

April 2014

# The Trapline

United States Department of  
Agriculture

Animal & Plant Health  
Inspection Service

Wildlife Services



*Cooperating with:*

Nevada

Department of Agriculture  
Division of Animal Industries



[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 Animal Industries (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 April, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **4.2** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$64.3** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$7.5** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **117** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$30,988** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$118,433** in damage to utilities and other agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During April, coyotes accounted for **\$11,259** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **239** 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 April, **4** samples were processed.

*The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of April, 2014.*

## Resource Protection

### State Office

The State Office cage trap loaning program has been suspended. Those in need of a cage trap will be directed to their local private pest control company. Information and technical assistance to assist Nevadans with alleviation of damage will still be provided, as well as response to imminent threats to human health and safety.

## East District

On March 31<sup>st</sup>, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Matt Spires confirmed that coyotes were responsible for the loss of one ewe and the injury of another, loss placed at \$500. In response to the depredations, WS Spires removed two coyotes using ground equipment. WS Spires also contacted the Ely plane for assistance. On two different occasions the Ely plane worked the location, removing two additional coyotes near the sheep. No further losses have been reported. WS Spires provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.



On April 11<sup>th</sup>, WS Mac Crome confirmed the loss of one ewe sheep to coyote predation. The damage occurred in central Elko County and the value of the ewe was placed at \$250. WS Crome placed several traps near the kill site. During the next several days, WS Crome removed two adult coyotes near the kill. No further losses have been reported on the band of sheep. WS Crome provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.



On April 14<sup>th</sup>, WS Crome received a call concerning the loss of two lambs to mountain lion predation. The damage occurred in central Elko County. The value of the two lambs was placed at \$350. In response, WS Crome placed trail snares near the kills. A few days later an adult female lion was removed near the kills. No further losses have been reported. WS

Crome provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

During the week of April 14<sup>th</sup>, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett conducted a two day field inspection with WS Dayne Barnes in Lincoln County. Field inspections are very important and serve to assure that all policies and safety procedures are being followed and that employees have necessary equipment. WS Barnes is working on a feral swine eradication project in Nevada and also assisting on a sage-grouse protection project in Lincoln County. At least three locations in Nevada have been confirmed to have populations of feral pigs.



On April 21<sup>st</sup>, the East District office received a call concerning the loss of two calves valued at \$1,500 to coyote predation. The damage occurred in western White Pine County. The rancher reported seeing a coyote eating one of the calves. On April 24<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to the location. During the morning's flight, one adult coyote was removed near the kills. No further losses have been reported.

On April 21<sup>st</sup>, the East District office received a call about a possible public safety mountain lion is-

sue in Lincoln County. A homeowner reported that something had killed a deer in their yard and it was covered by grass and debris. The next morning, Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler traveled to the location. After looking at the kill and a search of the surrounding area, it was determined that a bobcat had killed the deer. Since bobcats would not be considered a public safety threat, no action was taken. Technical assistance was provided concerning the bobcat.



On April 24<sup>th</sup>, a call was received by the East District office concerning a problem with a lion. The rancher reported that a lion had killed nine yearling sheep valued at \$7,200. The sheep are a special breed of sheep that have a great deal of genetic background done on them. MLS Buhler traveled to the remote ranch in Nye County and confirmed that a lion had killed all nine sheep. MLS Buhler cut the fresh lion track near the kills the following morning. MLS Buhler trailed the lion for several hours before finally treeing the lion. One well-placed shot brought the damage to an end. The lion was an adult eight year old male. No further losses have been reported. The sheep producer was very pleased

with the assistance received by MLS Buhler and Wildlife Services.

Sage-grouse nest and egg protection efforts are in full swing in eastern Nevada. WS Billy Taylor, WS Barnes and DS Bennett have all been very busy working on Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) sage-grouse nest and egg protection projects.



WS Derril Fry was busy during April removing coyotes on his lambing grounds. The sheep arrived during the middle of April and lambs starting being born towards the last part of the month. Removing coyotes prior to the sheep arriving in areas with historically high predation problems is very important and has been proven to reduce losses. Setting ground equip-

ment before the sheep arrive is much easier since guard dogs and sheep will not interfere with the equipment. WS Fry will continue to protect the several bands of sheep in his assigned areas in Elko County.



WS Scott MacDonald moved his field camp to northern White Pine County in preparation for lambing season. WS MacDonald has been removing coyotes in his assigned area during most of April. No losses have been reported. WS MacDonald will continue to

protect sheep and cattle in his assigned area during the upcoming lambing and calving season.

WS Scott Little was busy removing coyotes in his assigned area. WS Little reported that several bands of sheep have arrived in western White Pine County and are starting to lamb. May will be one of the busiest months for WS Little and the other Wildlife Specialists in eastern Nevada as most sheep producers lamb during the last part of April and the first part of May.

