

June 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

775-851-4848

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 **4.3** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$60.4** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$6.8** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **213** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$83,119** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$4,588** in damage to utilities and other agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During June, coyotes accounted for **\$3,338** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **90** 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, **2** samples were processed.

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

During the first week of June, a sheep producer just west of Ely reported very heavy coyote predation on newborn lambs. The producer reported that at least 14 lambs were confirmed killed by coyotes and the sheep rancher



reported several more were missing and presumed carried off by the coyotes. Starting on June 2nd, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Scott Little



traveled to the location and confirmed the losses, valued at more than \$2,100. WS Little used his horse and well trained coyote decoy dogs to search the surrounding hills for the offending coyotes. During the week, WS Little was able to remove three adult coyotes by calling and shooting to bring an end to the damage. This was no easy task since all three coyotes were extremely educated, older coyotes that had no doubt caused many problems in past years at this location since the area has experienced historically high losses. WS Little also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses. No further losses have been reported and the sheep producer was very happy with the assistance he received from WS Little and the Wildlife Services Program.

During the first week of June, a sheep producer reported that coyotes had killed four lambs, valued at \$600. Crew Member (CM) Wayne Rowley and WS Mac Crome traveled to the location in central Elko County and confirmed the losses. During the next several days, CM Rowley and WS Crome used their well-trained coyote decoy dogs and their horses to search for the offending coyotes. Two adult coyotes and two coyote dens were removed near the location of the kills. On June 4th, the Ely plane also responded to the location and removed one more adult coyote. No further losses have been reported and the sheep producer was very pleased with the assistance he received from CM Rowley and WS Crome. Without their hard work, losses would have been much higher since the producer had lost more than 25 lambs at this same location the previous year. Stopping this kind of damage in a timely matter is very important to lamb production in Nevada, as well as the economy.

On June 10th, a sheep producer in White Pine County contacted the East District Office concerning a problem with coyotes. The rancher reported that a coyote had killed one lamb and injured another so badly that it had to be put down. The rancher reported seeing a very large coyote at the location of the kill, but was unable to shoot it. WS Randy Evans was nearby and responded to the location immediately and confirmed the damage. The value of the two lambs was placed at \$300. WS Evans set several pieces of ground equipment near the kill site. On the next visit, WS Evans trapped a very large adult male coyote. The coyote was extremely old with well-worn teeth. No further losses have been reported and the

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rancher was very pleased with the quick response by WS Evans.

On June 11th, a sheep producer in western White Pine County reported the loss of one lamb to coyote predation. On June 12th, WS Little traveled to the remote location and confirmed that a coyote had killed the lamb, valued at \$150. Over the course of the next few days, WS Little was able to remove two adult coyotes near the kill using his well trained dogs and calling. To date, no further losses have been reported and the sheep producer was very pleased with the help he received from WS Little and the Wildlife Services Program. WS Little also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On June 16th, Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler received a report that a mountain lion had killed a calf and injured its mother. The mother cow had very deep claw marks on her face. The claw marks most likely occurred as the cow attempted to defend the calf from the lion attack. MLS Buhler traveled to the location in central White Pine County and confirmed the damage. It appeared that the lion had killed the calf and severely scratched the cow's face as it tried to defend the calf. MLS Buhler started hunting the offending lion and on June 19th, was able to remove the four year old male lion with the use of six well trained tracking dogs. Extremely dry conditions hindered MLS efforts but MLS Buhler was able to remove the offending lion. No further losses have been reported.



On June 16th, WS Crome confirmed the loss of three lambs, valued at \$450. The damage occurred on a remote band of sheep near the Idaho border in Elko County. WS Crome set several traps near the kills. WS Crome also requested the assistance of the Elko plane. On June 19th, the Elko plane responded to the location. During the morning's flight, the plane was able to remove a pair of adult coyotes near the kill site and also located a den that was later removed by WS Crome. To date, no further losses have been reported in the area.

On June 16th, WS Crome confirmed the loss of two lambs valued at \$300, to mountain lion predation. The sheep herder actually observed the lion feeding on one of the freshly killed lambs. The damage occurred on a remote band of sheep near the Idaho border in Elko County. WS Crome set six trail snares in near the kills. On June 24th, WS captured the offending lion as it returned to the kills. The lion was an adult female that weighed approximately 90 pounds. No further losses have been reported and WS Crome continues to monitor the area for predation issues.



On June 24th, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett conducted a day long field inspection with WS Crome. Several bands of sheep were checked and a number of traps and snares were inspected.

The field inspection took place near the Idaho border in Elko County. Field inspections are an important part of the Wildlife Services program and ensure that the employees have properly functioning equipment, a safe working situation and that all policies and directives are being followed. It's also a great opportunity to conduct cooperators contacts with farmers and ranchers.

West District

During the first two week of June, the annual Canada goose round-up took place. Canada geese are captured in the Truckee Meadows each June when they're molting and once captured, are turned over to the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) where they translocate the birds to State Wildlife Management areas in eastern Nevada. The main purpose to capture these non-migrating geese is because they pose a serious threat to aircraft for a large airport in Reno. NDOW and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Wildlife Biologists (WB), Washoe County Vector Control and WS' DS Jack Spencer, WB Luke Barto and WS Nick Smith employed the use of a large funnel/drive corral trap that resulted in the capture of 479 geese. This is the 29th year that Canada goose capture efforts have been conducted by the task force.



