

June 2012

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 June, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **5.2** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$61** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$21** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **803** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$94,899** in damage and WS Specialists verified another **\$18,362** in damage to other agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During June, coyotes accounted for **\$8,598** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **232** 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 June, **48** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of June, 2012.

Resource Protection

State Office

During June, 2012, the State Office trap loaning program checked out **23** cage traps. The species distribution for the traps loaned out were: raccoons (**7**), ground squirrels (**13**), striped skunks (**2**) and wood rats (**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

During the first part of June, a sheep producer reported the loss of several lambs and two ewes, in eastern Lander County. Wildlife Specialist (WS) Mac Crome traveled to the location and confirmed the loss of two ewes and fifteen lambs, valued at \$3,500, to coyote predation. During the next two weeks, WS Crome was able to remove seven adult coyotes, near the sheep. The Ely plane also removed an additional three coyotes, bringing an end to the damage. WS Crome provided technical assistance in the form of non lethal recommendations to help prevent future predation issues. No further losses have been reported and WS Crome continues to monitor the area.



During June, raven damage reduction efforts began in White Pine County at the request of a large power company. Wildlife Services entered into an agreement with the utility company after ravens had caused more than \$30,000 in damage. Ravens had nested on the power poles causing many power outages to rural communities, during the past several months. Additionally, the nesting material and ravens can short out the power lines, which not only cause the outages, but can also create fires during this extremely dry year. Wildlife Service's employees identified and GPS'ed a number of raven nests that were causing the problems. Several ravens were removed. Wildlife Services will help coordinate the removal of the nests in the near future.

On June 4th, WS Derril Fry received a call concerning the loss of three lambs, valued at \$600. WS Fry traveled to the location in central Elko County and confirmed that even with the use of guard dogs and herders, coyotes had still killed all three lambs. WS Fry set several pieces of equipment near the kill site then requested the Elko plane for assistance. The Elko plane removed four coyotes near the kill sites. WS Fry removed two adult coyotes and one den near the kills, bringing an end to the damage. No further losses have been reported and WS Fry provided technical assistance in the form of non lethal recommendations to help prevent future problems.



On June 6th, WS Nathan Fowler received a call concerning the loss of two lambs, valued at \$400. WS Fowler traveled to the location, in Elko County, and confirmed that coyotes had killed both lambs. WS Fowler placed several traps near the kill site and also requested the Elko plane. During the next several days, WS Fowler trapped two coyotes and the Elko plane removed three others. WS Fowler provided technical assistance to the sheep producer as well. No further losses have been reported and WS Fowler continues to monitor the area for predation events.

On June 7th, WS Matt Spires confirmed the loss of one lamb, valued at \$200, to coyote predation. WS Spires has been observing very high coyote numbers near several bands of sheep, in northern Elko County. WS Spires utilized traps to remove several coyotes, near the sheep. WS

Spires also requested the Elko plane. On at least two occasions, the Elko plane responded to the location, resulting in the removal of several coyotes, near the sheep. WS Spires will continue to monitor the sheep in his assigned work area.

On June 12th, WS Matt Spires received a call concerning the loss of one lamb and injuries to two others. WS Matt Spires traveled to the location, in northern Elko County, and confirmed that coyotes were responsible for the damage. The amount of the loss was placed at \$400. Unfortunately, only one of the two injured lambs survived. WS Spires removed three coyotes the same day utilizing calling. WS Spires also trapped another coyote, ending the damage. WS Spires provided technical assistance in the form of non lethal recommendations to help prevent future problems. Several of the non lethal recommendations were already in use, including: guard dogs and night penning. The sheep producer was very pleased with the assistance received from Wildlife Services.



WS Billy Taylor finished working on the sage-grouse protection project on June 15th. WS Taylor then began work for a large sheep producer in eastern White Pine County. WS Taylor confirmed the loss of five ewes and two lambs valued at \$1,300. WS Taylor utilized traps to remove several coyotes, near the kill sites. WS Taylor will continue to monitor the area for future predations problems. The sheep producer has been very pleased with the assistance he has received from WS Taylor.

