt ranch operations, the Elko plane was able to remove 67 coyotes from around the cows. ADS Sanders provided ground support and removed one coyote by method of shooting. The rancher was very

pleased with the morning's effort.

On January 19th and 20th, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett traveled to southern Nye County and treated two dairies that were having problems with starlings and mixed black birds. Utilizing DRC-1339, several thousand starlings and blackbirds were removed. Both dairies had reported an approximate loss of \$30,000 worth of feed to consumption and fecal contamination by the birds. Both dairies were very pleased with the results of the projects.



During the week of January 24th, work began on a mule deer protection project in hunt unit 144. The Nevada Alliance 4 Wildlife (an Elko County sportsmen's group) working together with NDOW biologists, received Heritage funding for this project. After consultation with the local NDOW biologist, a helicopter was sent to the unit. During the following four and half days, 99 coyotes were removed from the unit. NDOW continues to monitor these deer and hopefully these protection efforts will have a positive impact. Work will continue in hunt unit 144 and surrounding areas.



On January 24th, a sheep producer contacted the Elko Wildlife Services office concerning a problem with ravens. Ravens had injured and killed 15 lambs valued at \$1,500. On January 26th, CM Rowley placed out several eggs treated with DRC-1339. A total of 12 ravens were removed bringing the damage to an end. No further losses have been reported.

On January 25th, The Elko plane, crewed by Pilot Baer and CM Rowley, flew two large cattle and sheep ranches in Elko County. Last year, many calves and lambs were killed by coyotes during the spring. In an effort to reduce losses this coming spring, the Elko plane removed 20 coyotes from around the cows. WS Derril Fry provided ground support for the aerial operation. Both ranches are appreciative of the help in protecting the livestock.

On January 25th, DS Bennett and WS Virgil Fullerton treated a feedlot in eastern White Pine County that was experiencing damage from European starlings. DRC-1339 was used to remove approximately 2,000 starlings that had consumed roughly \$2,000 worth of feed. Droppings from the birds had also caused problems. No further losses have been reported at the feedlot.

On January 26th WS Scott Little received a call from a cattle rancher in western White Pine County concerning the loss of two calves valued at \$1,000. After confirming that the calves were killed by coyotes, WS Little requested assistance from the Ely plane. On January 28th, the Ely plane, crewed by IP Keogh and CM Jerred Taylor, responded to the location. With the assistance of WS Little as the ground crew, ten coyotes were removed. No further losses have been reported and the rancher was very pleased with the results.



On January 28th, The Elko plane, crewed by Pilot Baer and CM Rowley, flew on several cattle, sheep, and goat ranches in Elko County. The Elko plane removed 36 coyotes from the ranches, during the four hour operation. WS Gilbert Temoke provided

ground support and located several coyotes for the aerial operation. The ranchers are very appreciative of the help in protecting their livestock.

During January, WS Billy Conant reported that a sheep producer in Lincoln County lost six adult ewes to coyote predation. The value of the sheep was placed at \$900. WS Conant utilized traps, trail snares and shooting to remove ten coyotes near the sheep. WS Conant also requested the assistance of the Ely plane. The plane, crewed by IP Keogh and CM Jerred Taylor, was able to remove two additional coyotes near the site of the kills. WS Conant continues to run ground equipment near several wintering bands of sheep.

January was an excellent month for both Ely and Elko planes in the East District. Good weather with decent snow cover provided for great flying opportunities the entire month for the planes. Both aerial crews did an excellent job working all month including several weekends. Many livestock producers have expressed their appreciation for the extra effort put forth by the aerial crews as well as for the ground support provided by all of the Wildlife Specialists in the East District during the first month of the New Year.

West District

On January 3rd, Pilot Wes Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning aerial operation around several sheep bands in Washoe County. The sheep producer reported the loss of six ewes (valued at \$1,200). During the aerial work, a total of three coyotes were removed. WS Doug Koepke provided ground support during aerial operations and will continue to monitor the situation.



On January 3rd, WS Eric Hansen continued to protect livestock in Lyon County in response to several livestock losses from the prior week. While checking equipment, WS Eric Hansen removed a total of four coyotes, utilizing trail snares and leghold traps. No further livestock losses have been reported since the removal of the coyotes. WS Eric Hansen will continue to protect livestock in his work area.

On January 4th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a long flight around four cattle producers in Humboldt County. During the flight, a total of 16 coyotes were removed by the aerial crew. WS John Peter provided ground support during the aerial operation.

On January 4th, DS Jack Spencer Jr. assisted NDOW with an annual mid winter waterfowl survey in the Truckee Meadows area. DS Spencer observed over 1,000 Canada geese in his survey area. Many of these geese are in close proximity to a large airport in Reno. Annually, there are usually 9,000 to 10,000 geese in the Reno area. Most of these geese eventually migrate out of the area; however, many will remain.



On January 5th, WSs Luke Barto and Eric Hansen conducted a large bird project at a large feedlot in Lyon County. The feedlot manager reported that non-native starlings had consumed \$10,000 worth of feed in the past several months. The manager also reported that the starlings were contaminating cattle feed by defecating in it. The build up of guano also made conditions unsanitary for the many workers on the ground. WS Barto and WS Eric Hansen placed out DRC-1339 treated grain bait that eventually removed approximately 19,000 non native starlings.

On January 5th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an aerial hunt around several calving areas in Humboldt County. During the flight, a total of 23 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground support during aerial operations.

During the first two weeks of January, in Humboldt County, WS Peter removed 18 coyotes from eight M-44 units placed near a small calving area. This particular rancher reported the loss of three calves (valued at \$2,000) to coyotes. WS Peter will continue to protect livestock in his work area.

