

August 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

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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 **3.1** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$65.2** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$3.1** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **806** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$1,501** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$26,405** in damage to utilities and other agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During August, coyotes accounted for **\$20,205** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **124** 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, **8** samples were processed.

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



On August 4th, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Scott Little confirmed the loss of five lambs, valued at \$750 to coyote predation. Despite extensive efforts using his well-trained coyote decoy dogs, WS Little was unable to locate and remove the offending coyote. WS Little set several traps near the location of the damage and on August 14th, WS Little was able to trap the offending coyote. No further losses have been reported. WS Little continues to monitor the several bands of sheep in his assigned work area.

On August 4th, WS Randy Evans confirmed the loss of four lambs valued at \$600 to coyote predation. On August 8th, WS Evans was able to call and

shoot two coyotes near the site of the predation. No further losses have been reported and WS Evans continues to monitor the band of sheep experiencing the damage. WS Evans also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations, in an effort to help prevent future losses.

On August 5th, a cattle rancher north of Ely, Nevada contacted the East District office concerning a problem with coyotes. The rancher reported that they had a small farm flock of sheep at the ranch and that coyotes had been killing them for more than a week. On August 6th, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett responded to the ranch and confirmed the loss of six lambs and one adult ewe valued at \$1,450. DS Bennett had previously arranged to have the Ely plane respond to the ranch. During the morning's flight, six coyotes were removed. WS Scott Little also responded to the location and set several pieces of ground equipment. WS Little was able to remove three additional coyotes from the ranch. WS Little also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations



to help prevent future losses.



On August 6th, WS Mac Crome confirmed the loss of two lambs, valued at \$300, to coyote predation. The damage occurred on a remote band of sheep, near the Idaho border, in northern Elko County. WS Crome set several traps near the kills. On August 12th, WS Crome removed one large adult coyote near the kill site. No further losses have been reported. WS Crome continues to monitor the livestock in his designated work area.

On August 7th, WS Derril Fry confirmed the loss of three lambs, valued at \$450, to coyote predation. The damage occurred on a band of sheep in central Elko County. WS Fry used ground equipment and calling to remove two adult coyotes near the kill sites. To date, no further losses have taken place. WS Fry provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses



On August 11th and 12th, WS Matt Spires confirmed the loss of four lambs, valued at \$600, to coyote predation. The damage happened in the northern part of White Pine County. On August 12th, with the aid of his well-trained coyote decoy dog, WS Spires was able to call and shoot two coyotes near the kills. To date, no further losses have occurred on the band of sheep. WS Spires also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.



On August 11th, WS Scott MacDonald confirmed the loss of three lambs, valued at \$450. WS MacDonald confirmed that several coyotes were responsible for the damage. WS MacDonald used ground equipment to remove eight coyotes near the location of the kills. No further losses have been reported and WS MacDonald continues to monitor the livestock in his assigned work area. WS MacDonald also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On August 21st, a sheep rancher south of Wells, Nevada called and reported the loss of three lambs, valued at \$450, to coyote predation. On August 26th, the Ely plane responded to the location. With WS Crome acting as the ground crew, six coyotes were removed near the kills. No further losses have been reported.



On August 25th, a homeowner north of Ely stopped by the East District office and reported that coyotes had been coming into his yard and had killed 35 geese, 20 ducks, 20 chickens and 10 turkeys. The homeowner reported the total value of the loss was almost \$1,000. The homeowner said he owned twenty acres and had been trying to solve the problem himself. He said he had been sleeping with his shotgun in the backyard hoping to put an end to the damage. The homeowner also reported that he had set a trap for the coyotes but only caught one of his own chickens. On August 26th, WS Spires walked into the area directly behind the house. WS Spires was able to call and remove one adult female and two younger coyotes, bringing an end to the damage. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was also provided to help prevent future losses.

