

August 2015

# 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](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 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 August, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **2.9** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$18** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$4.5** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **1,271** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$12,914** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$18,562** in damage to natural and agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During August, coyotes accounted for **\$14,019** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **129** 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, 2015.*

## 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 link: <http://agri.nv.gov/Wildlife>. Where wildlife biology and damage management methods are offered by species.

**East District**

On August 3<sup>rd</sup>, a farmer in White Pine County contacted the Wildlife Services' East District Office concerning a problem with ravens. The farmer reported that ravens had caused more than \$2,000 damage to a field of oats he had recently planted. The farmer reported that the ravens were eating the new plants as fast as they emerged from the ground. The farmer estimated that about 50 ravens were causing all the damage. On August 4<sup>th</sup>, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett traveled to the location and confirmed the damage and observed 55 ravens feeding in the field. Since the area had several nearby homes, DS Bennett provided a courtesy call to the White Pine County Sheriff's office to advise that he would be using discharging a shotgun in the vicinity of the homes. Over the next several days, DS Bennett used a shotgun to haze the ravens away from the area. No ravens were removed but the harassment techniques worked and stopped the damage. The farmer was very pleased with the help provided. DS Bennett also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On August 4<sup>th</sup>, a livestock producer reported that two lambs had been killed by coyotes in Northeast Elko County. In response to the depredations, WS Mac Crome called and shot one coyote near the kill, the following day. WS Crome also removed an additional coyote with the use of a trap. Work is ongoing.



On August 5<sup>th</sup>, Crew Member (CM) Wayne Rowley confirmed the loss of one lamb, valued at \$200. The damage occurred on a small farm flock of sheep in central Elko County. WS Rowley set several traps near the kill. A few days later WS Rowley was checking his equipment and found that he had trapped a large adult coyote near the kill, bringing an end to the damage. WS Rowley was very busy during the month of August, both working as a crew member for the plane and also covering several bands of sheep in Elko County.

On August 10<sup>th</sup>, an additional two lambs were reportedly killed by coyotes in Northeast Elko County. In response to the damage, WS Crome spent the next three days calling and shooting the coyotes responsible for the damage. By the time the damage had stopped, WS Crome had removed five coyotes. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was provided to the cooperator to reduce future losses.



On August 11<sup>th</sup>, WS Scott Little confirmed the loss of one calf, valued at \$1,000, to coyote predation. The cattle rancher reported seeing a very high number of coyotes in and around his cows and calves. WS Little was able to remove one coyote by shooting. WS Little also set traps near the pasture where the calf was killed. During the next two weeks, WS Little was able to remove seven more coyotes from the area, bringing an end to the damage. WS Little provided technical assis-



tance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On August 14<sup>th</sup>, Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler received a call concerning the loss of three lambs, valued at \$600, to mountain lion predation. MLS Buhler traveled to the remote band of sheep in the high country of central White Pine County and confirmed that a lion had killed the



lambs. MLS Buhler used his mule and well trained dogs to trail the offending lion. Due to hot dry conditions, MLS Buhler was unable to catch and remove the lion. Knowing the lion would most likely return to kill more lambs, MLS Buhler rode into the sheep every day for nine days. On the ninth day, MLS Buhler and WS Randy Evans rode into check on the sheep. The lion had returned and killed six more



lambs valued at an additional \$1,200. This time the track was fresher and MLS Buhler was able to tree and remove a 130 pound male lion, bringing an end to the damage. The sheep producer was very pleased with MLS Buhler and WS Evan's efforts. No further losses have been reported.

