

December 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

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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 December, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **6.7** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$200.7** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$5.2** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **126** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$1,128** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$9,639** in damage to natural and agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During December, coyotes accounted for **\$9,639** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **435** 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 December, **238** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of December, 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 website: <http://agri.nv.gov/Wildlife>. Where wildlife biology and damage management methods are offered by species.

East District

On December 2nd, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Allen Eldridge confirmed the loss of two ewes, valued at \$500, to coyote predation. The damage occurred on a band of sheep in central White Pine County. That same day, WS Eldridge was able to call and shoot one coyote near the kill site. WS Eldridge set several traps near the location of the kills and was able to trap one additional coyote bringing an end to the damage. No further losses have been reported to date. WS Eldridge also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On December 4th, the East District office received a call concerning the loss of two calves to coyote predation. The damage occurred on a remote allotment in central Nye County. The value of the loss was placed at \$2,000. After confirming the loss, the Ely plane responded to the location on the morning of December 8th, with the assistance of District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett and WS Hunter Bodenchuk, the plane was able to remove ten coyotes near the location of the kills. No further losses have been reported and technical assistance was provided in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On December 7th, WS Bodenchuk began work in the East District as a State of Nevada (Division of Animal Industry) employee. Hunter recently transferred from the Texas Wildlife Services' program where he was a trapper in southwestern Texas for the past two and a half years. WS Bodenchuk had also worked one season protecting sage-grouse from raven, coyote and badger predation in Elko, White Pine and Lincoln Counties. WS Bodenchuk will be a great addition to the East District, the State of Nevada Department of Agriculture and the Nevada Wildlife Services program, welcome aboard.



On December 10th, DS Bennett confirmed the loss of one adult ewe, valued at \$250, to coyote predation. The damage occurred and a band of sheep in western White Pine County. DS Bennett placed several traps near the location of the kill. During the next two weeks, DS Bennett removed two coyotes. No further losses were reported. Technical assistance was provided in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.



On December 22nd, WS Mac Crome confirmed the loss of one ewe valued at \$250 to coyote predation. The damage occurred on an allotment near Wendover, Nevada on the Nevada/Utah border. Utilizing calling and snaring, WS Crome was able to remove two coyotes near the location of the kill.

No further losses have been reported and WS Crome continues to monitor the livestock in his assigned work area.

On December 22nd, DS Bennett conducted a day long field inspection with WS Dayne Barnes. WS Barnes has been working on a project in Lincoln County monitoring and removing feral swine. On December 29th, WS Barnes tracked a feral boar and was able to sight shoot it and sample the



swine for disease and genetics. The swine have caused extensive damage to several farms in the area as well as significant damage to riparian areas and rangeland near the Utah border. WS Barnes continues to work the project.



Both the Elko and Ely planes were busy during the month of December, flying for both depredation complaints as well as flying calving grounds in preparation for spring calving. Several large allotments and ranches with histories of high losses have been flown during the month as the weather permitted. The two planes will continue to fly with conditions excellent this winter for flying.



West District

On December 1st, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and Crew Member (CM) Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning flight in Humboldt County around several calving areas. During the early morning flight, 31 coyotes were removed. WS John Peter provided ground support during aerial operations. Cattle producers continue to request assistance from the aerial crew on a daily basis.

During the week of December 1st, through December 4th, WS Ben Miller continued to protect California bighorn sheep in northern Washoe County (hunt unit 011) from lion predation. WS Miller had not seen any recent lion sign, but with California's protected lion population just across the border, WS Miller will continue to be busy. Indeed, on December 2nd, WS Miller removed a 140 pound male lion in the same area as the bighorn sheep with the use of a trail snare. WS Miller used a call box and a corral funnel set with trail snares placed at pinch points. Although lions typically cover large areas, limited water sources and a good prey source can change that.



During the week of December 7th through December 10th, DS Jack Spencer met with the United States Bird/Wildlife Aircraft Strike Hazard Team in Las Vegas. DS Spencer also met with military officials at two military facilities including one facility adjacent to Area 51. The military facilities were having some wildlife issues including several bird strikes to aircraft. While DS Spencer was on site, two bird strikes occurred and at one of the military bases where several military stealth bombers (estimated at nearly a billion dollars each) were flying daily. DS Spencer will continue to work with the military facilities to discuss their wildlife issues and in the meantime the military is

seeking funding for a full time USDA/Wildlife Services Airport Biologist.

On December 3rd, a homeowner from Storey County called and reported that he found a dead feral horse in his back yard and as he approached it, a lion lying nearby took issue and growled at him. The concerned homeowner also mentioned that later in the day several lions were walking around his house and were hanging around the kids at the nearby bus stop. Because the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) has management authority over lions, DS Spencer passed the call to them, who in turn requested the lion be removed out of concern for the public. In response, Wildlife Biologist (WB) Hunter Moyles arrived and sight shot an adult female lion in the homeowner's back yard with a rifle and over the course of the week and into the weekend, removed three juvenile male lions with the use of a cage trap. The nearby homeowners and NDOW were pleased to have the public safety issue resolved as this was all close to a children's bus stop.



During the month of December, WS Carl Frey was busy placing equipment around winter sheep bands and calving areas in Lyon County. WS Frey has been using call boxes with various sounds to draw coyotes away from the livestock and into his equipment with great success. During the month, WS Frey removed five problem coyotes, by method of trapping and snaring. WS Frey will continue to protect livestock in several counties in western Nevada.