During the last two weeks of August, WS Crome confirmed the loss of at least four lambs to coyotes, valued at \$600. The damage occurred on a remote band of sheep in northern Elko County near the Idaho border. Despite setting several traps and snares near the kills, the offending coyote was not removed. On August 26th, while checking on the sheep, WS Crome observed the coyote feeding on a lamb that it had just freshly killed. One well-placed shot brought an end to the damage. WS Crome also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

During the month of August, WS Dayne Barnes continued monitoring and documentation of feral swine in Nevada. This population monitoring is part of an overarching national plan to reduce or eliminate damage attributed to feral swine. As more information is obtained and analyzed, work will transition from documentation to removal.

West District

On August 7th, Pilot Wes Gossard and Crew Member (CM) Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around a small flock of sheep in Lander County. This livestock producer has had guard dogs to protect these sheep for years, however, they have been unable to keep coyotes away from his sheep. The livestock producer reported that four lambs, valued at \$320, had been killed by coyotes. During the flight, the air crew removed four coyotes, with WS George Hansen providing ground support. Protection work will be ongoing.



On August 8th, WS Doug Koepke inspected ground equipment around a residence in northern Washoe County. A cooperater had reported several lions hanging around his house and had seen them in his barn and they had previously caused damage to livestock. During inspection WS Koepke removed one adult lion not far from the residence by using a trail snare. The livestock producer was pleased with the protection efforts by WS Koepke.

On August 7th, a livestock producer from Pershing County reported that three lambs, valued at \$240, had been killed by coyotes. The livestock losses occurred near a 9,000' peak. On August 8th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight and knowing the problems associated with flying high altitudes with warm weather the aerial crew only had about an hour to work the area, but luckily right at first light three coyotes were removed near the sheep with WS Koepke providing ground support. No further livestock damages have been reported.



On August 12th, a Carson City County sheep producer reported that two specialty sheep, valued at \$600, had been killed by a lion. DS Jack Spencer inspected the situation and determined that a female lion had killed the sheep. This particular rancher has raised sheep in this area for many years and only recently has had issues with lions. The depredating lion was near several dozen homes and evidence was found where the lion was using a kid's sand box as a toilet. DS Spencer placed a large cage trap that evening where the kill had occurred, using the depredated sheep as bait. Just before dark, the rancher saw the lion stalking his sheep

and he tried to shoot it, but was unsuccessful. That night, the rancher informed DS Spencer that the offending lion was captured in the trap. DS Spencer removed the old female lion, ending the damage. A Nevada Department of Agriculture spokesman was on site interviewing the rancher and documenting the situation for a future television public education program. The rancher was very pleased with the livestock protection efforts DS Spencer provided. DS Spencer will continue to help with capturing stock killing predators when time allows him away from the office.

During the week of August 4th through August 8th, WS Hansen was busy removing coyotes around several sheep bands in Lander County. Lately the sheep losses have been low, however, as sheep bands move, they attract coyotes and the threat of predation returns. During the week, WS Hansen removed seven coyotes with the use of leghold traps and trail snares. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock in Lander County.

During the first couple of weeks of August, WS John Peter was responding to a rancher's request to remove a feral pig that was causing damage to his barley field in Humboldt County. WS Peter inspected the damage site and confirmed that the tracks were from a boar pig, but he also determined that the boar was visiting the fields only occasionally. WS Peter continued to monitor the trail snares with the barley farmer and on August 18th, trail snared the feral pig. The rancher was pleased with WS Peter's response.



On August 20th, a livestock producer from Washoe County reported that a large black bear had killed four buck rams, valued at \$2,000. WS Nick Smith inspected the damage site and confirmed that a large black bear had caused the livestock damage. The area was semi-urban, so WS Smith worked with the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) and set a large culvert trap near the dead sheep. On Sunday, August 19th, WS Smith captured the large male black bear which was transferred to the NDOW bear biologist. WS Smith will continue to help protect livestock in his large work area.

