

April 2016

The Trapline

United States Department of
Agriculture

Animal & Plant Health
Inspection Service

Wildlife Services



Cooperating with:

Nevada

Department of Agriculture

Division of Animal Industry



www.agri.nv.gov

775-851-4848

Mission Statement

The Nevada Wildlife Services Program (WS) is a collaborative program involving the Nevada Department of Agriculture's Division of Animal Industry (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 **5.7** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$92** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$13.8** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **387** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$5,464** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$22,780** in damage to natural and agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During April, coyotes accounted for **\$6,655** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **297** 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, **43** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of April, 2016.

Resource Protection

State Office

During the reporting period, the State Office provided non-lethal recommendations to Nevadan's to assist in alleviating their conflicts with wildlife, particularly coyotes and raccoons. For more information about resolving conflicts with wildlife, please go to the following website: <http://agri.nv.gov/Wildlife>. Where wildlife biology and damage management methods are offered by species.

East District

On April 5th Wildlife Specialist (WS) Mac Crome confirmed the loss of one yearling sheep, valued at \$250, to coyote predation. The damage occurred in eastern Elko County. WS Crome returned to the kill site later that evening and observed the offending coyote that had returned and was feeding on the kill. WS Crome was able to sneak within range and remove the offending coyote with one well-placed shot. No further losses have occurred. WS Crome also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.



During the first week of April, a sheep producer contacted WS Crome concerning a problem with coyotes. The sheep producer reported seeing and hearing several coyotes in the pasture where he was lambing. WS Crome contacted the Elko plane for assistance. On April 6th, the Elko plane responded to the location in eastern Elko County. During the morning flight, the plane was able to remove four coyotes. WS Crome also removed one additional coyote.



On April 12th, a sheep producer in White Pine County contacted the East District Office concerning the loss of four yearling ewe sheep, valued at \$1,000. That same day, WS Hunter Bodenchuk traveled to the location and confirmed the kills. WS Bodenchuk placed several trail snares near the location of the kill. During the next two weeks, WS Bodenchuk, with the assistance of the Ely Crew Member (CM), removed one adult female coyote and a den, bringing an end to the damage. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations were also provided in an effort to prevent future losses.

On April 21st, the East District Office received a call concerning the loss of two adult ewes. The loss was made even worse with the fact that both ewes were only days away from lambing. WS Bodenchuk responded to the location in an effort to determine what predator had killed both ewes. After a very thorough investigation it was determined that feral dogs had killed the ewes. WS Bodenchuk turned the matter over to the White Pine County Sheriff's office and the White Pine County Animal Control Office.



On April 27th, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett confirmed the loss of two lambs to raven predation. DS Bennett observed at least fourteen ravens attacking the newborn lambs. DS provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommen-

dations many of which were already being implemented by the sheep producer. On April 28th, DS Bennett, with the help of WS Hunter Bodenchuk, put out eggs treated with DRC 1339. A post survey inspection revealed the offending ravens had been removed. No further losses were reported.

On April 28th, DS Joe Bennett received a call concerning the loss of four lambs to coyote predation. After confirming the kills as coyote predation, assistance was requested from the Ely plane. On April 30th, the plane flew the kills. Knowing that the sheep herders had been seeing a coyote in the band of sheep experiencing the losses, the plane concentrated its efforts near that area. A short time later two adults coyotes were removed near the band of sheep. Both were adult males. After the removal of the two coyotes, no further losses have been reported and the herders have not spotted any more coyotes near the sheep. The sheep producer called the East District office to thank Wildlife Services for the prompt response to his needs.



On April 29th, WS Crome confirmed the loss of five lambs, valued at \$1,000 to coyote predation. The damage occurred in central Elko County. During the next few days, WS Crome was able to call and shoot one coyote near the

kill sites. Knowing that several more coyotes were in the area, WS Crome requested the assistance of the Elko plane. During one early morning flight, the Elko plane successfully removed 11 more coyotes near the location of the kills. No further losses have been reported to date. WS Crome also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

During the month of April, WS Dayne Barnes removed and sampled four feral pigs in his project area as part of an invasive species program funded by USDA to eradicate feral swine from Nevada. Feral pigs can be very destructive to both crops, native rangeland, ground nesting birds and can vector disease to livestock if left unchecked. Feral pigs are classified as stray animals in Nevada and as such they fall under the management of the Nevada State Department of Agriculture. WS Barnes has been removing feral swine during the week and the weekends as the swine don't seem to respect a proper work week schedule.



During April, WS Billy Taylor and WS Samantha McGann were very busy removing ravens to protect sage-grouse nests and eggs. The project is administered by the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) in an effort to increase sage-grouse recruitment in Eastern Nevada. Work will be ongoing in Elko, Lincoln and White Pine Counties in the East District.

