

June 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 June, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **4.4** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$76** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$7** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **1,811** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$52,301** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$10,967** in damage to natural and agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During June, coyotes accounted for **\$10,817** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **149** 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 June, **20** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of June, 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 June 2nd, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Scott MacDonald confirmed the loss of two lambs to coyote predation. The value of the lambs was \$300. WS MacDonald set several foot hold traps near the location of the kills. One week later, the coyotes returned and killed two more lambs valued at \$300. As the coyotes were leaving the band, WS MacDonald caught them in traps near the kill site. No further losses have been reported. WS MacDonald also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.



During the months of May and June, WS Randy Evans confirmed almost \$1,000 damage to alfalfa fields by badgers. The badgers had caused extensive damage by burrowing and digging in the fields. The badger holes also posed a threat to horses and other livestock stepping in the holes and causing injuries. WS Evans placed several traps around the field to remove six badgers, work is ongoing. WS Evans also provided technical assistance to help prevent future losses.

WS Mac Crome has moved his camp to northern Elko County in an effort to protect several bands of sheep and many cows and calves in the area. WS Crome has removed at least ten coyotes in pastures that have experienced high losses over the years. Removing coyotes in areas with high historical losses just prior to the livestock's arrival has been very beneficial in the past. WS Crome will continue to monitor the livestock in his designated work area.

On June 8th, WS Allen Eldridge confirmed the loss of eight lambs to coyote predation. The value of the lambs was placed at \$1,200. The damage occurred on a band of sheep in central White Pine County. WS Eldridge set several traps near the location of the kills. During the next two weeks, WS Eldridge was able to remove two adult coyotes near the band. Knowing more coyotes were in the area, WS Eldridge requested the assistance of the Ely plane. The plane was able to remove four additional coyotes, ending the damage. WS Eldridge also provided technical assistance to help prevent future losses.



West District



On June 15th and 16th, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and Crew Member (CM) Brandon VanderMay conducted a two day aerial operation around populations of antelope in Nye County to increase recruitment as part of a Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) funded project. Despite wind and dust, six coyotes were removed near the antelope. The aerial crew estimated half of the antelope does had month+ old fawns present with them. WS Ben Miller provided ground support during aerial operations.

During the month of June, WS John Peter rode mule-back protecting several bands of sheep in Humboldt County. WS Peter removed one coyote by utilizing M-44s and one utilizing a firearm.

District Supervisor (DS) Jack Spencer provided technical assistance to a military installation in Clark county Nevada, to help them reduce the threat of wildlife strikes to aircraft. To that end, the facility has recently committed to funding an airport biologist to conduct a formal wildlife hazard assessment to identify wildlife threats to aircraft and from that draft a wildlife hazard management plan to address the assessed threats.



WS George Hansen spent the month protecting lamb bands from predation in Lander County. It is hopeful that at some point the State will bring back the Austin trapping position that was lost in the down turned economy. Until then, WS Hansen will make do with what he has.

During the month of June, WS Doug Koepke transitioned from working lamb bands in Washoe County to lamb bands in Pershing County and farm flocks of sheep in Churchill County. In the summer months, WS Koepke receives a lot of requests for help in the Fallon area. WS Koepke will continue to protect his many livestock cooperators.



During the month of June, new part time employee WS Cameron Green (pictured) assisted WB Hunter Moyles in several projects aimed at protecting aviation safety from wildlife strikes. Recently red-tailed hawks have moved in around the airfield, which provided WB Moyles with the opportunity to show WS Green tools and methods utilized to remove raptors to locations that don't result in damage to the aircraft and death to the birds. WS Green has been working out well and will continue to work as funding allows. Airport protection efforts will be ongoing.

During the month of June, 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. A total of 446 birds from 21 species were dispersed from the airfield. Wildlife numbers are finally starting to subside, but there are still quite a number of species on and around the airfield. This is primarily due to irrigation season and an overall increase in water levels compared to the last couple of years.

