

September 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 September, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **5.1** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$55.1** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$8.3** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **499** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$1,325** in damage and WS Specialists verified another **\$9,650** in damage to other agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During September, coyotes accounted for **\$2,400** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **234** 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 September, **13** samples were processed.

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

Resource Protection

State Office

During September, 2011, the State Office trap loaning program checked out **17** cage traps. The species distribution for the traps loaned out were: raccoons (**7**), ground squirrels (**6**) and striped skunks (**4**). 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 September 1st, Wildlife Biologist (WB) Sam Sanders removed three coyotes from around two bands of sheep in Eureka County, utilizing calling and shooting. WB Sanders' efforts have effectively reduced coyote predation losses to sheep throughout his work area all summer long. No losses have been reported on these bands of sheep in an area that typically has high lamb losses due to coyote predation. The cooperators are very pleased with WB Sanders' efforts.

On September 2nd, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Scott Little was checking in with sheep herders and confirmed the loss of one lamb to coyote predation. The value of the lamb was placed at \$200. Since the kill was fresh, WS Little used calling and his decoy dogs to remove the offending coyote. No further losses have been reported.

On September 5th, WB Sanders checked with sheep herders in northern Elko County. The herders reported that three lambs, valued at \$600, were killed by coyotes over the past three nights. That day while checking his equipment in the area, WB Sanders removed three coyotes from near the sheep by utilizing leghold traps. The following day, WB Sanders removed an additional coyote from just above the sheep with calling and shooting. The removal of these coyotes effectively stopped the predation to the two bands of sheep in the area.



On September 12th, WS Aaron Freund and Crew Member (CM) Wayne Rowley responded to a complaint concerning beavers. Although Wildlife Services does not routinely handle beaver complaints, the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) Elko office requested Wildlife Services' assistance. WS Freund confirmed approximately \$2,800 in damage to several ponds and trees at a homeowner's association office. WS Freund and CM Rowley utilized traps to remove four beavers. No further losses have been reported. Technical assistance was also provided to help prevent future problems. The homeowner's association was very pleased with the assistance provided by Wildlife Services.



On September 12th, the Ely plane, crewed by Instructor Pilot (IP) Tim Keogh and CM Jerred Taylor, responded to a sheep producer in western White Pine County. The rancher had reported the loss of one lamb, valued at \$200, to coyote predation. With WS Little and his well trained coyote dogs as the ground crew, the aircrew were able to remove four coyotes near the kill site. No further losses have been reported. Technical assistance was also provided and the sheep producer has since purchased guard dogs for the flock.

On September 13th, IP Keogh traveled to Elko County for three days of aerial operations. As the Elko plane has been down for an engine replacement, IP Keogh offered to help catch up on some of the flying in the area. During the two day operation, 13 coyotes were removed on several ranches experiencing coyote depredation.

On September 13th and 14th, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett conducted a two day field inspection with Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler. Two days were spent checking with sheep herders in the Schell Creek Mountain Range. Mules, at least seven tracking hounds, and two ATV's were used during the two day field inspection.



On September 21st, DS Bennett conducted a day long field inspection with WS Derril Fry. During the course of the day, a sheep producer in southern Elko County contacted WS Fry concerning the loss of one lamb, valued at \$200. WS Fry and DS Bennett responded to the location and observed a coyote eating the freshly killed lamb. WS Fry was able to remove the offending coyote with one well placed shot. WS Fry also snared a very large male coyote near the kill in equipment that had been previously set. WS Fry set several more traps and snares in the area to help prevent future problems. DS Bennett was able to personally meet with two of WS Fry's cooperators who were very pleased with the work provided by WS Fry and the Nevada Wildlife Services Program. WS Fry provided technical assistance to both resource owners in an effort to help prevent future losses.

On September 22nd, WS Fry received a report that a lamb had been killed by coyotes in southern Elko County. In response to the depredation, the Elko plane, crewed by Pilot Ken Baer and CM Rowley, flew the area on September 27th, removing eight coyotes with WS Fry operating as the ground crew.

