

October 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](http://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 October, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **6.4** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$100.7** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$7.3** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **239** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$3,397** in damage and WS Specialists verified another **\$1,328** in damage to other agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During October, coyotes accounted for **\$1,328** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **706** 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 October, **38** samples were processed.

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

## Resource Protection

### State Office

During October, 2012, the State Office trap loaning program checked out **17** cage traps. The species distribution for the traps loaned out were: badgers **(1)**, bobcats **(2)**, squirrels **(2)**, raccoons **(8)** and 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 October 3<sup>rd</sup>, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Scott Little confirmed the loss of three adult ewe sheep to coyote predation. The damage occurred west of Ely, Nevada. WS Little set several traps near the location of the kills. During the next week, WS Little removed two adult coyotes, bringing the damage to an end. WS Little provided technical assistance in the form of non lethal recommendations to help prevent future attacks. The sheep producer was already implementing the use of guard dogs, night penning and herding to try to prevent predation. The sheep producer called the East District Office and expressed his appreciation for WS Little's hard work during the past several months.



During the first week of October, WS Mac Crome received a call concerning the loss of some chickens to an unknown predator. WS Crome traveled to the remote ranch and confirmed that a coyote was killing the rancher's chickens. WS Crome placed two traps behind the ranch. A few days later, WS Crome caught the offending coyote. No further losses have been reported and the rancher was very pleased with the assistance she received from WS Crome. WS Crome also provided technical assistance in the form of non lethal recommendations to help prevent future predation issues.



On October 10<sup>th</sup>, WS Matt Spires confirmed the loss of two adult ewe sheep, valued at \$500, to coyote predation. WS Spires set 26 traps in the areas near the two kills. During the next several days, WS Spires trapped five adult coyotes, bringing an end to the damage. WS Spires also provided technical assistance in the form of non lethal recommendations to help prevent future predation issues. Both WS Spires' cooperators and his supervisor are very pleased with his hard work and dedication to preventing losses in his assigned area.

On October 12<sup>th</sup>, WS Little confirmed the loss of one ewe sheep to coyote predation. The value of the sheep was placed at \$250. WS Little set several traps near the location of the kill. The following week, WS Little caught four coyotes. No further losses have been reported on this band of sheep, after the removal of the coyotes.



During October, WS Nathan Fowler acted as the back-up crew member for the Elko plane on several occasions. WS Fowler is doing an excellent job as the back-up gunner. WS Fowler also spent much of the month setting equipment and learning the area, near Wendover, on the Nevada/Utah border. WS Fowler and WS Crome will be protecting more than 12 bands of sheep that winter there.

WS Crome finished his work in Eureka County, where he spent most of this past summer protecting five bands of sheep from predation. WS Crome will help protect the large number of sheep that come to eastern Nevada, from Utah and Idaho, to spend the winter months. WS Crome is also scheduled to travel to Cedar City, Utah and complete his training as

a crew member for aerial operations.

During the reporting period, WS Virgil Fullerton moved his camp to Baker, Nevada in preparation for this coming winter's work. WS Fullerton will be protecting several bands of sheep near Baker, Nevada. WS Fullerton removed several coyotes in areas that have experienced high losses in the past.



WS Billy Taylor removed several coyotes, during the month of October. WS Taylor worked on several bands of sheep in eastern White Pine County. The cooperators have been very pleased with WS Taylor's hard work protecting their livestock, during the past several months. Since WS Taylor is an intermittent employee, he plans on taking the rest of the winter off and then returning to work this spring. WS Taylor has done a great job over the past several months, working both on several Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) projects and protecting sheep in his assigned area.

WS Derril Fry spent the month of October protecting several bands of sheep near Jiggs, Nevada. WS Fry removed several coyotes near the sheep, preventing any losses from occurring. WS Fry also acted as the ground crew member for the Elko plane on several occasions. WS Fry's cooperators are very pleased with the work he provided, during the past several months.



### West District

On October 1<sup>st</sup>, Pilot Wes Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several fall calving areas, in Humboldt County. During the flight, a total of 13 coyotes were removed, with WS John Peter as the ground crew.

During the first week of October, WS Doug Koepke was busy running equipment around several fall calving areas and one sheep producer, in Churchill County. The previous week, one lamb (valued at \$150) was killed and one calf was injured by coyotes. WS Koepke checked his ground equipment near the damage sites, removing nine coyotes by utilizing traps and snares. To date, no further livestock losses have occurred and WS Koepke will continue to protect livestock in his large work area.



On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around a fall calving area, in Lyon County. WS Koepke located over 20 coyotes around the calving area the evening prior, by howling. On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, in less than an hour, a total of 27 coyotes were removed, showing the effectiveness of a highly skilled aerial crew and ground crew efforts, which were conducted by WS Koepke and Wildlife Biologist (WB) and Acting District Supervisor (DS) Zack Bowers. The ranchers were very pleased with the protection efforts and so far this year no livestock losses have occurred thanks to preventative efforts.



On October 9<sup>th</sup>, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several

fall calving areas, in Humboldt County. During the flight, 27 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground crew efforts, during the aerial operation.