On June 20th, WS Scott Little confirmed the loss of three lambs, valued at \$600, to coyote predation. WS Little was able to call and shoot two adult coyotes near the kills, bringing the damage to an end. WS Little also provided technical assistance to help prevent future problems from occurring.

WS Hunter Bodenchuk's seasonal position came to an end on June 30th. WS Bodenchuk did an excellent job working on the sage-grouse protection project in Eastern Nevada. WS Bodenchuk also spent two weeks removing ravens for a large power company. Prior to WS Bodenchuk's work, ravens had nested in several power poles, causing many power outages to rural communities in Elko, White Pine and Nye Counties. We wish Hunter well in his future endeavors.



WS Dayne Barnes continues to work on Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) hunt unit 241, protecting wildlife. WS Barnes removed several coyotes, during the month of June. WS Barnes also rode into several water sources, checking for predator activity and monitoring trail cameras that he has placed out. WS Barnes will continue his wildlife protection efforts in the area.

West District

On June 1st, Pilot Wes Gossard and Crew Member (CM) Brandon VanderMay conducted aerial activities, on a sheep ranch, in Lander County. Previously, four lambs (valued at \$800) had been killed by coyotes. During the flight, seven coyotes were removed in close proximity to the sheep. WS George Hansen provided ground support for the air crew.



During the first week of June, a sheep rancher in Lyon County lost 11 sheep

(valued at \$8,800), over several days to a lion. The lion would kill sheep, feed on them for only one night, and then leave. This feeding behavior is common in hot arid regions. WS Nick Smith placed equipment around the depredated livestock, and then at 2:00 am took his well trained hounds around the carcasses. The hounds trailed the lion across the river several times before catching it in some tall brush an hour later. The removed lion was estimated to be a 140 pound, five year old male. Catching lions in summer months on dry ground is difficult; however, WS Smith and his hounds are quite effective. To date, there have been no further livestock losses and the rancher was very pleased with WS Smith and expressed his gratitude to District Supervisor (DS) Jack Spencer.



During the first week of June, WS John Peter, WS Hansen, WS Ben Miller and Wildlife Biologist (WB) Luke Barto completed sage-grouse protection efforts, in the West District. The Wildlife Biologist and Specialists were placing out DRC 1339 treated egg baits around sage-grouse lek locations in western Nevada, during the nesting season.

On June 7th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial activities on a sheep ranch, in Humboldt County. During the flight, four coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground support for the air crew.

On June 11th and 12th, the aerial crew flew several sheep bands, in Lander County. During the two day flight, a total of six coyotes were removed in close proximity to the sheep and the aerial crew located one coyote den for WS Hansen to attend to. One adult near the den could not be found by the aircrew, so WS Hansen returned later and removed it, an adult male, nearby with the use of his decoy dogs. Livestock losses have been minimal this spring due to WS Hansen's diligent protection efforts. Protection efforts will continue.

On June 14th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations around several lambing areas, in Lander County. A livestock producer reported the loss of two lambs (valued at \$400). During the flight, seven coyotes were removed. WS Hansen provided valuable ground support for the aircrew.

On June 18th, WS Doug Koepke responded to a human health and safety call, in Churchill County. The citizens had reported that several coyotes had moved in near their homes, around their small children and had killed dozens of chickens. WS Koepke inspected the area that day and made a couple of calling stands that resulted in the removal of the five coyotes, in a short amount of time. The citizens were pleased to have the marauding coyotes removed from the area. WS Koepke provided those involved with non lethal technical assistance recommendations to reduce the chance that coyotes would kill their chickens or threaten their children's safety.