On June 12th, Pilot Wes Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around five lamb bands in Lyon County. During the flight, one coyote was removed. The coyote was walking straight towards the lamb band when the air crew stopped it 100 yards from the sheep. There have been very few problems lately for these lamb bands and WS Smith provided ground support during aerial operations.

On June 13th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around two lamb bands in Lander County. WS George Hansen had howled the previous day and had an idea where a group of problem coyotes were hanging out. When the air crew arrived right at first light, WS Hansen sent them to the pre-determined location. In a short



amount of time the air crew removed three coyotes. WS Hansen had also placed traps in the immediate area, resulting in the removal of an additional large male coyote. This area has had some periodic coyote problems but as soon as the livestock producer bunched the sheep into bands the predation losses slowed. WS Hansen will continue to protect these sheep bands.

During the month of June, WS Smith assisted NDOW and livestock producers in Lyon and Douglas

Counties with several black bear complaints. WS Smith provided both direct control and technical assistance depending on the severity of the black bear call. WS Smith will continue to assist NDOW with black bears when they request help.

During the month of June, numerous coyote calls have been received in Washoe and Clark Counties. Many of the problem calls are from urban areas where unmolested coyotes literally walk the streets killing and maiming pets. During the first week of June, most coyotes leave the dens and move pups to secluded areas where there is sufficient food and water. The caloric intake for a coyote family increases as the pups continue to grow and pets typically require less handling time than native prey and provide more calories per effort as well. Non-lethal technical assistance is offered to citizens, however, as more shooting and trapping restrictions are enacted in urban and suburban areas, coyotes are protected and more damage occurs.

On June 25th, DS Spencer conducted a routine ride along with WB Zack Bowers at a military installation in Churchill County. This facility, when running at full capacity, is the 27th busiest flying facility in the United States and encompasses considerable acreage. Because of its large size and remote location, there are a host of wildlife species that pose a threat to aircraft. Recently, red-tailed hawks and great blue herons have been in areas where they conflict with the safety of the flying service members. WB Bowers and DS Spencer inspected propane cannons used to deter avian species and though it has helped some, raptor trap and translocation projects will be conducted to alleviate the problems. Additionally, DS Spencer and WB Bowers placed trail snares aimed at removing mammals near the runways and perimeter fence line. A



coyote, badger and jackrabbits were removed using trail snares with several caught during the day on a perimeter fence line. WB Bowers will continue to protect aviation safety.

During the month of June, WS Doug Koepke was busy with seven bands of sheep in Washoe County. WS Koepke is plagued every year with a continual influx of coyotes that continually come into young lambs and lions that continually cross in from California. WS Koepke utilizes the air crew and often times works closely with bordering WS-CA employees that share the protection of the sheep. During the month, WS Koepke had two trouble spots with coyotes on particular lamb bands, but after a couple of weeks, removed five coyotes that ended the damage. A long time sheep producer from Washoe County called the District office and thanked everyone involved in the protection efforts. WS Koepke will continue protection efforts.

WS Ben Miller ended protection efforts on the Washoe County Mule Deer project (hunt unit 014) on June 30th. Since 2005, WS Miller protected mule deer and bighorn sheep by removing lions and coyotes in the hunt unit. The project was initiated to protect the decreasing mule deer population from what was believed to be excessive predation and since that time the deer population has nearly doubled and the bighorn sheep population doubled itself several times over. The number of deer

tags and bighorn sheep tags increased dramatically. WS Miller is now protecting California bighorn sheep populations in hunt unit 011 and eventually hunt units 012 and 013. The intent of this project, is to achieve similar results as in hunt unit 014. WS Miller dedicated a lot of time and effort above and beyond the normal duties of a job while working Unit 014 and we all appreciate his efforts.



During the month of June Wildlife Biologist (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 nine species of birds from on and around the airfield including red-tailed hawks, great blue herons and turkey vultures.

WB Bowers continued to reduce the attractiveness of the airfield to red-tailed hawks. In order to do this, WB Bowers removed 18 black-tailed jackrabbits (the main prey source for red-tailed hawks in the area). WB Bowers also dispersed 11 red-tailed hawks from on and near the airfield. There were many juvenile red-tailed hawks in the area during the month of June. Juvenile hawks as well as other birds in general, don't have full control over their movements until they are able to gain some flight experience. This can be a dangerous time for juvenile birds as well as aviation safety. WB Bowers will continue to try to deter red-tailed hawks and other species of bird animal strike hazard (BASH) concern from the airfield.

WB Bowers gave a presentation at the quarterly BASH meeting. The presentation gave an overview of the efforts involved in reducing BASH hazards for species of concern for the time period presented, as well as what to expect in the near future. During the meeting, WB Bowers presented general species biology and seasonal patterns for species of BASH concern.

