

December 2014

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 **7.2** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$97.1** 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 **\$5,892** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$231,981** in damage to utilities and other agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During December, coyotes accounted for **\$6,660** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **364** 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, **43** samples were processed.

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

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.



On December 8th, a cattle rancher in Nye County contacted the East District office concerning the loss of four calves, valued at \$3,000. On December 9th, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett traveled to the location and confirmed the losses. DS Bennett was able to call and shoot one coyote near the kill sites. The following morning, the Ely plane responded to the location, removing four more coyotes near the kills. DS Bennett was able to take nobuto samples from two of the coyotes killed by the airplane. The rancher was very pleased with the fast response to his problem. Technical assistance was also provided in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help prevent future losses.

On December 9th, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Scott MacDonald received a report concerning the loss of one lamb, valued at \$150, to coyote predation. WS MacDonald traveled to the ranch in eastern White Pine County and confirmed the lamb had been killed by a coyote. WS MacDonald set several traps near the kill. A few days later, WS MacDonald caught the offending coyote, bringing an end to the damage. No further losses have been reported. WS MacDonald also provided non-lethal technical assistance to help prevent future losses. The rancher was very happy with the assistance he received from Wildlife Services.

On December 10th, WS Billy Taylor confirmed the loss of two ewes, valued at \$500, to coyote predation. WS Taylor placed several traps near the kills. During the next several days, WS Taylor removed two coyotes near the kills. WS Taylor also requested the assistance of the Ely plane. The Ely plane responded to the location and removed one additional coyote near the kill site. No further losses have been reported.

On December 15th, a sheep producer in Nye County contacted Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler concerning the loss of four ewes, valued at \$1,000, to a mountain lion. MLS Buhler traveled to the location and confirmed that a lion had killed all four sheep. MLS Buhler hunted the offending lion for two days and was able to trail and tree it a short distance from the kills. The lion was an adult female that weighed approximately 85 pounds. No further losses have been reported. The lion was skinned and turned into the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) office in Ely. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was also provided in an effort to prevent future losses.



During the week of December 15th, WS Mac Crome confirmed the loss of four ewes, valued at \$1,000, in eastern Elko County near the Utah border. WS Crome used traps and snares to remove four coyotes near the kills. WS Crome also requested the assistance of the Ely plane. On December 23rd, the Ely plane responded to the location. During the morning's flight, the plane was able to remove an additional five coyotes near the band of sheep. No further losses have been reported and WS Crome continues to monitor the sheep for possible predation issues.



WS Randy Evans was at it, protecting several bands of sheep in Eureka and White Pine Counties throughout December. WS Evans removed nine coyotes near the bands of sheep. WS Evans also ground crewed for both the Elko and Ely planes during the month.

WS Scott Little removed 18 coyotes near several bands of sheep in Nye County that have had historically high losses to coyotes in the past. WS Little also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses. WS Little's cooperators are very pleased with all his hard work.



During the month of December, an out of state pilot was brought into Elko County to fly several sheep and cattle ranches that have been experiencing coyote predation. The plane flew for twelve days including the weekends in an effort to respond to all of the calls for assistance. The pilot will again return in January to assist the Nevada program.

West District

During the first part of December while covering for a couple of coworkers, WB Bowers responded to a lion call within a residential area of Fallon. While the lion was attacking a small goat, a helpful neighbor heard the commotion and came to the goats rescue. Although successful in stopping the attack, the lion would not leave the area after several attempts to scare it away. Many people had been contacted and responded to the situation prior to WS being notified. By the time WB Bowers arrived, the lion had moved on, but WB Bowers checked on the situation for several days to ensure the lion had not decided to return. Several sightings were reported over the next couple of weeks within the Fallon area, with WB Bowers responding when able. WB Bowers learned of many other goats and other livestock that were likely killed by the lion over the previous two to three weeks. Finally a lion was caught in the act of attacking domestic ducks and was killed by the livestock owner. While there is some debate over whether this was the same lion, no further damage has been reported since it was killed.





On December 4th, Acting West District Supervisor Zack Bowers dispatched Budget Technician (BT) Melissa Hartig and Staff Biologist (SB) Jack Sengl to a report of a lion attacking a horse and maiming it so bad it had to be euthanized. The depredating species was verified to be two dogs (one large and one very large), which the 38 year old horse didn't recognize as being a threat, until it was too late (judging by the tracks). The dogs first tripped it in a ditch, worked it over and after being downed several more times, the old horse was unable to get back up. Whether pet dogs or feral dogs, the owner was referred to Washoe County as the County has management authority over pets and domestic dogs.

On December 15th, a livestock producer reported that a lion killed three sheep (valued at \$500) at his ranch near Carson City. DS Jack Spencer responded and determined that a female lion had killed the sheep. DS Spencer placed a large cage trap, trail snares and leghold traps around the sheep carcasses, though the lion didn't return. This sheep producer has lived in this area for 40 years and only in recent years have lions killed his livestock.



