

November 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 November, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **7.7** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$67.6** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$7.5** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **92** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$5,700** in damage and WS Specialists verified another **\$7,200** in damage to other agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During November, coyotes accounted for **\$3,100** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **463** 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, **8** samples were processed.

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

Resource Protection

State Office

During November, 2011, the State Office trap loaning program checked out **12** cage traps. The species distribution for the traps loaned out were: raccoons (**9**), ground squirrels (**2**) and striped skunks (**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 November 2nd and 3rd, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Aaron Freund acted as the Crew Member (CM) for the West District plane. WS Freund just recently completed his entire required crew member training in Cedar City, Utah. WS Freund will be the back-up crew member in Elko. During the two day operation, several large ranches were flown and more than 17 coyotes were removed.

On November 2nd and 3rd, CM Brandon Vandermay acted as the CM for the Elko plane as part of his annual CM refresher training. With CM Wayne Rowley as the ground crew and Ken Baer as the pilot, a total of 60 coyotes were removed during the two days of flying. The flying took place on several cattle ranches and one sheep ranch that have experienced high coyote predation in the past.



On November 2nd and November 22nd, the Ely plane, crewed by Instructor Pilot (IP) Tim Keogh and CM Jerred Taylor, responded to a large cattle ranch in Nye County. With the assistance of District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett as the ground crew, several coyotes were removed during the two days of flying. The rancher reported the loss of more than 15 calves to coyote predation this past spring. In an attempt to help prevent a repeat of last year's losses, the Ely plane has been removing coyotes from the area. The Ely aircrew will continue to fly these locations this winter. The rancher was very pleased with the result and called the N-6 Grazing Board to express his appreciation.

On November 9th, DS Bennett and State Director (SD) Mark Jensen attended the N-6 Grazing Board meeting in Austin, Nevada. These annual Grazing Board meetings are an excellent way to provide a report of the activities that Wildlife Services has completed during the past year. Many excellent cooperator contacts were made at the meeting. Support from the N-6 Grazing Board as well as the other Grazing Boards throughout Nevada is very important to the Wildlife Services program.

During the week of November 14th to 18th, all three Nevada pilots attended the annual pilots meeting in Cedar City, Utah. Several important topics were covered during the meeting with safety as the number one theme.



On November 14th, a call was received by the East District Office concerning the loss of two adult ewes, valued at \$500. DS Bennett responded to the location in western White Pine County and confirmed that coyotes were responsible for the predation. DS Bennett placed several pieces of ground equipment near the kills. On November 21st, DS Bennett removed one coyote with traps and another utilizing calling. On November 22nd, the Ely plane, crewed by IP Keogh and CM Jerred Taylor, also removed an additional two coyotes, bringing an end to the damage. Technical assistance was also provided in an attempt to help prevent future problems.

On November 19th, WS Virgil Fullerton received a call concerning the loss of one adult ewe sheep, valued at \$250. WS Fullerton traveled to the location in eastern White Pine County and confirmed that a coyote had killed the ewe. WS Fullerton placed several traps near the kill. On November 21st, WS Fullerton returned to the location and removed two adult coyotes utilizing traps. The sheep herder told WS Fullerton that a coyote had returned to the kill and the sheep herders guard dog began chasing the coyote. The coyote ran down into a wash and while fleeing from the guard dog, ran into one of WS Fullerton's traps and was captured. WS Fullerton also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future predation issues from occurring.



On November 28th, the Ely plane, crewed by IP Keogh and CM Jerred Taylor, flew a sheep ranch in south east White Pine County. During the four hour operation, one coyote was removed. The ranch has had a very bad history of high losses during past years. The sheep producer was very pleased with the results.

On November 28th, the Elko plane, crewed by Pilot Baer and CM Rowley, flew several large ranches near Wells, Nevada. During the four hour operation, 39 coyotes were removed. WS Freund served as the ground crew.

WS Freund spent November removing coyotes near Wendover, Nevada. Approximately 12 bands of sheep from Utah and Idaho spend the winter in the area. The first band arrived in the area on November 27th. WS Freund removed seven coyotes near locations with historically high predation. The Elko plane, crewed by Pilot Baer and CM Rowley, also flew the area on the morning of November 22nd and removed three coyotes from the area. WS Freund will continue to work this area during the upcoming winter months.

During November, WS Matt Spires was busy working in his area in northern White Pine County. Although no losses were reported, WS Spires has been busy removing coyotes near several bands of sheep in an effort to help minimize losses this winter.

During November, 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 continues to monitor several trail cameras and mountain lion call boxes and snares. One trail camera photo was obtained by the local Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) Biologist from a chuckar hunter in the area with a photo of a small mountain lion. The NDOW Biologist contacted Wildlife Services and provided this information. WS Barnes found the lion's tracks as it moved north through the Delamar Range. WS Barnes is continuing his search for the lion.