On September 26th, a sheep producer in eastern White Pine County contacted the Ely District office concerning the loss of four lambs, valued at \$800. The following morning, the Ely plane, crewed by IP Keogh and CM Jerred Taylor, responded to the location. With the assistance of WS Billy Taylor as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove three coyotes, bringing the damage to an end. Since WS Billy Taylor is filling in as an intermittent employee for several months, he will continue to monitor the area for future predation problems.

Also on September 26th, a sheep producer in western White Pine County contacted the Ely District office concerning the loss of one lamb, valued at \$200, to coyote predation. In response to the depredation, the Ely plane, crewed by IP Keogh and CM Jerred Taylor, flew the area of the depredation removing two coyotes with the assistance of DS Bennett as the ground crew. No further losses have been reported.

On September 28th, the Elko plane, crewed by Pilot Baer and CM Rowley, conducted aerial operations in northern Elko County, removing nine coyotes to reduce future predation of sheep. WB Sanders ground crewed for the operation.



On September 29th, the Elko office received a report of a lamb that was killed by coyotes in central Elko County. In response to the depredation, the Elko plane, crewed by Pilot Baer and CM Rowley, flew the area, removing 20 coyotes with WB Sanders operating as the ground crew. Later that morning, the air crew and WB Sanders transitioned to Northern Elko County where they removed 14 coyotes to protect Fall calving.

During September, WS Dayne Barnes continued to work in his project area in hunt unit 241. WS Barnes removed several coyotes using trapping, snaring, calling and shooting. WS Barnes also used six trail cameras and placed out two mountain lion call boxes along with a large amount of lion snares near areas with historic lion/bighorn sheep predation issues.



During September, WS Billy Taylor was busy protecting sheep for a large sheep producer in southern White Pine County. WS Billy Taylor is helping fill in for the vacant position that was left when WS Billy Conant took a position in Idaho. WS Billy Taylor will be filling in, off and on, throughout the winter.

September saw most all of the sheep come out of the high country. Lambs were also shipped to markets. With the abundance of moisture this year, most all lambs were in excellent health with very nice weights. Losses in many areas seemed to be down as well. This is due, in part, to the hard work of the Wildlife Service's employees in Nevada. As adult sheep will be moving to their winter grounds, many East District employees took well deserved vacations during the transition period.

West District

During the week of September 9th thru 12th, a livestock producer from Lyon County reported that over a few days time, two ewes (valued at \$450) had been killed by a black bear. It can be difficult sometimes to determine what predator is responsible for depredation, however, when black bears kill sheep, the carcasses typically look like a bomb hit them. In this depredation event, the ewes were badly ripped apart. WS Eric Hansen had trail snares placed around the sheep pasture and on September 13th, he found that he had trail snared a 250 pound male black bear. The livestock losses stopped immediately after the bear was snared. The livestock producer was pleased that no additional sheep were killed. There are tracks of two other black bears on the ranch and no livestock losses, so snares were closed for a few days in hopes that the bears would leave, and then were reset to prevent lion and coyote depredation. There are over 70 million "other" acres in Nevada but for some reason, six to seven black bears have been verified on this little sheep ranch during the past month alone. A hunter with a black bear tag has been hunting this area, but unfortunately the 15 foot tall brush along the river makes sport hunting black bears in this area nearly impossible.



On September 7th, WS Doug Koepke conducted a DRC-1339 raven treatment project in Lyon County. The offending ravens were depredating livestock at a large feedlot. WS Koepke placed treated eggs around the damage site and the following day, removed 15 ravens. To date, no further livestock incidents have been reported. The livestock producer was pleased with the quick response and the results. WS Koepke will continue to protect livestock.

During the week of September 19th thru September 23rd, WS George Hansen was busy placing leg-hold traps and trail snares around several livestock grazing areas in Lander County. During the week, WS George Hansen removed seven coyotes. WS George Hansen will continue to protect livestock in his work area.

During the week of September 19th thru September 23rd, WS Ben Miller was busy checking equipment on the Washoe County Mule Deer project (hunt unit 014). WS Miller constantly walks by big-

horn sheep herds and like most bighorn sheep they barely pay attention to a passerby, however, on this day the sheep were skittish and trotted away from WS Miller. WS Miller later found where a large footed male lion was walking down the trail towards a small water hole that the bighorn sheep utilize. These limited water features are a great water source for both bighorn sheep and lions although unfortunately the lions tend to hunt off the water sources until the game is depleted or has moved on. WS Miller already had trail snares placed and expects that the lion will be caught in the next few days.



