

February 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 Industries (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 February, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **7.8** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$100.2** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$7** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **131** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$404,655** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$27,595** in damage to other agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During February, coyotes accounted for **\$24,738** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **330** 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 February, **2** samples were processed.

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

East District

On February 1st, a sheep producer in southern Nye County contacted Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler concerning a problem with a mountain lion. The next morning, MLS Buhler traveled to the remote ranch and confirmed that a lion had killed three adult ewe sheep, valued at \$750. MLS Buhler was able to locate the lion's track and trailed it for two days finally treeing it. One well-placed shot brought an end to the damage. No further losses have been reported and technical assistance was provided to help prevent future losses. The lion was an adult female in excellent condition. It was skinned and turned into the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) office in Ely.



On February 18th, the Elko plane responded to a call for assistance in northern Eureka County. The cattle rancher had reported the loss of two newborn calves valued at more than \$1,500. During the



morning's operation, the Elko plane was able to remove four coyotes near the location of the kills. No further losses have been reported and the rancher was very pleased with the quick response concerning his problem.

On February 18th, two calls were received by the East District Office concerning the loss of several calves on two different ranches in western White Pine County. One ranch had lost two

calves and the adjacent ranch had lost four calves. The total value of the six calves was placed at more than \$4,500. On February 19th, the Ely plane responded to the location. Two coyotes were removed near the kill site before high winds forced the plane back to Ely. Further work will be conducted as weather permits.

On February 16th, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett received a call from a sheep producer near Eureka, Nevada. The rancher reported the loss of one adult ewe valued at \$800 (this is a special experimental flock of sheep). DS Bennett contacted the pilot for the Ely plane that night and arranged to fly the location the following morning. DS Bennett arrived just before daylight and located the kill. The sheep herder reported seeing a large coyote near the kill site the evening before. When the plane arrived, they were able to locate and remove the coyote. No further losses have been reported. DS Bennett provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.



February was a very busy month for WS Randy Evans. WS Evans traveled to Cedar City, Utah and successfully completed aerial crewmember training. WS Evans also traveled to Elko, Nevada and passed the Nevada pesticide license exam and obtained his pesticide applicator certification.

During the first part of February, WS Evans confirmed the loss of two ewe sheep valued at \$500 to coyote predation. WS Evans was able to remove two coyotes near the kills by utilizing snares. WS Evans also requested the assistance of the Elko Plane, which removed an additional two coyotes. No further losses have been reported and WS Evans continues to monitor the several bands of sheep in his area.

During the month of February, WS Matt Spires confirmed the loss of one ewe and two lambs valued at \$650. The coyote predation occurred in northern White Pine County. WS Spires utilized traps and snares to remove five coyotes near the kills. WS Spires also called the Ely plane that removed several more coyotes near the sheep. No further losses have been reported.



During the first week of February, WS Matt Spires received a call concerning a problem with ravens. The rancher reported that the ravens were harassing his newborn calves and lambs and had also been defecating in their water source. The ranch has had a long history of lamb losses to ravens, pecking out the eyes and killing newborn livestock. WS Spires used hard boiled eggs treated with DRC-1339 to remove the offending ravens. No further problems have been reported. WS Spires also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future predation issues.

During the first week of February, DS Bennett received a call concerning the loss of four calves to coyote predation. WS Bennett contacted the Ely plane. The following day the Ely plane responded to the ranch in Nye County. With the assistance of DS Bennett, the plane was able to remove eleven coyotes near the kill sites. No further losses have been reported and the rancher was very pleased with the results. DS Bennett also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future problems.

West District



During the month of February, WS John Peter was busy addressing coyote complaints around calving areas and a lambing range in Humboldt County. WS Peter typically places M-44s around the calving areas each winter and into the spring months to keep coyotes at bay in the vulnerable livestock areas. During the month, WS Peter removed 33 coyotes with the use of M-44s and trail snares. WS Peter currently uses few leghold traps in his area because of the tremendous amount

of work it takes to keep leghold traps working with freezing temperatures and snow cover. WS Peter will continue to protect livestock in his large work area.

During the month of February, the West District had several new cattle ranchers request protection efforts from Wildlife Services. The high cattle prices and continual drought conditions are a unique scenario and ranchers are requesting even more protection efforts to an already stretched thin district. Protection efforts will be employed as best as possible.

During the week of February 3rd through February 7th, WS Doug Koepke was busy placing trail snares and M-44s around several calving areas in Churchill County. The cattle prices have been unbelievable high and new cattle producers have been requesting assistance from WS Koepke. During the week, WS Koepke removed 11 coyotes with ground equipment to protect the young stock.