During the first week of January, WS Koepke removed six coyotes in Pershing County with the use of the M-44 device. This particular area has several sheep bands that occasionally have livestock losses caused by coyotes. WS Koepke will continue to protect livestock in Pershing County.

On January 6th, WS George Hansen requested assistance from Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay on an area with several winter bands of sheep in Lander County. The aerial crew immediately found a pair of coyotes eating on a freshly killed ewe (valued at \$200). The aerial crew promptly removed these two offending coyotes and six others near the sheep for a total of eight coyotes. WS George Hansen provided valuable ground support during the aerial operation. WS George Hansen will continue to place equipment out near the sheep and request assistance from the aerial crew when needed.



During January 10th-13th, DS Spencer and Wildlife Disease Biologist (WDB) Zack Bowers traveled to Paradise Valley, NV, to conduct a feral swine project. It's uncertain how long ago the feral swine

were turned loose in the area, but Wildlife Services started receiving damage reports from ranchers about 15 years ago. Paradise Valley is located in northern NV in high desert habitat where riparian habitat integrity is in high demand. The feral swine cause considerable damage to these riparian areas and also to the surrounding range land. It is not uncommon for the ranchers to take considerable losses in the winter time when the feral swine start targeting their hay stacks. Due to the nomadic nature of the feral swine in this area,



DS Spencer and WDB Bowers arrived early to try to locate the feral swine and set snares in available locations. On the third day of the project, more assistance arrived with the presence of WSs George Hansen and Koepke who brought along dogs to help locate the swine from the ground. Also arriving on the location, was the West District plane, crewed by Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay. Working the area where it was believed that nine feral swine had been located, the men and dogs on the ground pushed the thick brush in an attempt to force the feral swine out into the open where the aerial crew could safely engage them. After several hours, ten feral swine were eventually pushed out into the open, and shot by the air crew. WDB Bowers sampled the feral swine for classical swine fever, swine brucellosis, pseudorabies, plague and tularemia. This feral swine project in-

volved six employees, two dogs, one airplane and good communication resulting in a successful outcome. Good job and many thanks to all those involved.

On January 11th, DS Spencer and WDB Bowers made a calling stand near a calving area in Humboldt County. In a mere five minutes, one coyote was called in and removed in close proximity to the calving cows.

On January 14th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an aerial operation around several calving areas in Humboldt County. During the flight, a total of 13 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground support during the flight.

On January 17th, DS Spencer conducted a site inspection in Lyon County at a feedlot that was experiencing feed loss/fecal contamination caused by non-native starlings. DS Spencer removed several starlings by shooting and performed a necropsy on the offending birds to see exactly what feed they were eating, so the correct pre-bait and corresponding treated bait is used to remove the depre-dating birds, thereby reducing future losses. DS Spencer also instructed a ranch hand as to the proper pre-baiting process to ensure success, while also ensuring that non-target bird species do not become adversely affected by the project.

On January 19th, WS Barto conducted a DRC-1339 bird abatement project in Lyon County. The feedlot owner (mentioned above) reported that the thousands of starlings had been consuming several tons of feed per month, but his real concern was the fecal matter that the birds were leaving in the feed bunks that undoubtedly get consumed by the cattle. WS Barto removed 3,000 starlings (85% of the birds present) with the treated DRC-1339 treated bait. Because birds continually move into this feedlot, another bird abatement project will likely happen in the near future, pending weather changes.



Also throughout the month of January, WS Barto continued work on a United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) funded project. Staff Biologist Jack Sengl, WDB Bowers and WS Barto conducted site visits to the study area to set up a survey route and point-count survey points, to analyze wildlife activity around the project, and provide recommendations to the Corps to prevent/reduce aviation hazards.

On January 20th, WS Koepke requested aerial assistance around a sheep producer who had lost eight ewes (valued at \$1,600) in the past two weeks. The aerial crew was at the location right at dawn and located a coyote feeding on a fresh ewe. The aerial crew removed the offending coyote and continued searching from the plane for several more hours but found no other depre-dating coyotes. WS Koepke will continue to monitor the situation and run ground equipment in the area.

On January 21st, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an aerial operation around a sheep producer and some calving areas in Lyon County. During the flight, a total of four coyotes were removed by the aerial crew. WS Eric Hansen also removed two additional coyotes with leghold traps. This area has had minimal livestock losses this past winter.

On January 24th, WS George Hansen requested assistance from the aerial crew on some winter sheep bands in Lander County. One band of sheep had lost two ewes (valued at \$400) to coyotes. Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay flew around the sheep bands that resulted in the removal of nine coyotes. WS George Hansen provided valuable ground support by locating several of the coyotes for the plane.

On January 27th, WS Koepke requested assistance from the aerial crew for two sheep bands in Nye County. Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay responded and during the resulting flight, a total of three coyotes were removed. This area has had very few livestock losses compared to previous years. WS Koepke will continue to protect these bands of sheep.

During the week of January 24th thru January 28th, WS Eric Hansen removed a total of 10 coyotes by using trail snares and leghold traps. All removed coyotes were in close proximity to calving and lambing areas. WS Eric Hansen will continue to protect livestock in Lyon County.



During the month of January, the air crew flew 83 hours for livestock protection efforts. The weather has been very conducive for flying and when there is good weather there is a lot of flying, however, when the weather is poor, low flight time and missed no-fly days are inevitable.

Information and Communication

On January 20th, State Director (SD) Mark Jensen attended the American Sheep Industry Convention in Reno, NV.

Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report.

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report.

Future Meetings and Events

February 9th, Nevada State Legislature Meeting in Carson City. SD Jensen to attend.



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