WS Randy Evans had no reported losses during April. WS Evans took some well-deserved vacation time during April and has started protection efforts in White Pine and Eureka Counties. WS Evans will be protecting several bands of sheep in both Counties.

Both the Elko and Ely planes were very busy during April, protecting both sheep and cattle in the East District. Many sheep producers trail their sheep from winter to spring lambing grounds. Both planes are crucial during this transition time, protecting the sheep as the herders walk with their flocks moving several miles each day. Cattle ranchers also rely on the planes protecting their newborn calves from coyote predation.



### West District

During the month of April, several Wildlife Specialists placed call boxes in lambing areas to deter coyotes. The call boxes were programmed with scare sounds (machine gunfire, horns, tire screeching etc.), turned up at a high volume and placed near the sheep. The sheep don't seem bothered by the call boxes and will even bed in close proximity to them. The call boxes appear to be working well, but they only keep coyotes out of a half mile area and some lamb bands are spread many miles apart. This is just another tool that works well in certain situations, and hopefully will reduce this year's lamb loss. Of interest, April and May are generally the months that traditionally experience the greatest lamb loss due to their small size.



On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, WS Nick Smith conducted a raven project in Lyon County. A large sheep producer has had problems with ravens injuring newborn lambs. WS Smith placed out treated DRC-1339 egg baits and removed the offending ravens. To date, no other raven damage has been reported on this lambing range.

On April 7<sup>th</sup>, Pilot Wes Gossard and Crew Member (CM) Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning aerial operation around a calving area in Nye County. The air crew flew around the newborn calves resulting in the removal of five coyotes. WS Smith provided ground support during the operation and will continue to place ground equipment close to the calving area. The cattle producer was very pleased with the protection efforts.

On April 8<sup>th</sup>, WS John Peter inspected a lamb (valued at \$150) that had been killed by a coyote in Humboldt County. WS Peter rode muleback with his coyote hounds and trailed the coyote back to its den site. WS Peter promptly removed the offending female coyote with the application of a fire-arm, as it was decoyed in with his coyote hounds. WS Peter also removed the den. WS Peter later

removed two additional coyotes with leghold traps and located another den. WS Peter will continue to ride muleback around the lambing grounds.

On April 9<sup>th</sup>, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning aerial operation in Washoe County around lambing areas that have and will continue to have ongoing coyote problems. During the flight, four coyotes were removed. WS Doug Koepke provided ground support. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On April 10<sup>th</sup>, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning operation around a lambing ground in Humboldt County. During the flight, 11 coyotes were removed to protect the vulnerable lambs. WS Peter provided ground support during the flight. Protection efforts are ongoing.

On April 11<sup>th</sup>, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning operation around a lambing ground in Lander County. During the flight, six coyotes were removed to protect the lambs. The air crew also located one den which was reported to WS George Hansen who was providing ground support. Protection efforts are ongoing.



On Saturday April 12<sup>th</sup>, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning aerial operation around a lambing area in Humboldt County. During the flight, three coyotes were removed.



The air crew also located one den which was reported to WS Koepke who was providing ground support. Protection efforts are ongoing.

On April 14<sup>th</sup>, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning aerial operation in Washoe County around lambing areas that have and will continue to have ongoing coyote problems. During the flight, six coyotes were removed. The air crew also located two coyote dens which were provided to WS Koepke who was providing ground support. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On April 15<sup>th</sup>, Pilot Gossard and CM Vandermay conducted an early morning aerial operation around a lambing ground in Humboldt County. During the flight, three coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground support during the flight. Protection efforts are ongoing.

On April 16<sup>th</sup>, Pilot Gossard and CM Vandermay conducted an early morning aerial operation around a lambing ground in Lyon County. During the flight, two coyotes were removed. The air crew also located one coyote den and reported it to WS Smith who was providing ground support. Protection efforts are ongoing.

On April 17<sup>th</sup>, WS Koepke was busy checking his M-44 line near a calving area in Churchill County. Previously, a cattle producer reported that coyotes had killed one calf (valued at \$700). During inspection, WS Koepke removed three coyotes with the use of M-44s. The livestock producer was pleased with WS Koepke livestock protection efforts.



On April 28<sup>th</sup>, Pilot Gossard and CM Vandermay conducted an early morning aerial operation around a lambing area in Humboldt County. During the flight, five coyotes were removed. One of the coyotes was necropsied which revealed a stomach full of fresh lamb meat. WS Peter provided valuable ground support during the flight. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, Pilot Gossard and CM Vandermay conducted an early morning aerial operation around a lambing ground in Lander County. During the flight, four coyotes were removed. The air crew removed two coyotes on a single pass while flying down a rocky canyon. The air crew also located one coyote den which was reported to WS Hansen who was ground crewing. Protection efforts are ongoing.