On June 18th, a cooperator from Lyon County reported that a black bear had killed a prized ewe (valued at \$1000). WS Smith inspected the situation and confirmed that the ewe was killed by a large black bear. WS Smith reported the situation to NDOW who allowed WS Smith to attempt to remove the depredating bear. WS Smith placed a foot snare near the kill but as often is the case in this area, the



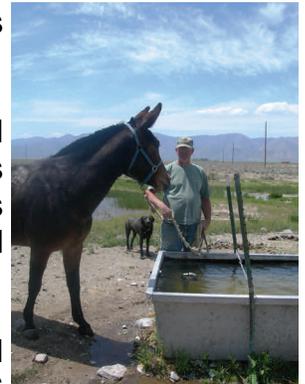
bears seldom come back to their kills. WS Smith checked the equipment for three days then pulled it as per NDOW's request. Black bear depredations on this particular ranch have caused several thousand dollars worth of livestock losses each year despite the non-lethal approaches already in place (guard dogs, electric fencing, tending). WS Smith will continue to monitor the situation.

On June 26th, WS Hansen conducted some calling around several lamb bands, in Lander County. WS Hansen often goes to a different lamb band each morning and calls. On this particular morning, WS Hansen called and removed a pair of coyotes that were right in the middle of a sheep band. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock in his work area.

During the month of June, WS Miller was busy placing equipment around mule deer fawning areas. WS Miller reported predation activities were low, until about June 15th, which was when coyotes started moving in, around the fawning areas. Within just a couple of days, WS Miller removed eight coyotes with leghold traps and trail snares. A few days later, WS Miller removed three additional coyotes with the use of his decoy dog. WS Miller also reported that a lion had moved into Hunt Unit 014 bighorn sheep area. Normally WS Miller would have already removed the offending lion, however, because of the recent theft of two electronic call boxes (which is under investigation), equipment was pulled that would normally be protecting these bighorn sheep. WS Miller will be busy trying to get back up to speed within the next few weeks.

On June 27th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations on several sheep bands, in Washoe County. During the flight, a total of six coyotes were removed. WS Koepke and WS (California) George Affonso provided ground support, since the livestock protection efforts were located on the State line. The West District works closely with several northern California WS' trappers.

During the month of June, WS Peter removed several coyotes from around sheep bands, in Humboldt County, with the use of leghold traps, trail snares and his decoy dogs. WS Peter rides around the sheep bands on his mule as the sheep head up the mountains into less accessible areas. WS Peter will continue to protect livestock in Humboldt County.



During the month of June, WS Smith removed 16 coyotes by utilizing leghold traps, trail snares, calling and shooting, in Lyon and Douglas Counties. DS Spencer conducted a field inspection with WS Smith and listened to three different livestock cooperators expressing their "thanks" for all the hard work and results that WS Smith has been achieving.

During the month of June, WB Zack Bowers continued conducting a Wildlife Hazard Assessment (WHA) at a military installation, in northern NV. The WHA involves conducting structured surveys on the airfield and the surrounding area, as well as general observations. This data is collected for a 12 month period in order to determine seasonal and spatial trends of wildlife usage on the airfield and surrounding area. Once this is complete, recommendations can be made regarding species management, habitat alterations, and agricultural management practices. While conducting the assessment, WB Bowers also participates in direct control of wildlife when necessary to minimize direct threats to aviation safety. In an effort to reduce the attractiveness of the airfield to coyotes, badgers and red-tailed hawks, DS Spencer and WB Bowers conducted a night operation. The purpose of the operation was to reduce the number of black-tailed jackrabbits around the airfield that are attracting the aforementioned predators. The night operation resulted in the removal of 12 black-tailed jack-

rabbits. WB Bowers also removed one coyote from the airfield, during the month of June.



Throughout the month of June, WB Barto continued to protect aviation safety at a local airport, conducting monitoring and also removing: a Canada goose nest and approximately 30 California ground squirrels. Removing active nests and eggs found within the aircraft operating area reduces the overall number of birds found on the airport, as well as young fledglings learning to fly around the Airfield Operating Area (AOA). The greatest numbers of bird strikes, nationwide, occur between June and October, when young fledglings are taking flight as well as fall migration. Removing prey species such as ground squirrels also removes natural attractants to birds of prey and scavenging birds that could pose a threat to aviation safety.

Also throughout the month of June, WB Barto continued to provide protection to six sage-grouse leks from ravenous ravens, in Churchill and Lander counties. WB Barto utilized DRC-1339 to remove an estimated 70 ravens throughout the protection efforts.



