

January 2016

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 January, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **8.5** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$269.6** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$7.6** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **94** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$6,960** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$12,123** in damage to natural and agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During January, coyotes accounted for **\$12,123** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **770** 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 January, **227** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of January, 2016.

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 29th, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Scott Little confirmed the loss of one ewe, valued at \$250, to coyote predation. The damage occurred on a band of sheep in northern Nye County. Using calling and snares, WS Little was able to remove the two offending coyotes during the first two weeks of January. No further losses have been reported and WS Little continues to monitor the area for predation issues. WS Little also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On January 6th, WS Allen Eldridge confirmed the loss of one ewe, valued at \$250, to coyote predation. Sensing the offending coyotes were still in the immediate area, WS Eldridge made some call stands to remove a pair of coyotes near the kill. No further losses have been reported. WS Eldridge also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On January 6th, WS Mac Crome confirmed the loss of three ewes, valued at \$900, to coyote predation. The damage occurred in western Elko County. WS Crome was able to remove one adult coyote near the kills by calling and shooting. No further losses have been reported. WS Crome also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations.



On January 8th, the East District office received a call from a sheep producer in White Pine County that reported he had lost twelve adult sheep valued at \$3,000 to coyote predation. During the week of January 11th, the Ely plane responded to the location twice, removing eight coyotes. No further losses have been reported and the area will be monitored for future losses.



On January 12th, WS Eldridge confirmed the loss of one ewe, valued at \$250, to coyote predation. WS Eldridge requested the assistance of the Ely plane. The Ely plane responded to the location in eastern White Pine County and removed five coyotes near the kill. No further losses have been reported. WS Eldridge also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On January 13th, the Elko office received a call concerning the loss of one calf, valued at \$800, to coyote predation. The cattle rancher reported that he had just found the fresh kill and had been seeing many coyotes in the pastures where he is just starting to calve out. The damage occurred on a ranch in central Elko County. On January 14th, the Elko plane responded to the location. During the morning's flight, 14 coyotes were removed. No further losses have been reported.

WS Casey Shields and Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler spent the month of January protecting Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep on a Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) funded project in eastern White Pine County. Despite very deep snow conditions, they were able to remove an adult female and an adult male lion in very close proximity to the sheep. The project will continue for several more weeks.



WS Dayne Barnes was sent down to Arizona for the month of January to help remove feral swine. WS Barnes was able to remove eight adult pigs using shooting and spotlighting. The removal efforts were challenging as the vegetation is so thick that you can hear them moving about, but can't see them for a shot. WS Barnes will continue to assist the AZ program as time and conditions allow.



Both the Ely plane and the Elko plane were very busy during the month of January. Both planes responded to many livestock depredation calls as well as flew several times for NDOW projects protecting vulnerable mule deer and antelope from excessive predation. Both aerial crews worked several weekends during the month with all the calls received.

On January 21st, the Ely plane responded to a call concerning the loss of two calves, valued at \$800 each, to coyote predation in Nye County. During the morning flight, the plane was able to remove eight coyotes, bringing an end to the damage. No further losses have been reported.

West District



On January 8th, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and Crew Member (CM) Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning flight in Pershing County around several calving areas. One calving area was losing a calf a week before the aerial crew's arrival. During the flight, two coyotes were removed. WS Doug Koepke provided ground support during aerial operations and to date no further livestock losses have been reported. Cattle producers across all of western Nevada continue to request assistance from the aerial crew on a daily basis.

During the week of January 11th thru the 15th, WS Ben Miller continued to protect California bighorn sheep in northern Washoe County (hunt unit 011) from lion predation. On January 14th, WS Miller was inspecting an area near the Sheldon Antelope refuge when he discovered the remains of a freshly killed mule deer buck. WS Miller back tracked the lion tracks and found where they traveled from the Sheldon refuge and killed the buck not far from where the bighorn sheep had been wintering. The lion's tracks were all similar in size and with fresh snow on the ground, WS Miller decided to trail the lions on foot. WS Miller hadn't gone too far when he spotted a lion walking up a hillside, he quickly dispatched the juvenile male with his rifle. A short time later, WS Miller spotted a second lion crossing a hillside and he promptly dispatched the additional juvenile male. WS Miller noticed a third lion track headed south, so he went back to his side by side for some water and rode to the last location of the tracks. WS Miller followed the trail and basically walked the lion down where it eventually treed and removed. WS Miller stays in good shape checking equipment which serves him well on this project.



On January 14th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several cattle producers in Humboldt County. During the flight, 46 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground support during aerial operations and located several of the coyotes in the livestock and directed the plane towards their location. The flying conditions have been dismal with the poor weather. Several of the ranchers were present during aerial operations and were very pleased with the protection efforts the aerial crew and ground crew provided. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

During the month of January, WS Carl Frey was placing equipment around winter sheep bands and calving areas in Lyon and Douglas Counties. During the month, WS Frey continued to use call boxes to draw several depredating coyotes to his equipment. WS Frey also placed raven decoys around the call box to better draw coyotes. WS Frey has noticed that coyotes are being captured at a faster rate with the use of the call box. WS Frey has a wildlife education background and a habit of thinking outside the box when it comes to protecting livestock. WS Frey will continue to protect livestock in several counties in western Nevada.



