

March 2018

# 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](http://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 March, 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 **\$214.8** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$11.4** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **4,524** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$4,491** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$288,748** in damage to aviation, natural and agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During March, coyotes accounted for **\$21,954** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **756** 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 March, **6** sample was processed.

*The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of March, 2018.*

## 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 March 1<sup>st</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from a sheep producer and 2 cattle ranchers in western White Pine County and eastern Nye County. With the assistance of Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) Field Assistant (FA) Hunter Bodenchuk as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 3 coyotes near the sheep and calves. Work will be ongoing as needed. FA Bodenchuk also provided technical assistance to the sheep producer in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help minimize future losses.

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, a contract helicopter started work on Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) Project 40 near Eureka. NDOW Project 40 is designed to remove coyotes and mountain lions to protect mule deer and sage-grouse. During the week, 301 coyotes were removed. Work will continue through sage-grouse nesting and mule deer fawning, ending in early June.

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a sheep and cattle producer in Elko County. The sheep producer was starting to lamb and reported seeing and hearing several coyotes near his sheep. With the help from Wildlife Specialist (WS) Mac Crome as the ground crew, 11 coyotes were removed. The sheep producer was very happy with the help he received from the Nevada Department of Agriculture and Wildlife Services. WS Crome also provided non-lethal technical assistance to help reduce future losses.

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from a sheep producer in Lincoln County. The sheep producer reported that he had lost at least 6 ewes valued \$1,500. With the help of FA Bodenchuk as the ground crew, 4 coyotes were removed including 2 near a fresh kill. No further losses have been reported. FA Bodenchuk also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.



On March 6<sup>th</sup>, Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler and MLS Casey Shields removed an adult male lion on NDOW Project 40. The lion had recently killed a mule deer doe.

On March 7<sup>th</sup>, MLS Buhler and MLS Shields removed an adult male lion on NDOW Project 40. This lion had also recently killed a mule deer doe.

On March 7<sup>th</sup>, Crew Member (CM) Wayne Rowley responded to a cattle ranch in Elko County that was experiencing a problem with ravens. CM Rowley confirmed the loss of one calf valued at \$500 to raven predation. CM Rowley used hard boiled eggs, treated with DRC-1339, to remove the depredating ravens.

CM Rowley also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from a sheep and cattle producer in northern White Pine County. The rancher had lost at least 3 ewes to coyote predation and was very close to lambing and calving season. With the help of FA Allen Eldridge as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 9 coyotes near the calves and the lambing areas. Work will continue as needed.

On March 12<sup>th</sup>, a contract helicopter arrived near in Nye County to begin work on NDOW Project 38. NDOW



Project 38 is the statewide coyote removal project to protect antelope. At least 3 locations in Nye County were identified by NDOW to protect antelope herds with low fawn recruitment. During the operation, 33 coyotes were removed near several herds of antelope. Work will continue as needed.

On March 12<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from several cattle ranchers in Lander County and Eureka County. The cattle ranchers had just started to calve out and reported seeing several coyotes in their calving pastures. During the flight, 8 coyotes were removed. Work will be ongoing as needed.

On March 13<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from several cattle ranches and one sheep ranch in eastern White Pine County. One cattle rancher had reported the loss of one calf, valued at \$500, to coyote predation. During the flight, 7 coyotes were removed. FA Eldridge assisted as the ground crew. Work will continue as needed.

On March 14<sup>th</sup>, a sheep producer in northeastern Elko County reported the loss of 3 ewes, valued at \$750, to coyote predation. WS Crome responded to the location and confirmed that coyotes had indeed killed the sheep. WS Crome set several trail snares near the kill location. A few days later, 1 adult coyote was snared. The Ely plane also responded to the damage. During the morning's flight, the plane was able to remove an additional 4 coyotes, bringing an end to the trouble. WS Crome will continue to monitor the livestock in his area.

On March 14<sup>th</sup>, work began on NDOW Project 21. NDOW Project 21 is designed to improve sage-grouse recruitment by removing ravens and other nest/egg raiders. Work will continue on the project through the sage-grouse nesting season. Leks in Elko, Lincoln, Eureka and White Pine County have been identified by NDOW for control efforts.



On March 16<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from a cattle rancher in southwestern White Pine County. Earlier, WS Scott Little had confirmed the loss of 2 calves, valued at \$1,000. With the help of WS Little as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 9 coyotes, including one large male coyote, near the location of the most recent kill. WS also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses. The rancher was very pleased with the help he received from the Nevada Department of Agriculture and the USDA Wildlife Services.

