

January 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 January, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **6.6** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$108** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$8.9** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **73** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$13,441** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$12,608** in damage to other agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During January, coyotes accounted for **\$8,750** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **450** 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, **12** 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 January 3rd, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Scott MacDonald received a call concerning the loss of four adult ewe sheep to a mountain lion. The rancher said one of his herders saw the lion while it was killing the sheep, during the daytime. The value of the sheep was placed at \$800. WS MacDonald contacted Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler and together they responded to the Baker, Nevada location the following morning. Tracks confirmed everything the herder had witnessed. MLS Buhler tracked the offending lion for two days and finally treed the 90 pound male lion after it returned and killed another ewe valued at \$200. No further losses have been reported and

the lion was skinned and turned into the Ely, Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) Office. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was provided in an effort to help prevent future losses. The sheep producer phoned the East District Supervisor and expressed his appreciation for all the help he received from WS MacDonald and MLS Buhler.

On January 6th, WS Mac Crome received a call concerning the loss of two ewes valued at \$500. WS Crome traveled to the location south of Wendover, Nevada and confirmed that coyotes had killed both ewes. Over the next few days, WS Crome shot one adult coyote as it fed on one of the sheep and called another in near the kills. On January 10th, the Ely plane also responded to the location and removed one additional coyote, bringing an end to the damage. No further losses have been reported and WS Crome will continue to monitor the sheep for losses. WS Crome also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to prevent more predation.

On January 14th, the East District Office received a call concerning a problem with coyotes and ravens.



The cattle rancher reported that coyotes had killed 10 calves valued at \$7,500 and that ravens had killed another three calves valued at \$2,250. The rancher said that every one of his newborn calves were being harassed and pecked on by ravens. The rancher reported that he would observe up to twenty ravens near each newborn calf. On January



16th, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett traveled to the ranch in western Nye County and counted at least 100 ravens near the cattle. One newborn calf was observed with fourteen ravens harassing it. During the morning, DS Bennett called and shot two coyotes and sight shot a third coyote near the calves. On January 22nd, the Ely plane responded to the location and removed an additional six coyotes near the calves. DS Bennett also placed out hard boiled chicken eggs treated with DRC-1339 in an effort

to remove the offending ravens. DS Bennett found one calf that had been freshly killed by the ravens. Both its eyes and umbilical cord had been pecked on and removed. Seven ravens were observed on the calf. As raven numbers continue to increase across Nevada, DS Bennett anticipates more and more need to control ravens to protect valuable livestock. DS Bennett also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to prevent future losses.

On January 18th, WS Matt Spires verified the loss of one adult ewe sheep to coyote predation in White Pine County (loss valued at \$128). In response to the depredation, WS Spires continued to check/set ground equipment and utilized calling to remove two coyotes toward the end of the month.

On January 16th, a call was received at the East District Office concerning a possible problem with a mountain lion. On January 17th, MLS Buhler responded to the location near Panaca, Nevada. MLS Buhler confirmed that a lion had killed three domestic ewe sheep valued at \$750. WS Buhler placed six of his well-trained tracking and trailing hounds on the trail. After a short race, MLS Buhler was able to tree and remove the depredating adult female lion. A necropsy of the lion revealed sheep meat and wool in its stomach. No further losses have been reported and the sheep producer was very grateful for the quick response.

On January 23rd, the East District office received a call concerning the loss of three ewe sheep, valued at \$750, to coyote predation. On January 27th, the Ely plane responded to the location in Lincoln County. During the morning's flight, six coyotes were removed including one on the kills. No further losses have been reported.

Throughout the month of January, WS Derril Fry was working to prevent livestock losses to predation for his cooperators. WS Fry utilized calling and continued to run equipment, which resulted in the removal of seven coyotes and no reported losses.

During the month of January, WS Scott Little worked to prevent livestock losses from coyotes. Although no losses had occurred, WS Little utilized traps and snares to remove/prevent ten coyotes from depredating livestock. WS Little will continue to protect livestock in his work area.