On December 17th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around a calving area long known to have problems with coyotes in Humboldt County. WS Peter showed up just prior to the planes arrival and voice howled to locate several coyotes for the plane. The aerial crew flew around the calves and removed 16 coyotes including a group of five coyotes running together. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On December 29th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several cattle and sheep producers in Lander County. During the morning flight, 14 coyotes were removed. WS George Hansen provided ground support during aerial operations and located several of the coyotes in the livestock and directed the plane towards their location. Protection efforts are ongoing.

On December 23rd and December 24th, WS Doug Koepke checked his equipment around a calving

area in Humboldt County. Livestock damage had been minimal and WS Koepke had placed a lot of equipment out in the area to keep the many coyotes out of the livestock. During inspection, WS Koepke removed 14 coyotes most by using M-44's. The cattle producers were very pleased with WS Koepke's protection efforts. WS Koepke will continue to protect livestock in his area.



On December 31st, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several cattle producers in Humboldt County. During the morning flight, 13 coyotes were removed. WS John Peter provided ground support during aerial operations directing the plane towards several coyotes. The flying conditions were bitter for the aerial crew as the temperatures were below zero made colder by opening the window to shoot. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

During the month of December, WB 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. Six species of birds and one mammalian species were dispersed from the airfield. Wildlife numbers on and around the airfield are about average compared to the previous four Decembers. Species showing increased numbers compared to previous Decembers are common ravens, coyotes, red-tailed hawks, mallards, and horned larks.

During the month of December, one strike occurred on the airfield. Initial inspection of the remains appears to be that of a sparrow species. It appeared to be an English house sparrow, although it could be one of several similar looking species of sparrow common to the area. Feathers have been sent to the Smithsonian Institute for identification.

During the month of December, a neighboring property to the previously mentioned military installation called to inform WB Bowers that they were experiencing losses to coyote predation. They explained that they had lost 20 chickens, six ducks, and six sheep. The cooperator was particularly concerned about the sheep, as they were his daughter's 4-H sheep which she had raised. WB Bowers responded to the location and confirmed that the losses had been caused by coyotes. WB Bowers inspected the area and set several traps. A couple of days later the cooperator called and informed WB Bowers that they had lost two more sheep. WB Bowers returned to the area and after following out tracks in fresh snow, determined that two coyotes were actually coming off of military property to kill the livestock. WB Bowers set more traps and within a couple days managed to catch the pair of coyotes and bring an end to the killing. WB Bowers will continue to monitor the situation closely, as these coyotes not only cause problems to the neighboring properties, but also pose a human health and safety issue to aircraft on the military installation.



During the month of December, WB Moyles continued protection work at an 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 1,324 birds and mammals from the airfield. Wildlife dispersed from the airfield included four 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 last part of November, and the first part of December WB Moyles has noticed an increase in Canada geese, and ducks on surrounding properties. Increased hazing will be deployed to keep the large geese away from the airfield. During the month of December, WB Moyles hazed 1,089 Canada Geese, and 233 ducks off of airport property. Methods used to deter wildlife included the use of pyrotechnics, cracker shells and the vehicle. Increased activity on the airport is due to freezing temperatures and snow cover. Limited open water has drawn many waterfowl species to the airport.



During the week of December 21st, WB Moyles was the acting District Supervisor and as such, was contacted by a cattle rancher in the Red Rock area explaining that they lost a calf to coyotes, loss valued at \$406. WB Moyles responded to the call, setting leg hold traps around the remaining stock. On December 22nd, WB Moyles made two calling stands, removing two depredating coyotes, a large male, and a female. No further losses have been reported.

Along with several non-lethal harassment techniques, WB Moyles also had to deploy some lethal means of control to reduce wildlife threats to aviation at the prior mentioned airport. Specifically, WB Moyles removed a striped skunk by utilizing trapping, and shooting. The wildlife hazard management plan will continue to be implemented at the airport to better protect aviation safety from wildlife hazard threats. Protection efforts are ongoing.

New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report

Valuing and Investing in Employees

Nothing to Report

Information and Communication

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) continues to be a threat to poultry operations in the US. As part of APHIS's mission to protect the health and value of America's agricultural and natural resources, APHIS has responded to numerous animal and plant health emergencies over the

years. By far, the worst in U.S. history was the outbreak of HPAI earlier this year. It was absolutely devastating to the poultry and egg industries, especially in the Midwest.

This fall and winter WS and NDOW are working together to sample waterfowl for any indication of HPAI. Although drought has greatly reduced the number of watersheds that can be sampled, the Central Lahontan and Lower Colorado-Lake Mead watersheds remain viable. As such, efforts will be focused in these watersheds. During the reporting period, Fall sampling goals were achieved. Many thanks to the waterfowlers for their participation and patience. Winter sampling began in December and will continue through January. Of interest, only naturally occurring (low pathogenic) avian influenza has been detected this waterfowl season.



Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report

Future Meetings and Events

January 8th, N-1 Grazing Board meeting in Elko. State Director (SD) Mark Jensen to attend.

January 13th, N-2 Grazing Board meeting in Winnemucca. SD Jensen to attend.

January 15th-16th, Pest Management Association Meeting in Las Vegas. SD Jensen to attend.

January 21st, Predatory Animal and Rodent Committee Meeting in Reno. SD Jensen to attend.

January 25th-28th, American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) meeting and Management team meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona. SD Jensen to attend.



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