On March 19<sup>th</sup>, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett traveled to Nye County and removed ravens



and starlings at a landfill. The birds were causing damage to equipment by defecating all over the trash compactor and dozers including the air conditioning units located on top of the equipment. The birds were also spreading trash to adjacent areas. The landfill had already tried several non-lethal attempts to curtail the problem including harassment and hazing and attempting to remove perches as well as covering all trash as soon as possible but nothing has solved the problem as the ravens are so overpopulated. On March 20<sup>th</sup>, DS Bennett used DRC-1339 to remove the depredating ravens and starlings. No further problems have been reported.

On March 21<sup>st</sup>, the East District office received a call from an NDOW Biologist concerning a rancher in Lincoln County that was having problems with ravens attacking his newborn calves. On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, DS Bennett traveled to the remote cattle ranch in eastern Lincoln County. DS Bennett was able to confirm that a group of ravens had attacked a calf and injured it so severely that the rancher had to put it down. DS Bennett also observed at least 20-30 ravens harassing the other calves in the pasture. DS Bennett used hard boiled eggs treated with DRC-1339 to remove the depredating ravens. No further losses have been reported. A nearby sage-grouse lek also benefited from the raven removal. DS Bennett also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help prevent future losses. The rancher was very pleased with the outcome.

On March 21<sup>st</sup>, FA Eldridge confirmed the loss of 2 calves, valued at \$1,000, to raven predation. The rancher reported that he witnessed ravens attacking the newborn calves. Using eggs treated with DRC-1339, FA Eldridge was able to remove the depredating ravens. No further losses have been reported. FA Eldridge also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On March 24<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to 2 large cattle ranches in Nye County. Both had recently started calving and both had lost at least three calves to coyote predation. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 8 coyotes in the calving pastures. Both ranchers were very pleased with the help they received from the Nevada Department of Agriculture and the Wildlife services program. Work will continue as needed during the calving season.



remove 19 coyotes. WS Evans caught an additional 5 coyotes in trail snares. No further problems have been reported.

On March 28<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a cattle ranch in northern Elko County. The rancher had just started to calve out and had already lost 4 calves to coyote predation. With the help of DS Bennett as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 5 coyotes near the location of the losses. Work will continue as needed.

During the month of March, FA Eldridge confirmed the loss of 7 ewe sheep to coyote predation. The damage occurred on several bands of sheep in northern White Pine County. FA Eldridge was able to remove 12 coyotes using traps, calling and shooting to bring an end to the damage. FA Eldridge also provided non-lethal technical assistance in an effort to prevent future losses.



During the month of March, FA Bodenchuk confirmed the loss of 5 ewe sheep to coyote predation. The damage occurred on 2 bands of sheep in Lincoln County. FA Bodenchuk was able to remove 5 coyotes to stop the damage. FA Bodenchuk also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent losses in the future.

During the last week of March, WS Evans confirmed the loss of 2 calves to raven predation. The rancher reported he saw as many as 50 ravens harassing his newborn calves. WS Evans used eggs treated with DRC-1339 to remove the offending ravens. WS Evans also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

During March, WS Scott Little confirmed the loss of 1 ewe sheep and 1 calf to coyote predation. The total amount of the loss was \$750. The damage occurred in southern White Pine and northern Nye County. WS Little used traps, trail snares, calling and shooting to remove 13 coyotes near the location of the losses. No further losses have been reported. WS Little also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent losses in the future.

FA Scott MacDonald confirmed the loss of 2 ewe sheep during the month of March. The value of the loss for the 2 sheep was set at \$500. The damage occurred on a band of sheep in eastern White Pine County near the Utah border. FA MacDonald used foothold traps to remove 12 coyotes near the location of the kills. No further losses have been reported. FA MacDonald also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

## West District

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several calving areas in Humboldt County after receiving 11 requests from cattle producers in the area. During the flight, 28 coyotes were removed right in close around the calving areas. WS Peter provided ground crew efforts. Aerial protection efforts will be ongoing in the West District as spring calving season is in full swing.

On March 7<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around a sheep producer that was lambing out in Lyon County. During the flight, 3 coyotes were removed. FA Mark Bentz provided ground crew efforts and also removed one additional coyote with the use of a foothold trap. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On March 8<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several calving areas in Humboldt County. During the flight, 12 coyotes were removed right in close around the calving areas. Aerial protection efforts will be ongoing in the West District.