WS Randy Evans continued to protect wintering livestock along the NV-UT border from predation during January. Including some losses from December, eight ewe sheep were lost to coyotes (valued at \$2,000). In response to the depredations, WS Evans removed six coyotes with the use of calling and trail snares. Protection efforts are ongoing.

January was an action packed month for Pilot Ken Baer, as he had returned to duty during the reporting period. To get Pilot Baer back in the air protecting livestock, a local check flight was conducted with an Instructor Pilot, followed by a trip to the training center. We, and the local livestock producers, are very thankful to have Pilot Baer back to work. Welcome back Ken!



West District

On January 3rd, a Reno resident reported that a lion had killed a deer near their house. DS Jack Spencer reported the situation to the NDOW which decided that if the lion stayed in the area it would be removed. Eventually the lion moved out of the urban area. Technical assistance was provided to the homeowner.

During the month of January, WS John Peter was busy addressing coyote complaints around calving areas in Humboldt County. Most of the complaints were that large groups of coyotes were moving in around the cows as they started calving and two locations had previous calf losses. On January 14th, WS Peter removed six coyotes by utilizing M-44s around one calving area which resulted in the removal of 10 coyotes. WS Peter will continue to protect livestock in his large work area.



On January 6th, Pilot Wes Gossard and Crew Member (CM) Brandon VanderMay conducted aerial operations around several calving areas in Lander County. During the flight, 12 coyotes were removed right in around the calves. To date, no calf losses have been reported in the calving areas. WS Peter provided ground support, during aerial operations.



On January 8th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations around several calving areas in Lander County that have a history of calf losses. During the flight, 16 coyotes were removed right in around the calves. To date, no calf losses have been reported in the calving areas. WS Peter provided ground support during aerial operations.

On January 8th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay could not conduct aerial operations because of poor weather conditions, so the air crew modified M-44s and welded M44 stakes for the field. When the aerial crew is grounded during adverse weather they stay busy with various projects.

On January 9th, a farmer from Lyon County reported that each year they suffer massive crop losses caused by horned larks eating their lettuce and spinach crops. Last year the large farming operation reported that horned larks caused \$145,000 in damage last year. DS Spencer provided technical assistance; however, their previous non-lethal measures have failed. DS Spencer also recommended that the farmer obtain a depredation permit from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), as they are responsible for the management of horned larks and migratory birds in general.

On January 14th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations around several calving areas in Lander County that have a history of calf losses. During the flight, 13 coyotes were removed right in around the calves. To date, no calf losses have been reported in the calving areas, but ranchers reported coyotes starting to harass newborn calves. WS George Hansen provided ground support, during aerial operations.

During the week of January 13-17, WS Ben Miller was busy checking trail snares and call boxes around mule deer and bighorn sheep on the Washoe County Mule Deer project (hunt unit 014). On January 17th, WS Miller checked equipment in a canyon often frequented by bighorn sheep and upon inspection removed a large 140 pound male lion and a large female lion with the use of trail snares. During the week, WS Miller also removed seven coyotes near the high elevation deer wintering areas. WS Miller also witnessed the largest herds of mule deer on the protection area since protection efforts started.



WS Miller will continue to protect mule deer and bighorn sheep till the projects ending date in June.

On January 21st, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations around several winter sheep bands in Washoe County and right along the California border. During the flight, 18 coyotes were removed right in around the sheep. WS Doug Koepke and CA-WS George Affonso provided ground support during aerial operations. The West District works with several of the California trappers along the border and rightly so, as several allotments cross the state line. Protection efforts will be ongoing. The livestock producers were pleased with the protection efforts.