During the month of June, a vehicle crash involving a coyote occurred at the above mentioned military installation. As a result of swerving to miss a coyote a new security vehicle was totaled. Luckily the driver only sustained minor cuts and bruises. While WB Bowers is primarily focused on aviation safety, he was contacted and consulted on the situation. WB Bowers provided some technical assistance initially, and may be contacted to provide further information in the future. WB Bowers mentioned to the initial point of contact that this is further evidence that a fully integrated wildlife damage management plan is necessary at this installation.

Throughout the month of June, WB Barto removed: thirty five rock doves (feral pigeons), two mallard ducks, nineteen California ground-squirrels, six mourning doves and one killdeer from a local airport in an effort to reduce bird and aircraft collisions.

No bird strikes were reported at the above mentioned airport for the month of June. Historically (going back 20 years), June is one of the highest wildlife strike months. To have zero strikes this year in June is a testament to the dedication, diligence and expertise of WB Barto, and also reflects the commitment of the airport to wildlife hazard management.

Non-lethal methods of dispersal using pyrotechnics were also utilized to reduce the hazards found on/around the airfield. A total of 175 rock doves (feral pigeons) and approximately 300 cliff swallows were dispersed from airport property by WB Barto, in an effort to reduce wildlife threats to aviation. Of interest, the swallows have had a tendency to move from one excluded area to another, so a continual work in progress that requires constant vigilance.



Eleven mallard ducklings were captured from the above mentioned airport and transferred to a licensed bird rehabilitator where they will be raised to adulthood and one red-tailed hawk that had been competing for airspace with arriving and departing aircraft was also captured and then translocated away from the above mentioned airport.

A feral/free ranging dog was successfully dispersed from the above mentioned airport property. Efforts to capture the animal were unsuccessful on property, but authorities were notified of the stray dog's whereabouts after leaving the premises.

Two point count surveys, two off-site surveys and was conducted during the month of May at the above mentioned airport.

New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report

Valuing and Investing in Employees

Nothing to Report

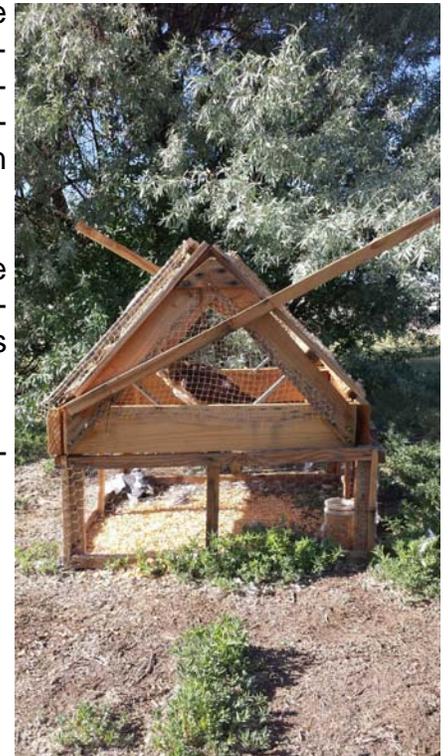
Information and Communication

On June 3rd, 2014, DS Spencer attended the Predatory Animal and Rodent Committee Meeting in Sparks.

On June 6th, 2014, DS Bennett attended the N-4 Grazing Board Meeting in Panaca.

Emerging Trends/Issues

On June 3rd, Staff Biologist Jack Sengl accompanied NDOW Warden Buck Tingle on a site visit at a Senior Citizen park, in Sparks, NV. Numerous elderly folks reported being attacked by hawks. The primary hawk responsible for the attacks was actually a female Coopers Hawk (accipiter), defending a 60 yard territory around her nest, gliding down and chest bumping folks in the head and neck. One resident was scratched on her right eyelid which required a visit to Urgent Care and a few shots. Coopers Hawks aggressively defend their chicks from any threat until the chicks have left the nest and are capable of living independently. After witnessing the attacks and the inability of the elderly folks to avoid the dive bombing, SB Sengl and Warden Tingle made the decision to resolve the issue the following morning. As the Cooper's hawks would not cease their activity until after the



chicks were flying independently, on June 4th, SB Sengl climbed up the tree and safely gathered up all five chicks with Warden Tingle and WB Barto monitoring and facilitating from the ground. The chicks were transferred to the Wild Animal Infirmary so that they could be checked by a veterinarian and raised until they could be released back into the wild. SB Sengl then removed the nest to ensure that if the birds re-nested, it would be elsewhere. The chicks were judged to be in good condition and at this time, are already beginning to fly in their safety netted enclosure. As expected, removal of the chicks and nest ceased the aggressive action towards people. Many thanks to the folks at the Wild Animal Infirmary and NDOW for their assistance. Picture courtesy of the Wild Animal Infirmary.



On June 5th, SB Sengl captured a juvenile American crow so that the homeowner could transfer it to a local Veterinarian and eventually a rehabber. The young flightless crow had apparently been blown out of the tree during a wind storm, causing the adults to terrorize the retiree and her small pets. Once the young crow was removed, the aggression ended.

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report

Future Meetings and Events

Nothing to Report

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