WS Scott Little removed 14 coyotes during the month of November in southern White Pine County and Nye County. Most all of the sheep have arrived on their winter grounds. WS Little is removing coyotes in areas that have experienced high predation losses in the past several years. By removing these territorial coyotes, WS Little is preventing these historically high losses from occurring. WS Little will continue his control efforts during the next several winter months.

WS Derril Fry spent the month of November protecting several bands of sheep in southern Elko County. No losses were reported during the month. WS Fry also investigated two possible moun-

tain lion issues in Elko County. Although no lion sign was found, WS Fry will continue to monitor these reports for possible problems.

Most of the sheep in the East District are now on their winter ranges. Both the airplanes in the East District as well as the Wildlife Specialist's will be busy protecting these wintering bands of sheep.

West District

During the week of November 1st thru November 4th, WS Doug Koepke was busy removing coyotes from his large work area. WS Koepke has had numerous livestock requests in several different counties this past week. During the week, WS Koepke removed a total of 13 coyotes by utilizing leghold traps and trail snares.

On November 6th, a livestock producer from Humboldt County reported that two calves, valued at \$1,400, had been killed by coyotes. On November 8th, Pilot Wes Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial activities around the calving areas, which resulted in the removal of 38 coyotes. Most of the coyotes removed were in the immediate vicinity of the calving area. WS Koepke, operating as the ground crew, located several of the coyotes for the aerial crew. The aerial crew has been busy the past week and during all that flying, they didn't lose one coyote after being spotted from aircraft. No further livestock losses have occurred, since the removal of the coyotes. The livestock producers were pleased with the protection efforts.

During the week of November 7th thru November 11th, WS Eric Hansen reported that three lambs, valued at \$600, had been killed by coyotes. WS Eric Hansen placed additional equipment out and during the week he removed eight coyotes with trail snares. The livestock losses ceased and the sheep producer was pleased with WS Eric Hansen's protection efforts.

On November 9th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an aerial operation around several calving areas in Humboldt County. During the aerial operation, a total of 25 coyotes were removed from calving areas. The coyote related complaints immediately ceased and the livestock producers reported to WS John Peter that there were no additional problems. Protection efforts are ongoing.

During the week of November 14th thru November 18th, DS Jack Spencer received reports that six pet dogs had been killed by coyotes in Reno, Carson and Lake Tahoe. DS Spencer provided technical assistance to better educate dog owners about the threat of coyotes in urban landscapes. Each year coyotes no doubt kill or maim a substantial number of pets in the Greater Truckee Meadows.

During the week of November 6th thru November 8th, WS Ben Miller backpacked nearly 40 miles in the Excelsior Mountains located in Mineral County, checking on translocated bighorn sheep. WS Miller carried enough supplies (food, water, tent, bedroll etc.) in his backpack to get a better assessment of the area while looking for predatory wildlife sign, without leaving the area. WS Miller had a light snow cover, so tracking conditions were optimal. WS Miller found tracks of two female lions, 23 bighorn sheep, seven deer, six coyotes, and four bobcats. WS Miller also found one small ewe that had been killed by a lion in the past week, and two additional bighorn sheep both confirmed killed by lions. The findings were reported to NDOW.

On November 10th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial activities on several calving areas, in Lander County. During the flight, three coyotes were removed. The aerial crew also spotted close to 20 dead cows in the area and was surprised that there were not more coyotes in the area with all the food availability. Protection efforts will be ongoing as complaints arise in this area.

During the week of November 11th thru November 14th, WS George Hansen was busy protecting livestock in Lander and Nye Counties. During the week, WS George Hansen removed eight coyotes by utilizing trail snares and calling. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock in his work area.

On November 21st, a livestock producer from Carson County reported that five sheep, valued at \$1,200, had been killed by lions. On November 21st, DS Spencer inspected the two nearby livestock loss sites and confirmed that a male and female lion had killed the sheep, but also found sign of several other lions living nearby. DS Spencer placed trail snares and a large cage trap at the location of the livestock damage. On November 22nd, DS Spencer removed two lions (one male and one female) with the equipment set. The ranch hand's bunk house was near the equipment and that night the ranch hand heard one lion being caught at 7:00pm and the other near midnight. DS Spencer had helped this particular sheep rancher three year's prior with a similar situation. A few years back the local news crew had video from a video trail camera that captured a large lion killing sheep in the rancher's corrals. The rancher was very pleased with DS Spencer's protection efforts.



On November 22nd, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay flew around several sheep and cattle producers, in Pershing County. During the flight, a total of 16 coyotes were removed. WS Koepke provided ground support during the aerial operation. Protection efforts will continue.