On January 24th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations around several winter sheep bands in Lyon County. During the flight, five coyotes were removed right in around the sheep. To date, very few coyote problems have been reported in the area, however, the lambing season will be commencing in a month for some sheep producers in the area. WS Nick Smith provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On January 27th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations around several calving areas in Humboldt County that have a history of calf losses. During the flight, 31 coyotes were removed right in around the calves. The ranchers were very pleased with the protection efforts. WS Peter provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

During the month of January, the State Office was flooded with coyote complaints from Clark County. Many of the calls involved coyotes killing pets (six dogs valued at \$3,000) and livestock in suburban areas. There is currently no trapping position in Clark County; however, DS Spencer has been working with local businesses trying to fund a position in the Las Vegas area. Non-lethal technical assistance has been provided for Clark County residents and though the information helps, a person on the ground at the problem area is the best solution.

During the month of January, DS Spencer provided technical assistance to four homeowners, regarding lion complaints. One individual in south Reno had two lions jump her fence, killed and eat on her 80 pound dog prior to her seeing the lions in her back yard. Several other residents had lions kill various livestock in suburban areas. Lion complaints have been on the rise this past year.

During the month of January, WS Smith was busy running equipment in Douglas, Lyon and Carson Counties, removing coyotes near livestock. Douglas County has had several new cooperators requesting assistance from WS Smith. WS Smith will continue to protect livestock in several counties.



During the month of January, Wildlife Biologist (WB) Zack Bowers continued to deter wildlife from using/crossing the airfield. In an effort to keep these species from crossing the airfield, WB Bowers has utilized harassment with several methods. January saw an increase in temperatures, with mostly dry conditions with the exception of some rain/snow at the end of the month. WB Bowers harassed seven species of birds from on and around the airfield including horned larks, great blue herons and red-tailed hawks. WB Bowers also lethally removed two coyotes and one raccoon from on and around the airfield. In addition to improving aviation safety, the neighboring livestock owners will benefit from this as well.

Throughout the month of January, WB Barto removed one coyote, one feral/free ranging cat, two large adult raccoons, four striped skunks and three feral pigeons from a local airport. Domestic animals captured are transferred to Washoe County Regional Animal Services. No wildlife strikes were reported during the reporting period.

Non-lethal methods of dispersal using pyrotechnics were also utilized to reduce the hazards found on/around the airfield. Specifically, 97 ducks and 85 geese were dispersed from airport property to reduce wildlife threats to aviation throughout January.

Continued wildlife surveillance is part of an integrated approach to reduce threats to aviation safety.



As such, three on-site “point count” surveys and one “night” survey was conducted. One off-site survey was also conducted to monitor wildlife usage in the General Safety Zone.



Ongoing protection efforts from January resulted in the removal of one adult female coyote from the above mentioned airport. The coyote was located while conducting daily perimeter patrols and was found gaining access through an open culvert. Following the removal of the coyote, the culvert was excluded to prevent any other wildlife from entering.

New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report

Valuing and Investing in Employees

Nothing to Report

Information and Communication

On January 31st, DS Spencer met with three sheep ranchers in Lyon County regarding the loss of positions in the State and what they could do to help expand trapping positions in the West District. The ranchers hope to meet with the Governor about predation issues in Lyon County. Last lambing season, the west district had several hundred more lamb losses because there are just not enough trapping positions to adequately service all the lambing areas. The ranchers were also interested in protecting the CA/NV



Bi-State sage-grouse (USFWS *proposed* threatened species) and pointed out the increase in raven numbers. Of interest, the Partners In Flight (PIF) model estimates the Nevada population of ravens has increase to over 190,000 birds (ravens now outnumber sage-grouse in Nevada), which is detri-



mental to raising newborn livestock. DS Spencer referred all sage-grouse inquiries to NDOW, as NDOW is the managing department for sage-grouse in Nevada.

On January 7th, DS Spencer conducted a mid-winter waterfowl survey along with several NDOW Biologists in the Reno-Sparks area. Most years over 10,000 waterfowl species are counted by biologists in a morning census. The population census has many benefits, including monitoring for change in abundance near airports. Large Canada goose numbers in 2013 were 8,968 and 8,984 in 2014...so, not much of a change.

Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report

Future Meetings and Events

February 13, 2014, Sage Brush Ecosystem Council Meeting, SD Jensen to attend.

March 4, 2014, Nevada Board of Agriculture Meeting, SD Jensen to attend.



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