West District

On April 6th, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted a flight around two lamb bands in Humboldt County. During the flight, 14 coyotes were removed and the aerial crew located one coyote den. WS John Peter provided ground support and his tracking hounds were effective at trailing several coyotes that might have otherwise eluded capture. Protection efforts are ongoing.

On April 5th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a flight around six bands of sheep in Lyon County. During the effort, two coyotes were removed and a den was found. WS Frey provided ground support. Protection efforts are ongoing.



During the beginning of April, WS Carl Frey placed DRC-1339 egg baits around several lambing areas in Lyon County to protect newborn lambs from ravens. A conservational benefit of removing the over abundant ravens is the protection of a large bi-state sage-grouse lek.

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On April 12th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a flight around two bands of sheep in Lander County. During the effort, three coyotes were removed. WS George Hansen provided ground support and will continue to protect these lamb bands. Protection efforts are ongoing.

On Saturday, April 16th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a flight around two lamb bands in Humboldt County. During the operation, 10 coyotes were removed and the aerial crew located one coyote den. WS Peter provided ground support and his tracking hounds were effective at trailing several coyotes that might have otherwise eluded

removal. Protection efforts are ongoing.

On April 18th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a flight around several lamb bands in Washoe County. During the operation, 10 coyotes were removed and in addition, the aerial crew located one coyote den. WS Doug Koepke provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On April 19th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a flight around two bands of sheep in Lander County. The sheep producer reported seeing a pair of coyotes leaving the sheep on several occasions. During the flight, six coyotes were removed and one den was discovered. On the same day, WS Hansen removed three coyotes, with the use of foothold traps also in close proximity of the

lamb bands. WS Hansen provided ground support and will continue to protect these lamb bands. Protection efforts are ongoing.

On April 22nd, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a flight around six bands of sheep in Lyon County. The sheep producer reported that two lambs (valued at \$250) had been killed by coyotes and the herders reported seeing a large coyote leave the lamb carcasses. During the flight, one large coyote was removed. WS Frey later checked his M-44s and discovered a large male coyote, also near the lamb losses, had pulled an M-44. To date, no lamb losses have occurred. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

During the month of April, NDOW requested assistance with problem coyotes approaching people and killing pets in a northern Reno neighborhood. The main culprit reported was a large male coyote. DS Jack Spencer and WS Hunter Moyles inspected the situation and located the aggressive coyote and removed it with the use of a suppressed rifle. There are still and will likely always be other coyotes in this area, as such, it is important to keep pets safe (such as with kennels) and reduce alternate food sources (such as pet food and garbage).



During the month of April, sage-grouse egg and nest protection work in the west district continued as part of an NDOW project to reduce nest raiding by ravens. DS Spencer, WS Peter, WS Ben Miller and WS Cameron Green placed DRC-1339 egg baits in several western Nevada Counties around sage-grouse leks. Protection efforts will continue till the later part of May when most grouse eggs have hatched.

During the month of April, the rainy weather hampered aerial protection efforts. On the positive side, the extra moisture will hopefully recharge some aquifers and add to the green-up which livestock and wildlife have had in short supply over the drought. During the week of April 18-22nd, just about every sheep producer in western Nevada requested the plane. Most lambs that die, die during their first six weeks of life, so this is usually their most vulnerable period. Newborn protection efforts will continue through next month.

During the month of April, 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. Over 1,000 birds including 18 species were dispersed from the airfield. Two species of mammals were lethally removed. Wildlife numbers on and around the airfield are increasing due to spring migration, initiation of irrigation season and an overall increase in water levels compared to the last couple of years.

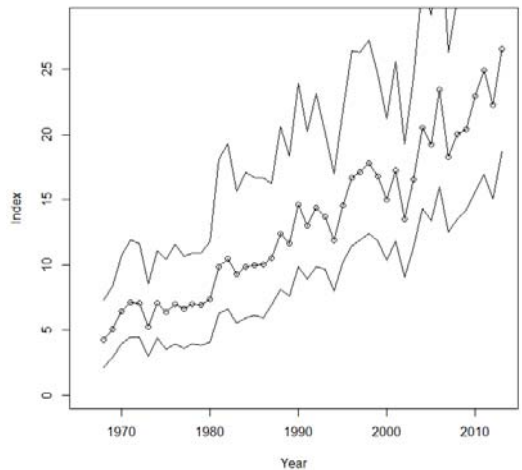
Also in April, there were two reported bird strikes; and one incident of remains found on the runway. Both bird strikes caused damage. The first strike was identified by the Smithsonian as involving a golden eagle. Identification on the second strike is pending. The remains found on the runway (a hair sample) have also been sent off to the Smithsonian for possible identification. According to the Smithsonian they may be able to identify it to at least the group level (i.e. rabbit).

