

August 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 August, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **3.6** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$48.1** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$7.5** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **314** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$17,904** in damage and WS Specialists verified another **\$17,935** in damage to other agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During August, coyotes accounted for **\$17,135** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **253** 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 August, **40** samples were processed.

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

Resource Protection

State Office

During August, 2012, the State Office trap loaning program checked out **30** cage traps. The species distribution for the traps loaned out were: raccoons (**13**), ground squirrels (**6**) and striped skunks (**11**). 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 July 31st, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Scott Little received a call concerning the loss of three lambs, valued at \$600. On August 1st, WS Little responded to the location in western White Pine County, and confirmed that both lambs had been killed by coyotes. WS Little used his horse and well trained decoy dogs to call and shoot two adult coyotes near the location of the kills. A check of the stomach contents of both coyotes revealed that they both contained mutton and wool. The sheep producer was very pleased that WS Little responded so fast and removed both coyotes the day after he was contacted. No further losses have been reported and WS Little continues to monitor the area for predation issues.

On August 11th, a call was received at the Ely District office concerning a problem with coyotes. District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett traveled to the location, north of Ely, and confirmed that coyotes had killed two adult ewe sheep and four lambs, valued at \$1,300. DS Bennett contacted the Ely plane for assistance, which responded to the depredation call on August 14th. During the flight, the plane was able to remove nine coyotes including at least three that were feeding on one of the freshly killed lambs. A follow-up flight a few days later resulted in three more coyotes removed near the depredated sheep.



During the second week of August, WS Little confirmed the loss of two lambs, valued at \$400. The damage occurred on a sheep ranch in White Pine County. On August 14th, WS Little received a call from the sheep herder concerning the loss of another lamb. WS Little traveled to the location and asked the sheep herder to show him the kill so he could confirm if it was a coyote kill. As WS Little and the sheep herder hiked into the remote canyon, they observed a coyote eating the lamb. One well placed shot from WS Little brought the damage to an end. No further losses have been reported since the large male coyote was killed.



On August 14th, DS Bennett received a call concerning the loss of six lambs, valued at \$1,200. DS Bennett traveled to the location in White Pine County and confirmed the six lambs had been killed by coyotes. The sheep herder reported that on two mornings in a row, he had observed a coyote near his sheep. He pointed to a saddle a short distance away and told DS Bennett that the coyote was seen using the saddle. DS Bennett set two traps in the saddle and several more near the sheep. On the next trip, two coyotes were caught in the saddle the sheep herder had pointed out. One additional coyote was trapped a short distance from the sheep. No further losses have been reported. DS Bennett provided technical assistance in the form of non lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On August 14th, WS Mac Crome called and shot a large male coyote that had killed two ewe sheep, valued at \$500. The predation occurred in Eureka County. No further losses have been reported on this band of sheep and WS Crome provided technical assistance in the form of non

lethal recommendations.

On August 18th, WS Derril Fry received a call concerning the loss of three lambs, valued at \$600. On August 20th, WS Fry traveled to the remote location in Elko County and confirmed that coyotes had killed all three lambs. WS Fry placed several traps near the location of the kills. Upon returning to check the traps, WS Fry discovered that he had captured two adult coyotes. No further losses have been reported since removing these two coyotes. WS Fry provided technical assistance to help prevent future problems from occurring.

On August 20th, the Elko plane responded to a call for assistance from WS Nathan Fowler. During the past week, WS Fowler confirmed the loss of at least seven lambs, valued at \$1,400, to coyote predation. Despite many hours of hard work, the coyote continued to kill lambs. The Elko plane was able to locate and remove the large male coyote. A necropsy by WS Fowler confirmed that the coyote had mutton and wool in its stomach. No further losses have been reported.

On August 22nd, WS Little confirmed the loss of one calf, valued at \$500, to coyote predation. WS Little placed several traps near the kill. The next time WS Little checked the traps, a pair of coyotes was removed near the kill. No further losses have been reported. WS Little provided technical assistance to the cattle rancher in the form of non lethal recommendations to help prevent future predation issues.

During August, sheep losses were very high in the East District. All the Wildlife Specialists were kept very busy during the month, trying to solve the many coyote problems throughout the district. Many believe that the long, hot, dry summer has resulted in the higher than normal losses.

During the month of August, WS Fowler confirmed the loss of at least ten yearling sheep, valued at \$2,000. Several coyotes were responsible for the losses in northern Elko County. WS Fowler was able to remove six coyotes, utilizing traps near the location of the kills. WS Fowler also provided technical assistance in the form non lethal recommendations, many of which are already being incorporated.