Also in June, there were three reports of bird strikes or remains found on the runway at above mentioned facility. Two of the cases have been confirmed by the Smithsonian Institute as involving a cliff swallow and a house sparrow. Identification on the third case is still pending. Fortunately none of these cases were damaging.

Again in June, WB Bowers spent a considerable amount of time picking up and disposing of roadkill on and around the airfield. This is important this time of year as roadkill attracts turkey vultures to

the area which often results in the turkey vultures being in conflicting airspace with aircraft. In addition to turkey vultures, roadkill can also attract other opportunistic scavengers such as black-billed magpies, common ravens, red-tailed hawks and Swainsons' hawks. Of interest, 153 roadkill carcasses were picked up and disposed of during the reporting period.

During the month of June, WB Moyles continued protection work on an international airport in Reno and Nevada Air National Guard installations. To that end, WB Moyles continued to deter wildlife from using/crossing the airfield property by employing several methods of harassment. WB Moyles dispersed 79 birds and mammals from the airfield. Wildlife dispersed from the airfield included 12 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 first week of June, the 31st annual goose round up was conducted to reduce the threat of urban geese striking aircraft. During the effort there were approximately 15 volunteers from the NV 152nd Airlift Wing (ANG), seven NDOW employees and six USDAWS personnel. The annual goose round up was conducted at four city parks, two golf courses and a private pond. In total there were 185 geese captured, banded and transferred to NDOW custody for later translocation to State wildlife management areas. Thanks to all hands that made the 31st goose round up a success.



During the month of June WB Moyles conducted an initial wildlife hazard assessment on an off-site drop zone that the military uses on a weekly basis. During the visit, WB Moyles observed around 17 different species of mammalian and avian species. The most common species found were Common Ravens, Horned Larks, and Red-tailed hawks. The work beginning on the off-site facility couldn't come at a better time. During the last week of June and first week of July there has been two bird strikes, one with damage.

On June 7th, WB Moyles was contacted by airport personnel asking for assistance with a bird problem with hawks in the hangers. WB Moyles responded and hand caught four American Kestrels from the hanger. He later transferred them to the Wild Animal Infirmary in Carson City where they will be rehabbed and translocated to a safer environment. WB Moyles will continue to monitor the area for nesting activity, and continue to disperse birds to make it less attractive for nesting.

On June 22nd, WB Moyles was contacted by airport property managers in regard to marmot damage one of the tenants was experiencing. WB Moyles responded to the call and removed 16 marmots using body grip traps and shooting. WB Moyles will continue to monitor the area for marmot damage. To date, to reduce the threat of raptor strikes to arriving and departing aircraft, he has removed over 100 marmots from this area which is directly north of the runway.

Along with several non-lethal harassment techniques, WB Moyles also had to deploy some lethal means of control to reduce aircraft strike potential at a large airport in Reno. During the month, WB Moyles removed some offending species for public safety including: 16 marmots, one pigeon, two Horned larks and 10 CA ground squirrels utilizing trapping, and shooting. WB Moyles will continue to implement the wildlife hazard management plan to reduce the potential of wildlife strikes to aircraft.

Valuing and Investing in Employees

On June 7th, WS Mac Crome, WS Scott MacDonald and Budget Technician Jennifer Mowbray received extra effort awards and WS Randy Evans received the East District Employee of the Year award (pictured left to right).



Information and Communication

On June 7th, the East District held its annual district meeting at the East District office in Ely, Nevada. Several required trainings including pesticide use and firearms training were covered during the day long meeting. Several awards were also presented during the meeting. A nice BBQ lamb lunch was provided and enjoyed by all.

On June 17th, DS Joe Bennett attended the N-4 Grazing Board meeting in Panaca, Nevada. Grazing Boards typically help fund aerial operations in the respective grazing allotments. Meetings such as this are a good way for Wildlife Service’s personnel to listen to ranchers concerns and needs. The meeting went very well.

Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report

Future Meetings and Events

July 20th and 21st, West District Annual Meeting in Reno.



USDA APHIS

Wildlife Services



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