On February 4th, Pilot Wes Gossard and Crew Member (CM) Brandon VanderMay conducted aerial operations around several calving areas in Humboldt County to prevent return of historic losses. During the flight, 10 coyotes were removed right in around the calves. This calving season, no calf losses have been reported in the calving areas. WS Koepke provided ground support during aerial operations.

On February 5th, WS George Hansen removed two coyotes that had killed two ewes (valued at \$200) with the use of leghold traps in Nye County. WS Hansen will continue to protect these winter sheep bands. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock in his assigned work area.

On February 6th, DS Jack Spencer conducted a field inspection with Wildlife Biologist (WB) Zack Bowers at a military installation in Churchill County. During the inspection, WB Bowers and DS Spencer checked field equipment and perimeter fencing. WB Bowers will continue to provide professional wildlife damage management activities for our armed forces personnel.

On February 11th, DS Spencer conducted a field inspection with WS Nick Smith in Douglas County. WS Smith and DS Spencer checked M-44s and met with several cattle producers in his work area. Several cattle producers had high praise for WS Smith's work ethic and livestock protection efforts.

On February 12th, DS Spencer conducted a field inspection with WS Koepke around several cattle ranches in Churchill County. WS Koepke took advantage of an extra hand in the field setting trail snares around calving areas. WS Koepke removed four coyotes for the day and several ranchers expressed their gratitude for WS Koepke's livestock protection efforts.

On February 14th, WS Koepke removed a lion from a ranch in Washoe County by using a trail snare. This lion, and one other, had been seen on several occasions entering a rancher's building. On one occasion the lions ran within a few yards of two workers. One of the offending lions that was trail snared was partially consumed by another lion. Lions killing and eating one another occurs naturally.

On February 20th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations around several cattle producers in Humboldt County. During the long flight, the aerial crew removed 10 coyotes within close proximity of the calving areas. DS Spencer provided ground support during aerial operations.

On February 24th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning operation around a calving area in Humboldt County. The cattle producers previously reported that two calves (valued at \$1,500) had been killed by coyotes. The aerial crew arrived and observed several coyotes surrounding a calf and repeatedly mauling the calf. The aerial crew removed the offending coyotes and to their surprise the calf stood up. Talk about timing. The aerial crew promptly removed seven additional coyotes for the day. WS Peter provided ground support during aerial operations.

On February 27th and February 28th, DS Spencer conducted a field inspection with WS Ben Miller on the Washoe County Mule deer and Bighorn sheep project (hunt unit 014). The duo hiked into some remote areas to check equipment and look for predatory sign, which was scant. WS Miller will continue to protect mule deer and bighorn sheep until the protection efforts cease in June.



During the month of February, Wildlife Biologist (WB) Zack Bowers continued to deter wildlife from using/crossing the airfield of a Churchill County military installation. In an effort to keep these species from crossing the airfield, WB Bowers has utilized harassment with several methods. February brought some much needed precipitation to the area, which limited access to some areas due to muddy conditions. WB Bowers harassed five species of birds from on and around the airfield including horned larks, great blue herons and mallards. WB Bowers also lethally removed three coyotes and two black-tailed jackrabbits from on and around the airfield.



Some species of birds are starting to show up in numbers around the valley. Great blue herons, mallards, mourning doves and flocks of mixed blackbirds have all been observed in increasing numbers on and around the airfield. WB Bowers completed some maintenance on the propane cannons and all are up and operational. The Airfield Manager and WB Bowers tested the Long Range Acoustic Device (LRAD) and are looking forward to having another tool to add to the tool box. The LRAD provides a very intense and directionally focused sound that will hopefully deter birds from crossing the airfield. WB Bowers is in the process of finding sounds for the LRAD that will hopefully deter species of Bird Animal

Strike Hazard (BASH) concern from crossing the airfield.

Throughout the month of February, WB Luke Barto removed five horned larks, four yellow bellied marmots, two rock doves (feral pigeons), six striped skunks and one feral/free ranging cat from a local airport to protect aviation safety. All feral/free ranging domestic animals captured at the above mentioned airport were transferred to Washoe County Regional Animal Services. No bird strikes were reported at the above mentioned airport for the month of February.



Non-lethal methods of dispersal using pyrotechnics were also utilized to reduce the hazards found on/around the airfield. A total of 116 mallard ducks and 136 Canada geese were dispersed from airport property to reduce wildlife threats to aviation throughout February.

Continued surveillance is part of an integrated approach to wildlife management and a good way to track wildlife movements. Two point count surveys and two off-site surveys were conducted during the month of February at the above mentioned airport. A total of 19 species were identified between the two survey methods.

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

March 4th, 2014, Nevada Board of Agriculture Meeting, State Director (SD) Mark Jensen to attend.

March 6th, 2014, N-3 Grazing Board Meeting in Fallon, SD Jensen and DS Spencer to attend.

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