During the month of August, WS Scott Little assisted the White Pine Emergency Response Team. A motorcycle rider had crashed in a remote part of White Pine County resulting in serious injuries to a 60 year old man. WS Little helped the emergency responders locate and stabilize the man for transportation to the hospital in Ely, Nevada. The man is expected to make a full recovery. Situations like this happen from time to time, due to the remote locations that Nevada Wildlife Service's personnel work in. Many times in the past, Wildlife Specialists have been the first people to find and assist stranded and injured citizens.

During August, Crew Member (CM) Jerred Taylor was busy working around three bands of sheep in central White Pine County. CM Taylor confirmed the loss of at least six lambs and received reports concerning more than 30 more. Since the sheep have been in very high, remote, road less areas all month, CM Taylor has been hiking in each day. The round trip hike takes just over five hours. CM Taylor often works other projects when flying is slow, during the summer months.



August was a very busy month for WS Matt Spires. WS Spires confirmed the losses of at least 14 lambs, valued at \$2,800. WS Spires utilized trapping and calling to remove 11 coyotes near the

sheep. Both the Elko and Ely planes flew the area as well, removing several other coyotes. As with all of the East District losses, WS Spires' losses have been unusually high for this reporting period.

West District

On August 1st, WS John Peter inspected several lion targeted trail snare systems in Humboldt County that he had placed for a stock killing lion. Upon inspection, WS Peter discovered that he trail snared an old 90 pound female lion. WS Peter had to use wire fencing around and over the trail snare to keep the deer and antelope out of the snare. This lion was caught exactly where the sheep were. This is the third stock killing lion that WS Peter has trail snared around these sheep bands in the last eight months. WS Peter will continue to protect livestock in this area.

During the first week of August, WS Nick Smith completed aerial gunner (Crew Member) training in Cedar City, Utah. WS Smith completed the required training and the instructor commented that WS Smith did really well for a first timer. WS Smith will serve as the West District's back-up Crew Member.

On August 8th, Pilot Wes Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around a Washoe County cattle ranch located within the Washoe County Mule Deer Project. During the morning flight, the aerial crew removed four coyotes. WS Ben Miller provided ground support for the aerial operations.

During the month of August, DS Jack Spencer collected over 30 mallard ducks that most likely died from avian botulism in a suburban pond in the City of Sparks. DS Spencer removed the dead ducks from the water and placed them up in the brush where the dead fowl carcasses quickly dried up from the summer's heat. DS Spencer also contacted the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) and made them aware of the situation. The best available remedy for suppressing avian botulism is collecting dead and dying birds and moving them out of the water. The outbreak was contained quickly and no doubt many more waterfowl were saved.



During the month of August, WS Peter was busy placing and checking equipment around several lamb bands in Humboldt County, which resulted in the removal of six coyotes, four of which were removed with the use of M-44s. WS Peter will continue to protect livestock in his large work area.

On August 14th -15th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted flights around two locations where coyotes were killing sheep in Lander County. During the two days of flying, a total of six coyotes were removed. WS George Hansen provided ground support by calling coyotes from heavy vegetation before the plane arrived and then the plane removed them after WS Hansen obtained a visual on the offending coyotes. Livestock losses ceased for the time being, however, with the dry weather, coyotes continually move in around the livestock/water sources.

On August 17th, WS Miller conducted his routine mule deer/bighorn sheep protection efforts on the Washoe County Mule Deer project (hunt unit 014). WS Miller observed that a male lion moved in around a population of mule deer utilizing a waterhole. WS Miller's



trail camera at the water hole captured photos of the lion. Within a week, the offending lion was captured in WS Miller's trail snare set. The male lion was five years old and had several facial scars. Later that day, at the prior mentioned spring, WS Miller's trail camera captured a picture of an ear tagged (#179) mule deer from a 2004 NDOW study. Only 24 mule deer were tagged in the 2004 study and during the past year, WS Miller has seen several deer with ear tags and although these are older deer, two of the old does still had fawns with them. Older does should mean older trophy class bucks in Hunt Unit 014 and that's good news for Nevada sportsmen. Protection efforts seem to be working well and WS Miller will continue to protect mule deer and bighorn sheep in this area.

On two weekends during the month of August, DS Spencer worked on several coyote complaint calls in which NDOW had requested WS' assistance. In the past month, 18 pet dogs, valued at \$9,000, were killed within the city limits of Sparks. On two separate mornings, DS Spencer removed five coyotes with the help of his decoy dogs. Protection efforts will be ongoing because the urban coyote problems will likely never go away for good. DS Spencer also conducted an interview with the local paper, with an emphasis on non-lethal approaches that citizens can and should be implementing to reduce the potential for an unsafe interaction with a coyote.