During the month of August, WS Allen Eldridge confirmed the loss of nine lambs valued at \$1,800 to coyote predation. Although this was WS Eldridge's first full month on the job, WS Eldridge was able to call and shoot two coyotes and trap an additional six coyotes, bringing an end to the losses. WS Eldridge also provided technical assistance on several occasions in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

During August, a sheep producer in Eureka County started having very bad predation problems with coyotes. WS Billy Taylor came out of retirement to assist as an intermittent employee. WS Taylor took a camp and his ATV and responded to the two bands of sheep experiencing the problems in the high mountains of Eureka County. WS Taylor confirmed the loss of at least six lambs, valued at \$1,200. WS Taylor also reported that coyotes had killed about twenty more before he got to the location. WS Taylor set several traps and snares near the damage. WS Taylor removed two coyotes using traps and shot another. WS Taylor is continuing his control efforts as he has located a number of other coyotes near the two bands of sheep. Both the sheep producer and District Supervisor are very pleased concerning the efforts WS Taylor has put forth. WS Taylor also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations including night penning and guard dogs in an effort to help reduce future losses.



During the month of August, WS Evans was very busy confirming the loss of six lambs and received reports of an additional eighteen lambs killed by coyotes. The value for the confirmed and reported losses totaled \$4,800. The losses occurred on five bands of sheep in the high country of Eureka

and Elko Counties. WS Evans used his horse and well trained decoy dog to remove eleven coyotes near the location of the losses. WS Evans also provided technical assistance on eight different occasion providing non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help prevent future losses. WS Evans has been very effective working and removing coyotes at higher elevations in very steep and difficult terrain.

WS Scott Little confirmed the loss of two calves and twenty two lambs to coyote predation during the month of August. The total value, of the losses for the month of August, was placed at \$5,866. The calves were lost on two separate ranches in western White Pine County and the lambs were lost at high elevations in central White Pine County. In an effort to stop the losses, WS Little was able to shoot one coyote and trap an additional twelve coyotes during the month. WS Little used his horse and well trained decoy dogs during the month on many occasions. WS Little also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help stop losses in the future.



WS Scott MacDonald spent the month of August protecting three bands of sheep in northern White Pine County. Although no losses were reported, WS MacDonald removed sixteen coyotes near the sheep before they could cause damage. Many times, removing the coyotes in areas of high historical losses can save thousands of dollars in losses to the sheep producer. WS MacDonald also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses. WS MacDonald will continue to monitor the sheep in his area.

WS Dayne Barnes continued his feral swine removal efforts in Lincoln County, during August. WS Barnes has at least one corral trap and twenty snares set in places that feral swine have frequented in past months. WS Barnes is also using spot lighting and trail cameras in an effort to locate and remove the swine. The vast expanse of thick piñon/juniper trees and the low number of swine is making the job very difficult, but WS Barnes is continuing to locate and remove feral swine from this area.

## West District

On August 11<sup>th</sup>, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and Crew Member (CM) Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around a sheep producer in Lander County that had two lambs (valued at \$400) killed by coyotes. During the flight, three coyotes were removed. To date, no further live-stock losses have been reported, since the removal of the offending coyotes.

On August 12<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay assisted the California Wildlife Services program by flying a large sheep ranch just over





the Nevada border. The large sheep producer was experiencing lamb losses for some time. During the morning flight, the aerial crew removed 13 coyotes all within close proximity of the sheep bands. WS-CA George Affonso provided valuable ground crew services by locating several of the coyotes for the aerial crew.

On August 17<sup>th</sup> through August 18<sup>th</sup>, the West District aerial crew assisted the East District with some much needed flying. Currently, IP Gossard is the only NV pilot for another two months or so in Nevada.



On August 21<sup>st</sup>, WS George Hansen checked ground equipment around several bands of sheep in Lander County. During the trap check, WS Hansen removed three coyotes by method of trapping. WS Hansen reports very few coyote problems in his area this month, but reports he has been pro-actively working around livestock. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock in his large work area.

During the month of August, WS Ben Miller was busy placing and checking trail snares in northern Washoe County (hunt units 011-013) for the protection of trans-located California bighorn sheep. WS Miller has been working closely with a Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) bighorn sheep biologist to concentrate protection efforts around bighorn sheep herds and water holes from data observed on tracking collars. WS Miller has been utilizing call boxes, in addition to his custom made trail snares to capture lions inhabiting the same areas as bighorn sheep. Many of these locations are far from roads, so WS Miller must backpack supplies in, which can make for long walks and longer days. WS Miller will continue to lend his WS predator trapping expertise to protect these valuable bighorn sheep populations.