New and Developing Methods

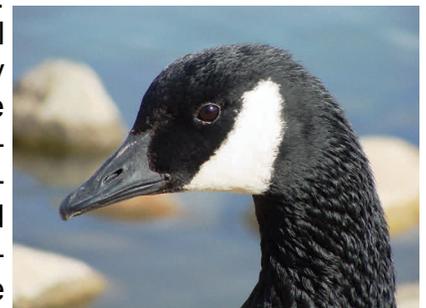
Nothing to Report.

Valuing and Investing in Employees

Nothing to Report.

Information and Communication

Throughout the first two weeks of June, the Truckee Meadows Goose Task Force (comprised of WS, NDOW, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Washoe County Vector Control and volunteers) conducted the 27th Annual Canada Goose Roundup. The annual Canada goose roundup's primary purpose is to enhance aviation safety in the Truckee Meadows. Each year, local Canada geese are collected, using a walk-in coral drive trap, then banded and transferred to a holding area where they are housed until the goslings are old enough to be transferred to State management areas throughout Nevada. Removing localized geese reduces the chance that young goslings learning to fly will collide with aircraft, as well as providing data for biologist's management needs and reducing economic loss of cleanup and property damage to local businesses, cities and private properties. A total of 413 Canada geese were gathered throughout Washoe, Douglas and Carson Counties.



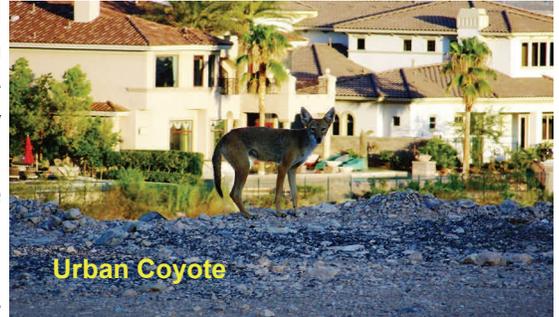
On June 19th, State Director (SD) Mark Jensen and DS Bennett provided a program overview for the N-1 Grazing Board Meeting in Elko.

On June 20th, SD Jensen and DS Bennett provided an overview of predation damage management to protect sage grouse to the Elko County Commissioners in Elko.

On June 29th, DS Joe Bennett provided information to several Native American tribes at a meeting held in Elko, Nevada. Information was provided about APHIS and the Wildlife Services Program. Several questions were answered concerning wildlife damage management on tribal lands in Nevada.

Emerging Trends/Issues

On the evening of June 15th, Staff Biologist (SB) Jack Sengl loaded up a truck and departed to Las Vegas to meet up with DS Bennett and NDOW Game Wardens the following morning in response to a public safety situation involving a family of coyotes in an extremely urban area. Although NDOW and WS routinely get urban coyote complaints where coyotes are acting aggressive and preying upon cats and small dogs, in this case, a citizen's dog was killed by a coyote while still on the leash (the dog died in the animal hospital). These traumatic episodes unfortunately do occur, but are generally not considered normal coyote behavior. The NDOW Game Wardens had already removed the male coyote, which left the protective female and her two remaining pups (which WS was to assist with). Since coyotes are very cautious and will generally not enter any kind of a cage trap, DS Bennett and SB Sengl placed several leghold traps in a highly vegetated area on a golf course where the coyotes had been observed. Unfortunately the coyotes moved to a different location. On the morning of the 19th, one pup was captured and the remaining female and pup were witnessed leaving the area by greens keepers. Additional equipment was placed and monitored for an additional day and night in the event that the adult would return. The female was not seen again and the equipment was promptly removed. The NDOW Warden, DS Bennett and SB Sengl provided technical assistance (particularly habitat manipulation and community involvement) to residents and the home owners association staff so hopefully this situation will not reoccur. On a side note, three Reno residents reported their small dogs were killed by urban coyotes in June.



Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report.

Future Meetings and Events

Nothing to Report.

USDA APHIS

Wildlife Services



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