On August 22nd, WS Peter rode his mules into a road less area, in Lander County, where coyotes had been killing a lot of lambs on the lambing range. WS Peter called by the sheep and immediately a large male coyote came into distance and WS Peter promptly removed it. No further livestock losses were reported, since the removal of the offending coyote.



On August 24th, a Humboldt County sheep producer called and requested assistance from the West District's aerial crew. The livestock producer reported that several coyotes had moved in near his sheep bands. On August 27th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning aerial operation that resulted in the removal of ten coyotes. WS Peter provided ground support, during the aerial operations.

On August 24th, WS Smith checked equipment set for a large black bear that had (on four occasions) killed a bunch of sheep, on a ranch, in Lyon County. WS Smith removed the stock killing black bear with a trail snare. The male black bear was estimated to be 15 years old and around 400 pounds. This black bear (like many others) would rip gates open, climb over electric fences, dig under or tear through fences, just to kill livestock. The rancher was very pleased with WS Smith's protection efforts. WS Smith will continue to provide protection efforts.



On August 28th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning operation around several sheep bands, in Lander County. Previously, the sheep producer reported that three lambs, valued at \$600, had been killed by coyotes. During the flight, the aerial crew removed a total of five coyotes, with WS Hansen operating as the ground crew. To date, no further livestock losses have

been reported.

During the month of August, WS Doug Koepke was busy running traps, trail snares and M-44's on numerous ranches. WS Koepke has had minimal losses, but as the calving season nears, he expects to be especially busy in Churchill and Pershing Counties.

During the month, the West District's aerial crew was busy for an unusually dry and hot August. Live-stock producer's usually have minimal losses in August in the district. DS Spencer has been the West District Supervisor for the past 12 years and does not recall an August with so many requests for assistance.

During the month of August, Wildlife Biologist (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.

On August 17th, while on leave, WB Bowers was notified that bird remains had been discovered on a taxi-way, during a routine airfield inspection. WB Bowers advised that the remains should be placed in the freezer until WB Bowers returned. WB Bowers will send feathers from the remains for identification as per the above mentioned protocol.

On July 23rd, the airfield manager discovered the remains of a bird on the runway. WB Bowers identified the remains as that of a horned lark, which appeared to be struck by aircraft. As per military directive, WB Bowers sent feathers from the remains to the Smithsonian Institute's Feather Identification Lab for species confirmation. WB Bowers filled out the report in the military database and will complete the report when species confirmation is received from the Smithsonian. WB Bowers has noticed an increase in horned lark numbers recently, although they are far from being at the levels they occurred at over the previous winter. On August 2nd, WB Bowers received confirmation from the Smithsonian that the remains were from a horned lark and released the report in the military database.

During the first week of August, WB Bowers was contacted by cooperators who lease and own military property. One cooperator was losing calves to coyotes while another was losing sheep (adults and lambs). WB Bowers had also noticed an increase in coyote numbers on the airfield and witnessed a family group of ten coyotes crossing the runway, during surveys. WB Bowers has spent a lot of time behind a desk in recent years and reached out to DS Spencer and WS Koepke for assistance. DS Spencer provided a calling refresher, while WS Koepke provided a snaring refresher shortly thereafter. These lessons proved very useful as WB Bowers went on to remove 26 coyotes, during the month, on and around the airfield. WB Bowers is very appreciative of the assistance of his coworkers and the cooperators are very pleased with the results.

Throughout the month of August, WB Luke Barto continued to protect aviation safety at a local airport, removing: two coyotes, one American crow, one Mallard duck, one striped skunk and one feral cat from the airport. Mammals such as coyotes, skunks and cats can be a threat to aviation safety, causing damage to planes or possibly requiring pilots to use evasive maneuvers to avoid a strike.

Also throughout the week of August 6th, WB Barto traveled to Austin, NV to provide protection for several bands of sheep on summer grazing allotments. WB Barto made several call stands and assessed activity around the bands of sheep.

During the week of August 13th, WB Barto met with the wildlife hazard working group at the above mentioned airport for the annual FAA certification inspection. Part of the inspection addresses wildlife hazard management requirements and objectives on and around the airport.

New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report.

Valuing and Investing in Employees

Nothing to report.

Information and Communication

Nothing to Report.

Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report.

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report.

Future Meetings and Events

September 15th, Nevada Trapper's Association Annual Trapper Education Day in Mount Charleston, NV. DS Bennett and Staff Biologist Jack Sengl to attend.



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