On January 15th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight in Washoe County around several calving areas and a sheep producer getting ready to winter lamb that have experienced historic losses. During the flight, eight coyotes were removed. WS Koepke and a California WS Trapper provided ground support during aerial operations and to date, no livestock losses have been reported. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On January 22th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight in Humboldt County around a calving area. A cattle producer reported that three calves (valued at \$1,500) had been

killed by coyotes. During the first 40 minutes of the flight, 31 coyotes were removed and the aerial crew noticed that most of the coyotes were removed around 200+ mule deer living right next to the cows. The aerial crew ended the day with 51 coyotes removed. Two of the ranchers were present during the flight and were amazed and pleased to have the coyotes removed. WS Peter provided ground support during aerial operations and no further livestock losses have been reported. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On January 25th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight in Lander County around a calving area of a long time grazing board member. During the flight, 11 coyotes were removed. WS George Hansen provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On January 27th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight in Washoe County around a sheep producer who just started lambing. During the flight, 10 coyotes were removed near the lambing area with WS Koepke and a California WS' Wildlife Specialist provided ground support. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On January 28th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight in Humboldt County around several calving areas and a sheep producer. During the flight, 18 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection efforts will be ongoing.



On January 27th, District Supervisor (DS) Jack Spencer provided M-44 training for WS Frey around a calving area in Douglas County. DS Spencer and WS Frey placed M-44s at several locations where ranchers requested their use. DS Spencer was the Wildlife Specialist in this area in the 1990s, as such, he passed information that he recalled to WS Frey. WS Frey has several ranchers requesting M-44s on their calving and lambing grounds, so WS Frey will stay busy for the unforeseeable future.

During the month of January, Wildlife Biologist (WB) Zack 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 were dispersed from the airfield. Two species of mammals and one species of bird were lethally removed. Wildlife numbers on and around the airfield are about average compared to the previous four January's. Species showing increased numbers compared to previous January's are common ravens. Although not showing increased numbers in structured surveys, general observations and sign indicate high numbers of horned larks and coyotes on and near the airfield.



During the month of January, there were 10 incidents of feathers/remains found either on aircraft or runway. It is believed that some of the remains found on the airfield could be associated with remains found on aircraft. Most of the remains have been identified by the Smithsonian as horned

larks. One of the incidents has been confirmed by the Smithsonian as involving a great blue heron. Survey data as well as general observations show that horned lark numbers peak on and near the airfield in January and February. Limited success has been achieved dispersing horned larks from the airfield this winter. This resulted in the decision to lethally remove some individuals in order to reinforce the nonlethal harassment. Six horned larks were removed which, for the time being, has convinced the rest of the flock to spend their time elsewhere.

WB Bowers noticed a large influx in coyote activity on and near the airfield during the month of January. This was evidenced by sign on the airfield, crawl holes under the perimeter fence as well as sightings by WB Bowers and other airfield personnel. In an effort to minimize chances of a strike involving a coyote, WB Bowers removed 11 coyotes during the month of January. This will not only benefit aviation safety, but will also likely benefit many of the neighboring property owners who are currently in the process of lambing and calving.

During the month of January, WB Hunter Moyles continued protection work on 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 disperse 784 birds and mammals from the airfield. Wildlife dispersed from the airfield included seven 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 had noticed an increase in Canada geese, and ducks on surrounding properties. Increased hazing will be implemented to keep the large geese away from the airfield. During the month of January, WB Moyles hazed 747 Canada Geese, and 32 duck species off of airport property. Methods used to deter wildlife included the use of pyrotechnics, crackers 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.

On January 5th, WB Moyles helped with the annual NDOW mid-winter waterfowl survey. Total waterfowl surveyed for the day was 12,282. There were 18 different waterfowl species surveyed. This is a little less than what was surveyed in 2015.

During the first week of January, WB Moyles continued to notice high numbers of Canada geese on and around the airfield. On January 7th, WB Moyles reinforced non-lethal methods by dispatching two Canada geese from a large group that had been landing on the airfield. During the next few weeks, WB Moyles noticed significantly fewer geese landing on the airfield.

Along with several non-lethal harassment techniques, WB Moyles also had to deploy some lethal means of control to reduce the threat of wildlife strikes to aircraft at the prior mentioned airport in Reno. During the month, WB Moyles removed some offending species for public safety including: one skunk by utilizing trapping, and shooting. Aircraft protection methodology will continue to be implemented 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 January 8th, DS Joe Bennett, State Director (SD) Mark Jensen, CM Wayne Rowley and Instructor Pilot Josh Pavia attended the N-1 Grazing Board meeting in Elko, Nevada.

On January 13th, SD Jensen attended the N-2 Grazing Board meeting in Winnemucca.

On January 15th-16th, SD Jensen attended and presented at the Pest Management Association Meeting in Las Vegas.

On January 21st, SD Jensen attended the Predatory Animal and Rodent Committee (PARC) Meeting in Reno.

On January 25th-28th, SD Jensen attended the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) meeting and presented at the Management team meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona.

On January 15th, DS Spencer, WB Moyles, and two California USDA Wildlife Services employees met with an Air Force Chief Safety Officer at a military installation on the Nevada/California border that has had a number of wildlife strikes to aircraft over the past ten years and need assistance in addressing the threats. WB Moyles will be providing assistance to this installation, as well as two others. There will be more meetings in the future regarding clearance and needs.

This fall and winter, WS and NDOW worked 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 were focused in these watersheds. During the reporting period, all sampling goals were achieved. Over 300 samples were collected from the Lower Colorado-Lake Mead watershed by East District personnel. Many thanks to the waterfowlers for their participation and patience. 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

February 18th, PARC meeting in Elko. SD Jensen and DS Bennett to attend.



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