During the week of December 15th through 19th, WS George Hansen was out running equipment around several winter sheep bands in Lander County. During the week, WS Hansen removed 10 offending coyotes from around the sheep bands with the use of leghold traps.



On December 23rd, Instructor Pilot Wes Gossard and Crew Member Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several winter sheep bands in Pershing County. A livestock producer reported that three ewes (valued at \$400) had been killed by coyotes. During the flight, four coyotes were removed in close proximity of the sheep carcasses. No additional livestock losses have been reported and protection efforts will be ongoing. The sheep producer called DS Spencer and said "thanks for all the protection efforts your staff provide".

During the month of December, WS Nick Smith was out placing equipment around a dozen ranches in Lyon and Douglas Counties. Cattle and sheep producers call for assistance throughout the year in WS Smith's large work area. During the month, WS Smith removed 17 depredating coyotes; including eight with the use of M44s. WS Smith will continue to protect livestock.

During the month of December, WS John Peter received requests for assistance regarding feral pigs on a ranch in Humboldt County. In response, WS Peter removed three feral pigs by using trail snares. WS Peter will continue to monitor the feral pig situation. The rancher was very pleased with the protection efforts WS Peter provided.

During the month of December, residents in the Reno/Sparks area reported the loss of 11 pets (valued at \$5,500) to coyotes. It is likely that more pet casualties and attacks occur in the area and are not reported. Non-lethal technical assistance was provided to reduce the chance that replacement pets would suffer similar fates.

During the month of December, WS Ben Miller was out checking around several trans-located bighorn sheep populations in northern Washoe County. During the month, WS Miller found where a female lion and three large juveniles had walked around a recent bighorn sheep release site, and then moved north a few miles into the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The Sheldon NWR does not allow removal of any predators including lions and coyotes. WS Miller will continue to protect these bighorn sheep populations from lion predation.

During the month of December, DS Spencer assisted a large airport in Reno with wildlife strike technical assistance in the form of entering wildlife strikes into the Federal Aviation Administration's Strike Database. DS Spencer also provided recommendations/assistance to reduce further wildlife strikes and resolve coyote issues. Coyotes have been digging under perimeter fences to access the aircraft operations area (AOA). To resolve the problem, DS Spencer placed snares in the crawl holes and did an extensive search of the outside perimeter and found where a coyote was coming from. DS Spencer tracked this coyote to a small farm area, though was unable to remove it. Calling was also attempted, though ineffective due to pedestrians. DS Spencer eventually waited near a trail where he saw the coyote cross before and removed it with a suppressed rifle. Coyotes frequently show up on the airport and urban coyotes are usually pretty easy to capture, but they can be difficult at the same time because of the entire disturbance from the city. DS Spencer also contacts the local authorities as a courtesy so they do not mistake his wildlife problem resolution with illegal misdeeds.



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. WB Bowers harassed five species of birds from on and around the airfield including red-tailed hawks, mallards and blackbirds. WB Bowers continues to monitor the airfield and surrounding area on a daily basis in order to stay on top of the situation.

On December 18-19th, WB Bowers participated in a cross-training exercise in Salt Lake City, Utah with WB Mike Smith. WB Bowers is in the process of gearing up for trapping and trans-locating red-tailed hawks from on and around the airfield. WB Smith is very experienced and knowledgeable when it comes to trapping raptors. WB Bowers got a very good refresher in several types and methods of raptor traps. WB Bowers also brought his equipment along and WB Smith looked it over and helped to improve/modify the traps. This cross-training not only served as a refresher course but also saved WB Bowers many hours of trial and error when it comes to modifying raptor traps. WB Bowers is very thankful to WB Smith and the Utah program for allowing this opportunity.



New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report

Valuing and Investing in Employees

Nothing to Report

Information and Communication

On December 8th, DS Bennett attended the N-6 Grazing Board meeting in Austin, where he provided a presentation and summary representing the work from the previous year and leading into the new year.

On December 16th, DS Bennett and SB Sengl attended the N-1 Grazing Board meeting in Elko, where DS Bennett provided a presentation and summary representing the work from the previous year and leading into the new year.

Emerging Trends/Issues

An avian influenza (AI) outbreak occurred in British Columbia, then in Washington State. The specific strain is H5N8. Out of concern for the poultry industry and wildlife health, Pacific flyway States (including Nevada) began sampling hunter harvested dabbling ducks. Nevada's goal is to provide 350 samples before the end of January to be tested by University of California at Davis. To that end, several NVWS personnel sampled over the Christmas weekend. Thus far, all samples have come back negative for H5N8.



Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report

Future Meetings and Events

January 8th-11th, Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) meeting in Las Vegas, NV, State Director (SD) Mark Jensen to attend.

January 22nd, BLM and FS Activities Plan Meeting in Reno, NV, Staff to attend.

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