Also during the reporting period, WB Bowers was notified that an individual running on a trail with his dog within the perimeter of the previously mentioned military installation was chased by a coyote. WB Bowers explained that coyotes have pups this time of year and become very territorial and aggressive to other dogs. WB Bowers worked with security to get a message out to “all hands” to inform them to be cautious while walking or running with their dogs this time of year. WB Bowers will continue to monitor the situation.

Also during the month of April, WB Bowers was contacted by the high voltage personnel. They explained that they were having problems with ravens building nests on power poles on the outlying areas. The ravens put the nesting material around the primaries which causes electricity to arc through the nesting material and can cause a fire. The high voltage guys have tried putting up a deterrent structure to prevent the ravens from building their nest. The ravens incorporated the structure into their nest. Ravens are fairly intelligent for birds, and it is common for them to use anti nesting structures as part of their nest. In addition, the high voltage guys are also knocking the nests down on a weekly basis, but the ravens continue to rebuild. As a result, WB Bowers went and inspected the situation and verified that the ravens are building their nests on several power poles as indicated by the high voltage crew (a common problem in Nevada). WB Bowers also verified that the ravens incorporated the anti-nesting structure into their nest. Addition, WB Bowers also confirmed that at least one of the power poles had previously caught on fire in the area of the nest location. Raven populations have gone through high population increases throughout many areas of the west including Nevada in the last several decades (see population trend for Nevada from the breeding bird surveys). Research indicates that ravens thrive on anthropogenic (human caused) habitat and food sources. WB Bowers has recommended lethal control of the problem ravens and will continue to try to monitor the situation despite its distance from the main station. (photo taken by Scott Jenkins).



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During the month of April, WB Hunter Moyles continued protection work on an international airport in Reno and Nevada Air National Guard installations. WB Moyles continued to deter wildlife from using/crossing the airfield property. In an effort to deter these avian/mammalian species from crossing the airfield, WB Moyles utilized several methods of harassment. WB Moyles dispersed 282 birds and mammals from the airfield. Wildlife dispersed from the air-field included 14 species of birds and mammals. WB Moyles will also continue to monitor the airfield and surrounding area using formal surveys and general observations.

During the month of April, WB Moyles has noticed a decrease in Canada geese, and ducks on surrounding properties. Hazing has still been deployed to keep the large geese away from the airfield. During the month, WB Moyles hazed 29 Canada geese, and 54 ducks off of airport property. Methods used to deter wildlife included the use of pyrotechnics, crackers shells and the vehicle. Decreased activity on the airport is due to the warm temperatures, spring green up away from the airport and nesting activity.

On April 6th, WB Moyles was performing his routine perimeter check on the airport property when he found a Canada goose with a broken/partial missing wing. WB Moyles hand caught the bird and removed it from the airfield. Later that day, WB Moyles spoke with airport officials and found out that they had found part of a wing on the runway. After further investigation the wing found on the runway was determined to be the bird that WB Moyles found earlier that morning.

On April 21st, WB Moyles was conducting a routine inspection on a nearby property close to the airfield, and observed an increased presence of California gulls using a vacant lot. Upon further inspection, WB Moyles found four California gull nests. During the month WB Moyles removed 8 gull nests from the site. WB Moyles will continue to monitor the area for nesting activity, and continue to disperse the gulls to make it less attractive for nesting.

On April 22th, WB Moyles was contacted by airfield personnel, stating that they had a pair of geese harassing people in the parking lot. WB Moyles responded to the call and removed a Canada goose nest, and dispersed the pair of geese. During the month, nesting activities have increased significantly for all avian species. WB Moyles will continue to monitor the activity on the airfield and surrounding properties to ensure birds are kept from nesting on the airfield.



On April 27th, WB Moyles was contacted by airport authority managers wondering if we could help with a huge marmot problem on one of their properties. WB Moyles responded to the call and removed 57 marmots by using body grip traps and a pellet gun. Removal of the rodent prey base should greatly reduce the draw of coyotes and Red-tailed hawks to a lesser extent. WB Moyles will continue to monitor the area to see if further action is required.

Valuing and Investing in Employees

Nothing to Report

Information and Communication

On April 19th-22nd, State Director (SD) Mark Jensen attended the Wild Pig Conference and WS' National Feral Swine meeting in South Carolina.

Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report

Future Meetings and Events

May 13th and 14th, Board of Wildlife Commissioner's Meeting in Reno. SD Jensen to attend.



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