On September 21st, Pilot Wes Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted aerial operations around several cattle and sheep operators in Humboldt County. During the flight, a total of six coyotes were removed. WS John Peter provided ground support.

During the week of September 19th thru September 23rd, WS Koepke was busy placing leghold traps and trail snares around several livestock grazing areas in Pershing and Churchill Counties. During the week, WS Koepke removed eight coyotes. WS Koepke will continue to protect livestock in his work area.

On September 26th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations around several cattle operators in Humboldt County. During the early morning flight, a total of 27 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided valuable ground support by locating several of the coyotes for the aerial crew.

WS Koepke was busy this month protecting sheep producers, in Pershing and Churchill Counties, from livestock losses. Recently the sheep had moved out of the mountains and are down on the flats, with many of the lambs being shipped. WS Koepke will continue to protect livestock in his work area.

On September 27th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations around several cattle operators in Lander County. During the flight, the aerial crew removed 10 coyotes. WS George Hansen located nine of the 10 coyotes for the aerial crew. The combination of a good aerial crew and a good ground person makes for a highly effective team.

On September 27th, WS Miller inspected an area where he had previously found that a large lion had moved in on a bighorn sheep herd. WS Miller inspected a small ravine game trail that leads to water and discovered that he had trail snared a scarred up 170 pound male lion with a broken and abscessed lower left canine. WS Miller progressed further along his day and discovered that he had trail snared yet another lion. This lion was estimated to be an 85 pound female which was captured close to where the prior mentioned lion was caught. WS Miller will continue to protect mule deer and bighorn sheep in the protection area.



On September 28th, a farmer from Humboldt County reported that wild pigs had once again invaded his croplands causing considerable damage. WS Peter inspected the site and confirmed that pigs were responsible for the damage. WS Peter will be placing out trail snares in the near future to remove the crop raiding stray pigs. Last winter, DS Jack Spencer, Wildlife Disease Biologist (WDB) Zack Bowers, WS George Hansen, WS Koepke and the aerial crew removed nearly a dozen pigs from this same area during a feral pig disease surveillance project.

New and Developing Methods

WS Eric Hansen has been experimenting lately with remote trap monitoring transmitters and receivers to more efficiently check ground equipment over a large area that is impeded by terrain, topography and tall vegetation. The system is similar to radio telemetry systems used for monitoring hounds and wildlife collars. The transmitter has a small magnet that is covered by a ferrous object, which is in turn connected to a trap chain/snare cable with a tether. Once the trap/snare moves far enough away from the transmitter, it separates the ferrous blocker from the magnet which then sends out a different “blip” cadence for the transmitters’ specific frequency, indicating to the receiver that the ground equipment has moved.



Valuing and Investing in Employees

During the reporting period, WS Conant was offered and accepted a position in the Idaho WS’ program. We hope he finds his new position challenging and rewarding.

Information and Communication

On September 24th, DS Bennett and Staff Biologist (SB) Jack Sengl participated in the Nevada Trapper’s Association’s annual Trapper’s education Day. The event was held on Mount Charleston near Las Vegas. Many non trapping members of the public attended this event. DS Bennett and SB Sengl both gave presentations during the day. This is an excellent way to help promote trapping in Nevada while molding future young trappers.



On September 3rd, DS Bennett conducted an interview with a reporter from the Elko Daily Free Press. The reporter asked many question about the Wildlife Services program in Eastern Nevada. Several topics were discussed during the interview.

On September 23rd State Director (SD) Mark Jensen attended the NDOW Commission Meeting in Reno, NV.