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an aerial operation around six lamb bands in Lyon County. The rancher reported that five lambs (valued at \$625) had been killed by coyotes. During the flight, the air crew removed four coyotes and WS Smith trapped one coyote near the lambs that had been killed. Protection efforts will be ongoing as it is common for coyotes to draw in with the arrival of thousands of vulnerable lambs.

During the month of April, WS Ben Miller placed DRC-1339 treated egg baits to remove offending



ravens in the Virginia Mountains in Washoe County to protect sage-grouse nests. District Supervisor (DS) Jack Spencer also spends a day or two each week assisting with the project. A recent publication by the United States Geological Survey (USGS), on this study site, indicated very low sage-grouse nesting success with, not too surprisingly, the common raven cited as the main culprit in sage-grouse nest raiding. WS Miller and WS Spencer met with a longtime rancher in the Virginia Mountains while out placing eggs. The rancher commented that for the first time, he has seen considerably fewer ravens around. WS Miller and DS Spencer will continue to protect active sage-grouse nests and to a lesser extent, juvenile sage-grouse chicks till the end of May.

During the past month, residents from Washoe and Clark Counties reported that several pets were killed or maimed by coyotes in urban/suburban areas. A television station in Las Vegas recently aired a story about the rising coyote populations and pet attacks in the area. As shooting and trapping are prohibited in these areas, the public is limited to non-lethal methods to address the concern. <http://www.fox5vegas.com/story/25373405/coyotes-scale-fence-to-get-at-pet-dog>

During the month of April, Wildlife Biologist (WB) Zack Bowers continued to deter wildlife from using/crossing the airfield at a military installation in northern Nevada. In an effort to keep these species from crossing the airfield, WB Bowers has utilized harassment with several methods. WB Bowers harassed five species of birds from on and around the airfield, including red-tailed hawks, cliff swallows and mallards.

WB Bowers received a report from a livestock owner on a property neighboring the prior mentioned location. WB Bowers responds to these calls on the neighboring properties outside of his normal work hours. Typically this will be before or after the normal shift or on weekends. In this particular situation five sheep (two adults & three lambs) had been killed by coyotes. WB Bowers confirmed the sheep were killed by coyotes and discussed the situation with the cooperator. The cooperator had installed a motion light and improved the fencing in order to protect his livestock. WB Bowers set some equipment in an effort to save the rest of the flock. The offending coyote was removed the following Saturday. No further losses have occurred; WB Bowers will continue to monitor the situation as it benefits not only the livestock producer, but also aviation safety as coyotes will attempt to utilize the airfield for a variety of reasons as documented in the BASH plan.



The offending coyote was removed the following Saturday. No further losses have occurred; WB Bowers will continue to monitor the situation as it benefits not only the livestock producer, but also aviation safety as coyotes will attempt to utilize the airfield for a variety of reasons as documented in the BASH plan.

Throughout the month of April, WB Luke Barto removed: two Canada geese, three rock doves (feral pigeons), one European starling, three California ground-squirrels, two mallard ducks, three killdeer, one striped skunk and one raccoon from a local airport to reduce potential wildlife strikes to aircraft. Additionally, one red-tail hawk was captured and translocated away to reduce the strike risk and protect the hawk.

One bird strike was reported at the above mentioned airport for the month of April. The strike was reported by an inbound pilot, but following a thorough inspection of the aircraft, no remains from any wildlife could be located.

Pyrotechnics were also utilized to reduce the hazards found on/around the airfield. A total of 119 ducks and 53 geese were dispersed from airport property to reduce wildlife threats to aviation throughout April. In addition to dispersal, five nests and two goslings were located and removed from the airfield. The goslings were transferred to a local bird rehabilitator where they will be raised until they can be released.



Two point count surveys, two off-site surveys were conducted during the month of March at the above mentioned airport.

### **New and Developing Methods**

Nothing to Report

### **Valuing and Investing in Employees**

Nothing to Report

### **Information and Communication**

On April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014, State Director (SD) Mark Jensen attended the Sagebrush Ecosystem Council Meeting in Carson City.

On April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014, SD Jensen attended the Predatory Animal and Rodent Committee (PARC) Meeting in Reno.

### **Emerging Trends/Issues**

Nothing to Report

### **Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)**

Nothing to Report

### **Future Meetings and Events**

May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014, NDOW Commission Meeting in Reno, SD Jensen to attend.

May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014, Sagebrush Ecosystem Council Meeting in Carson City, SD Jensen to attend.

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# Wildlife Services



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