On August 21st, WS Koepke conducted a raven project for a cattle producer/feedlot operator in Lyon County to stop the ravens from killing his upcoming newborn calves. This cooperater has experienced raven depredations historically around the calving seasons. WS Koepke placed DRC-1339 treated egg baits, removing 17 depredating ravens. No further livestock complaints have been reported and the rancher was pleased with the protection efforts WS Koepke provided.

On August 28th, DS Spencer conducted a routine field inspection with Wildlife Biologist Zack Bowers on a large military facility in Fallon. The airport manager commented that they are very pleased with WB Bower's hard work and protection efforts at the facility. DS Spencer will continue to meet employees and cooperators in the field.

During the month of August, WS Ben Miller was busy placing equipment in areas of northern Washoe County (hunt unit 011) around translocated California bighorn sheep. WS Miller found where a large male lion is visiting a herd of sheep, roughly once a month. WS Miller had another

male lion visiting a bighorn sheep population a few miles up the road and it was the same scenario before he captured it, so hopefully in the next month he can remove this lion before it has a chance to eat anymore bighorn sheep. WS Miller will continue to protect bighorn sheep in northern Washoe County.

During the month of August, WS Peter was busy removing coyotes around a sheep producer in Humboldt County. WS Peter was mule-back, running leghold traps, M-44's, trail snares and decoy dogs resulting in the removal of five coyotes. Sheep losses in the area have been minimal lately and WS Peter usually spends his summers mule back in the high country protecting sheep bands. Protection efforts are ongoing.



Throughout the month of August, WB Luke Barto utilized a multitude of mitigation techniques in an effort to reduce wildlife attractants and threats in an effort to protect aviation safety at a local airport. Wildlife are very diverse and ever evolving as they learn to live in proximity to airfields, which makes mitigation similar to hitting a moving target. Wildlife movements and abundance fluctuates with available resources, climate and reproduction. Airport biologists take these factors into account and are able to track wildlife movements and evaluate trends and patterns by conducting routine surveys both on and around the airfield. More specifically, WB Barto monitors for those wildlife that consistently cross airspace of in/out bound air traffic that could result in a collision. Continued surveillance for the month of August included two point-count surveys and two off-site surveys at the above mentioned airport.

In addition to continued surveillance, WB Barto also employs non-lethal dispersal in conjunction with direct control methods to reduce avian and mammal threats to aviation safety. WB Barto harassed eight avian species including one red-tailed hawk, California gulls and mallard ducks. WB Barto also removed: five feral/free ranging pigeons, four mourning doves, two mallard ducks, one coyote and one red-tail hawk.

Three bird strikes were reported throughout the month of August at the above mentioned airport, each involving a single bird. One juvenile California gull, one American kestrel and one Brewers black bird were identified to the species level. Identification of species allows biologists and airport managers to utilize management techniques targeted specifically to those species being struck.

One coyote and one red-tailed hawk were removed from the above mentioned airport in an effort to reduce wildlife threats to aviation. Coyotes and red-tailed hawks can be both direct and indirect threats to aviation while searching for carrion that has been struck on runways, taxiways or roadways nearby, as well as indirectly scaring birds into pathways of aircraft. This is the second coyote removed in the last two months.



Coyote struck by aircraft

A chipmunk was also removed by WB Barto from inside a

terminal of the airport mentioned above. Small rodents such as chipmunks can be destructive when found inhabiting buildings, structures and vehicles, often chewing on electrical wiring which could result in fire hazards.

WB Barto also attended the week long annual Bird Strike Committee conference for 2014 held in Atlanta, GA to maintain his Qualified Airport Biologist certification. The annual conference is open to the private industry as well as government entities that manage wildlife threats at/around airfields with emphasis on wildlife strike hazard awareness and wildlife mitigation techniques and tools.

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 2nd, Predatory Animal and Rodent Committee meeting in Elko, State Director (SD) Mark Jensen to attend.

September 3rd, Nevada Board of Agriculture meeting, SD Jensen to attend via Video conference from Elko.



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