On August 25<sup>th</sup> through August 27<sup>th</sup>, CM VanderMay traveled to Utah to re-certify for his annual crew member certification. CM VanderMay passed the written exam with 100% and as always, performed flawlessly during the practical portion of the training. We are fortunate indeed to have such high quality employees.

During the month of August, WS Koepke was busy protecting livestock producers in Churchill County. During the summer months when the open range livestock protection work slows down, WS Koepke stays busy with calls from smaller ranches in the Churchill County area. WS Koepke runs M-44s, leghold traps and trail snares to help protect his many livestock producers around the Fallon area.

During the month of August, eight pet dogs were reportedly killed by coyotes in the Reno/Sparks area. These are likely a fraction of the pets killed in the Reno/Sparks area as many incidents go unreported or are reported to other agencies. The WS state office provided technical assistance to pet owners about coyotes. Each year WS receives urban coyote and other nuisance animal calls and it becomes very time consuming.

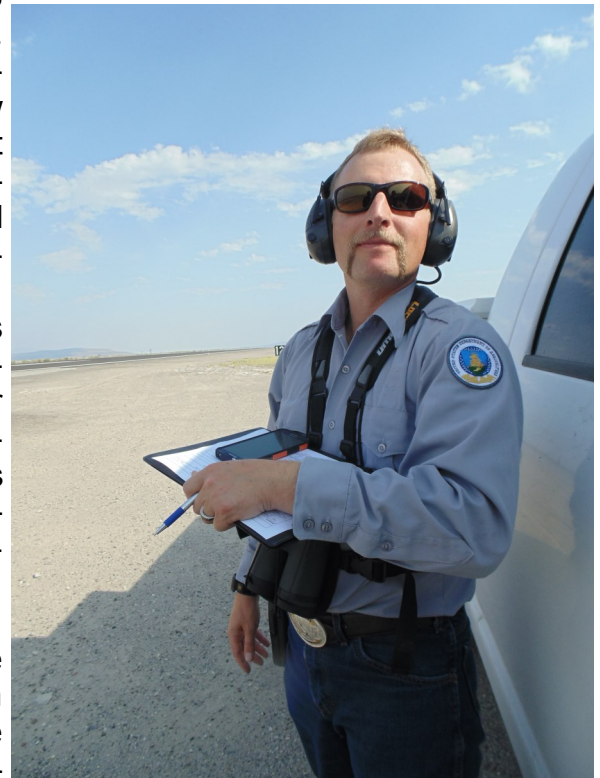




During the month of August, WS Peter was busy protecting sheep bands in Humboldt County. WS Peter has been utilizing M-44s around sheep bands with good success. Next month there will likely be dozens of cattle producers requesting WS Peter's assistance in Humboldt County for protection of their vulnerable calves. WS Peter usually sets M-44s on most of the calving areas all winter to help cattle producers in this area with great success.

During the month of August, Wildlife Biologist (WB) Zack Bowers continued to deter wildlife from using/crossing the airfield at a military installation in northern Nevada. In an ef-

fort to keep these species from crossing the airfield, WB Bowers has utilized harassment with several methods. WB Bowers dispersed 18 birds from on and near the airfield. This is down considerably from the previous few months. Wildlife dispersed from the airfield included eight species. The most common and abundant species dispersed include American avocets, white-faced ibises and black-crowned night herons. These birds are congregated around two drain ditches which hold water year round. Despite receiving decent levels of precipitation this spring, the area has been in drought conditions for several years now and wildlife is concentrated around water sources. Persistent harassment is necessary in this situation as birds and other wildlife are reluctant to leave this water source. WB Bowers continues to monitor the airfield and surrounding area using formal surveys and general observations.