During the week of October 9<sup>th</sup> through October 12<sup>th</sup>, DS Jack Spencer received numerous calls in the Reno/Sparks area, where coyotes had killed or injured an additional ten pet dogs since the last reporting period. One call in particular was a Sparks' homeowner who had come home and discovered that a large coyote had come through the doggy door into her house and killed her pet dog in her bedroom. DS Spencer provided non-lethal technical assistance for the pet owners. DS Spencer also conducted a Legislative Public Affairs approved interview with a local paper and promoted more non-lethal methods to keep pets safe. DS Spencer estimates that in any given year, several hundred cats, dogs and various other pets will be killed by coyotes in the Reno/Sparks area. Public hunting and trapping is not allowed within the city limits of Reno/Sparks, so to an extent, coyotes are free to roam through urban neighborhoods.

During the week of October 9<sup>th</sup>, WS George Hansen was dealing with coyotes that had killed several sheep, in Lander County. WS Hansen continued placing equipment around the sheep damage sites and in four days, removed a total of 16 coyotes by utilizing traps, snares and calling. WS Hansen is extremely efficient when it comes to capturing offending wildlife around livestock. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock in Lander County.

On October 15<sup>th</sup>, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several fall calving areas, in Humboldt County. During the flight, a total of nine coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground crew efforts during the aerial operation. Protection efforts are ongoing.

During the week of October 22<sup>nd</sup> through October 26<sup>th</sup>, WS Peter called around several bands of sheep that were moving through the country. During the week, WS Peter called around the sheep right at first light every morning which resulted in the removal of seven coyotes. Protection efforts are ongoing.

On October 23<sup>rd</sup> and October 24<sup>th</sup>, DS Spencer held an annual district meeting. Mandatory training was conducted during the meeting and Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay received recognition as "Most Valuable Employees" in the district and were presented with plaques. On the final day of the West District meeting, employees enjoyed a water buffalo and emu chili cook out during their lunch break.

During the week of October 25<sup>th</sup> through October 28<sup>th</sup>, a large black bear killed six sheep (valued at \$1800) on a ranch, in Lyon County. WS Nick Smith confirmed the black bear damage and consulted with NDOW as per policy. NDOW determined that the bear should be removed. WS Smith placed ground equipment for the offending black bear; unfortunately, the bear continued to kill sheep and wouldn't return to the kills where the equipment was set. WS Smith inspected the last two sheep kills and with his professionally trained hounds, trailed the bear from the fresh kill site, to a rocky creek bottom, where WS Smith promptly removed the estimated 500 pound 12-15 year old black bear. All livestock losses ceased after the removal of the depredating black bear. The livestock producer was very pleased with WS



Smith's protection efforts.

On October 29<sup>th</sup>, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several fall calving areas, in Humboldt County. During the flight, 37 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground crew efforts during the aerial operation. Protection efforts are ongoing.

On October 31<sup>st</sup>, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several sheep areas, in Lander County. During the flight, six coyotes were removed. WS Hansen provided ground crew efforts during the aerial operation. Protection efforts are ongoing.

On October 31<sup>st</sup>, DS Spencer conducted an M-44 training session with WS Smith. DS Spencer and WS Smith placed M-44s out on several ranches that had lost both sheep and calves, during the past week. WS Smith was a quick learner, becoming proficient with the devices and cognizant of the associated policies by days' end. DS Spencer will continue to provide training and conduct field inspections with his employees in the field.



During the month of October, Wildlife Biologist (WB) 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.

Throughout the month of October, WB Luke Barto continued to protect aviation safety at a local airport, removing: seven pigeons and one striped skunk that failed to respond to non-lethal approaches. WB Barto also utilized pyrotechnics to disperse 55 ducks, 30 pigeons and four great blue herons from the above mentioned airport. WB Barto also performs perimeter fence inspections to reduce the chance that mammals gain access to the airfield and keeps the airport informed of progress toward reducing the airfield wildlife attractants.

Also throughout October, WB Barto continued to protect the citizens of Sparks, NV from aggressive, pet stealing coyotes. Working in cooperation with local NDOW Law Enforcement, as well as meeting with home and business owners that had routinely and recently seen the depredating coyotes, WB Barto was able to remove an additional three adult coyotes believed to be responsible for the recent attacks. No further losses have been reported.



## New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report.



## Valuing and Investing in Employees

WB Barto volunteered for, and was selected as one of only six Wildlife Services' Certified Airport Wildlife Biologists in the Country, to serve a four month overseas tour of duty (TDY) at a military installation in Afghanistan. WB Barto will be performing technical and direct assistance to detect and mitigate any wildlife threats to aviation while stationed overseas, protecting the men and women of our armed forces. In addition to the service, WB Barto will gain valuable career experience and development working in the international arena alongside with people from many different backgrounds and cultures. As part of valuing and investing in his employee, DS Spencer will cover, or facilitate the coverage of WB Barto's duties, back at home, during WB Barto's TDY.

## 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

Annual Cattlemen's Association and Wool Growers Trade Show in Winnemucca, NV. November 14-16. State Director Mark Jensen, DSs Spencer and Bennett to attend .

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USDA APHIS

# Wildlife Services



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