Emerging Trends/Issues

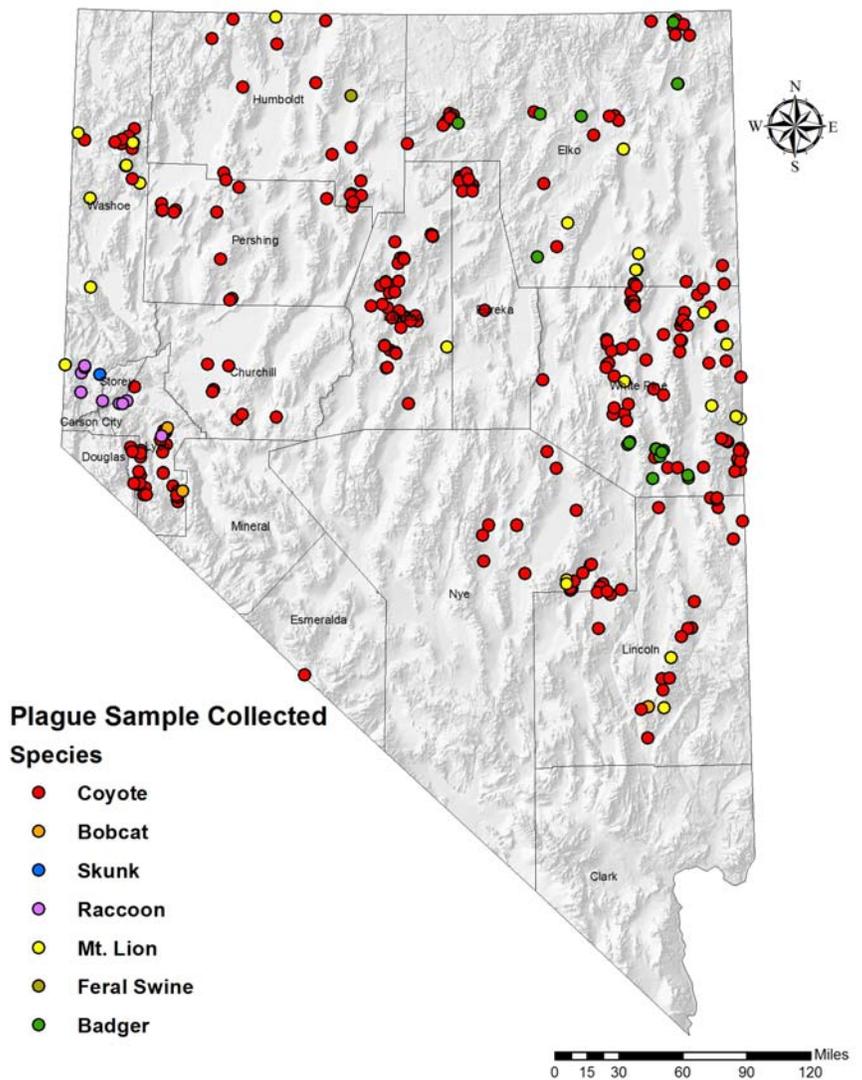
On September 23rd, WDB Bowers responded to a report of dead birds in Lyon County. The concerned citizen mentioned that there were dead ravens and owls in the area. WDB Bowers determined that the carcasses were too old for most diagnostic tests, but collected the carcasses and later submitted feathers for Avian Influenza Virus and West Nile Virus testing. The concerned citizen said they would continue to monitor the area and notify WDB Bowers if they noticed any new developments. WDB Bowers also contacted Dr. Peri Wolf of NDOW to inform her of the situation.



Nevada WS personnel routinely participate in statewide zoonotic disease sampling in cooperation with the Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDOA) and NDOW. Page seven of this newsletter shows where plague samples were collected in the calendar years 2010 and 2011, in the State of

Nevada. Nevada Wildlife Services employees follow a sampling protocol which outlines how blood samples are collected for plague sampling within a given area from animals that were already being removed for livestock, natural resource, public safety, or aviation safety purposes. Although the no-buto blood strip sampling takes additional time and effort, it allows State health officials and the CDC to monitor for disease “hotspots”, which in turn is beneficial for both the public and wildlife and reduces the cost burden to the public for disease surveillance.

Nevada Plague Sampling in 2010 and 2011



Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

By Presidential proclamation, September 15th thru October 15th is recognized as National Hispanic Heritage Month.

Future Meetings and Events

November 14th-16th, Cattlemen’s meeting in Minden, NV. SD Jensen and others to attend.

December 2nd, NDOW Commission Meeting in Reno. SD Jensen to attend.

December 6th, NDOA Board meeting in Reno. SD Jensen to attend.

USDA APHIS

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