On November 23rd, a livestock producer from Carson County reported that another lion had moved into his sheep herd and killed two sheep, valued at \$450. DS Spencer determined that a large male lion had killed the sheep. On November 25th, DS Spencer trail snared a male lion at the livestock damage site. The rancher reported that nearly 100 mule deer had been living along his property for the past couple of years; however, lately he's only seen a half dozen deer around. DS Spencer also confirmed the presence of two other lions living within a ¼ mile of the property. DS Spencer has confirmed that five lions had been living within a ¼ mile area before three offending lions were removed. The rancher was pleased that the offending lions were removed and his livestock protected; however, he was also concerned for the many small children that play along the river where the offending lions often travel.



During the week of November 28th thru November 30th, WS Eric Hansen was busy working on two sheep ranches in Lyon County. On November 30th, WS Eric Hansen removed five coyotes by utilizing leghold traps.

Throughout the month of November, Wildlife Biologist (WB) Luke Barto continued to protect aviation safety at a local airport, removing: a red tail hawk nest, an adult female coyote, five pigeons, and a

skunk. Removal of the nest (as well as harassment in the spring) will deter the hawks from re-nesting in close proximity to active runways. This is important to arriving and departing aircraft, especially in the late summer months when the reared young birds are attempting to fledge from the nest, and learning to fly while also competing for airspace. WB Barto removed the coyote from airport property as harassment and discouragement would not deter it from crossing active runways. Coyotes are a direct threat to arriving and departing aircraft, as well as indirectly attracting birds associated with carrion.

WB Barto also investigated two wildlife strikes at the above mentioned local airport. The first involved a large flock of European Starlings that were crossing the runway to a roosting location when an in-bound aircraft struck the flock. No injuries were sustained and damages involved minor engine repairs. The second strike involved a flock of Rock Doves (feral pigeons) flying at an altitude of 8000 feet and 25 miles away from the airport, which is highly unusual as pigeons don't generally fly at such altitudes. No injuries were sustained and no damages were reported.

WB Barto also utilized non-lethal harassment techniques to haze five Canada geese off of airport property and away from arriving and departing aircraft.

WB Barto continued wildlife surveys for the Army Corps funded project during the reporting period.

During the month of November, WB Zack Bowers started the Wildlife Hazard Assessment (WHA) process at a large military installation in Churchill County. This included conducting constructed surveys and general observations on runways, and the surrounding property. WB Bowers is also checking out base property in other locations throughout the county as well as addressing the installation's nuisance wildlife complaints. During the reporting period, WB Bowers submitted the remains from three wildlife strikes to aircraft, to the Smithsonian Institute for species identification. It is imperative to identify species that have been struck so that the Airport Wildlife Biologist can then manage for that particular species.

New and Developing Methods

Recently DS Spencer had a new lion cage trap fabricated for use in areas where a vehicle can drive to livestock kills and place the trap. DS Spencer had the trap modified with handles and wheels to make the heavy trap more mobile for field applications. Although utilizing cage traps for capturing lions is nothing new, this is the first time in Nevada that a livestock depredating lion was captured with one. Lions are one of the easier predators to capture with equipment as they commonly walk into trap sets that a wise ole coyote would shy away from. The lion cage trap will continue to be improved and used where applicable.



Valuing and Investing in Employees

WS Eric Hansen recently accepted a new position with the Idaho Wildlife Services' program. WS Eric Hansen has spent the last two years working diligently to protect livestock for his many cooperators in Lyon County. WS Eric Hansen came to the West District with limited experience, however, WS George Hansen and DS Spencer spent time cross training with WS Eric Hansen. WS Eric

Hansen always has a positive attitude and quickly acquired expert trapping skills within a few months. The first year WS Eric Hansen spent in Lyon County didn't go unnoticed by livestock producers or his supervisor. At a grazing board meeting a long, long time sheep producer commented that "for decades we annually lose 150 lambs to coyotes during lambing. The first year Eric trapped for us we only lost three lambs during lambing!" WS Eric Hansen will be missed by his many co-workers and we wish him and his family well in Idaho. The unfortunate result of Eric Hansen moving on is that the western half of Nevada now only has three trappers, but hopes to fill in behind WS Eric Hansen soon.



Information and Communication

On November 9th, SD Jensen and DS Bennett attended the N-6 Grazing Board meeting in Austin, NV.

On November 9th, DS Spencer attended the NDOW Commission Trapping Committee Meeting in Reno, NV.

On November 14th-16th, SD Jensen attended the Cattlemen's and Woolgrower's meeting in Minden, NV.

Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report.

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

With respect for and in recognition of the contributions our service members have made to the cause of peace and freedom around the world, the Congress has provided (5 U.S.C. 6103(a)) that November 11 of each year shall be set aside as a legal public holiday to honor our Nation's veterans.

Future Meetings and Events

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

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

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