Two of the wildlife strikes that occurred in July at the above mentioned airfield were identified as involving an American kestrel and a cliff swallow. No remains were recovered from the third strike. During the month of August five wildlife strikes occurred. Two of the strikes have been confirmed as involving a common nighthawk and a mourning dove. Identification on two other remains is pending, and no remains were recovered from one of the strikes. One of the strikes where identification is pending caused damage to an engine and will likely result in costs in the seven figures. Typically July and August are slow times of the year for wildlife activity at the above mentioned airfield. Although bird numbers this spring were higher than normal around the airfield, they have since declined and resemble a more typical pattern. The increase in strikes for July and August is not fully understood at this time. WB Bowers will continue to use a variety of methods in order to reduce wildlife activity on the airfield.

During the month of August, WB Hunter Moyles initiated protection work on a major international airport in Reno. During the month, 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 522 birds and mammals from the airfield. Wildlife dispersed from the airfield included 15 species of birds and mammals. Many of these birds were congregated around a drainage ditch which holds water on a year around basis.



Despite receiving decent levels of precipitation this spring, the area has been in drought conditions for the past several years now and wildlife is concentrated around water sources. Persistent harassment is necessary as birds and other wildlife are reluctant to leave the water source located on airport property. WB Moyles will start to monitor the airfield and surrounding area using formal structured surveys and general observations.

On August 3<sup>rd</sup>, WB Moyles toured around the facilities with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector where he talked about habitat modifications and exclusion options that the facility has employed and could potentially employ. WB Moyles will continue to employ wildlife management techniques recommended by the FAA.



On August 11<sup>th</sup>, WB Moyles was contacted by the airport properties manager stating that they are being overrun with pigeons. These offending pigeons were defecating on aircraft and hangers posing a human health and safety risk (due to fecal pathogens) as well as an aviation safety risk. WB Moyles employed the use of a pellet gun and removed 17 offending pigeons. Efforts will continue to reduce the amount of pigeons in the hangers.

On August 24<sup>th</sup>, WB Moyles noted on his daily perimeter check around the airport, that there seemed to be a larger number of hawks, accipiters and falcons in the area posing a potential aviation safety risk. To prevent collisions with aircraft, WB Moyles used modified Swedish goshawk traps and Bal-Chatrri traps to capture and trans-locate six American kestrels, and two Cooper's hawks. Efforts will continue due to the fall migration.



Along with several non-lethal harassment techniques WB Moyles also had to deploy some lethal means of control to eliminate aircraft strike potential at the above mentioned airport. During the month, WB Moyles removed several offending species for public safety including: two coyotes, one crow, 36 pigeons, one raccoon, three skunks and 310 ground squirrels by utilizing trapping, shooting and toxicants. Aircraft protection methodology will continue to be employed at the large airport to better minimize the potential for wildlife strikes to aircraft. Protection efforts are ongoing.

## New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report

## Valuing and Investing in Employees

Nothing to Report

**Information and Communication**

On August 4<sup>th</sup>, Staff Biologist (SB) Jack Sengl attended and presented to the Nevada Trapper's Association (NTA) Annual Rendezvous in White Pine County. The Rendezvous is a great opportunity to present wildlife disease presentations and transfer information to folks who handle wildlife. Additionally, programmatic overviews were shared. Over 200 adults were in attendance and there seemed to be 50+ kids as well, though as active as they were in the demonstrations, they were difficult to count. Disease and programmatic information was well received by the trappers and all seemed to have a good time. Of interest, Joe Bennett, from our program received the NTA's Trapper of the Year award for his dedication and devotion to NTA. Mr. Bennett has been the tireless host/organizer for the last two rendezvous which have gathered trappers together from across the Country. Putting together such large events which include bringing vendors together, prize ceremonies, speakers and open communication is a process that spans the whole year.

**Emerging Trends/Issues**

Nothing to Report

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

Nothing to Report

**Future Meetings and Events**

Nothing to Report.



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# Wildlife Services

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