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several cattle and a sheep producers in Pershing County. During the flight, 24 coyotes were removed to protect the vulnerable newborn livestock. WS Doug Koepke provided ground crew efforts and located several of the coyotes for the plane. Protection efforts will be ongoing.



On Saturday March 10<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several cattle producers in Lander County. Cattle producers reported that coyotes were starting to move in around the calving grounds. During the flight, 5 coyotes were removed. WS Hansen provided ground crew efforts. Aerial protection efforts will be ongoing in the West District.

On March 13<sup>th</sup>, WS Koepke and WS-CA George Affonso inspected a dead sheep in Washoe County right near the California border. The dead sheep was confirmed to have been killed by a female lion. Upon further inspection it appeared the lion had likely killed other sheep in previous weeks because of knotted sheep wool seen on the top barbed wire strand where she was packing the sheep carcasses to cover. WS Koepke placed foothold traps near the sheep carcass that night and the following morning the depredating lion was removed. The sheep producer was pleased with the livestock protection efforts both WS Koepke and WS Affonso provided. To date, no additional livestock have been lost.



During the week of March 12<sup>th</sup> through March 16<sup>th</sup>, WS Ben Miller continued efforts to protect translocated California bighorn sheep in Washoe County (hunt unit 013) as part of NDOW project 22-01. WS Miller continues to place trail snares and call boxes around the bighorn sheep populations and occasionally use hounds. On March 14<sup>th</sup>, WS Miller removed a female lion with the use of trailing hounds. WS Miller will be switching from bighorn sheep protection in the next

week to sage-grouse nest and egg protection (NDOW project 21-02) as usual, returning to NDOW project 22-01 in June.

On March 15<sup>th</sup> and March 16<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard traveled to the Wildlife Services aviation training center. WS Gossard conducted required spin training with another instructor pilot. WS Gossard will continue to conduct required aerial training.

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several calving areas in Humboldt County after receiving requests from cattle producers. During the flight, 10 coyotes were removed close to the calving areas. WS John Peter provided ground crew efforts. Aerial protection efforts will be ongoing in the West District.

On Saturday March 17<sup>th</sup>, WS Peter placed out DRC-1339 treated egg baits around locations NDOW requested raven removal to protect sage-grouse nests and eggs as a part of NDOW project 21. The location of the egg baits are typically near sage-grouse leks and nesting locations in Humboldt County (hunt unit 031 and 032). WS Peter will continue to protection efforts through mid-May.

On March 22<sup>nd</sup>, WS Miller placed DRC-1339 treated egg baits around sage-grouse nesting and lek sites in Lander County (hunt unit 151). WS Miller also treated a landfill located in close proximity to nesting sage-grouse. 201 ravens were removed in the process and WS Miller made mention that he has seen more ravens in this area than in the past sev-



eral years. WS Miller will continue to protect sage-grouse nests and eggs.

On March 20<sup>th</sup>, WS Koepke inspected ground equipment in Churchill County around several calving areas that had lost newborn calves. During the trap inspection, WS Koepke removed 3 coyotes with the use of foothold traps. WS Koepke also set M-44s to reduce losses. Protection efforts are ongoing.

On March 22<sup>nd</sup>, several cattle producers from Pershing County reported that several calves had been killed and eaten to the bone by coyotes. On March 26<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay flew several cattle producers in Pershing County. During the flight, 6 coyotes were removed. WS Koepke provided ground crew efforts and located several of the coyotes for the plane. To date, no further livestock losses have been reported. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On March 26<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay flew around several calving areas in Humboldt County. During the flight, 8 coyotes were removed right in close around the calving areas. WS Peter provided ground crew and later placed M-44s units around the calving areas at the request of ranchers. The cattle producers were pleased with both the fixed wing and ground protection efforts.

During the month of March, FA Bentz maintained equipment around 6 lambing bands and numerous calving areas in Lyon and Douglas Counties. FA Bentz reports very few livestock losses, largely in part due to his dedication and hard work protecting livestock in his large work area. On March 27<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay flew around some lamb bands that resulted in the removal of four coyotes to reduce losses. One of the coyotes was only 400 yards away from the herder and the sheep. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On March 28<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay flew around several calving areas in Washoe County. During the flight, 10 coyotes were removed. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On March 30<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay flew around several calving areas and some lambing sheep bands in Washoe County. During the flight, 7 coyotes were removed. WS Koepke provided ground crew efforts during aerial operations. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

During the week of March 26<sup>th</sup> through March 29<sup>th</sup>, WS Peter maintained equipment and placing M-44 units around calving areas across Humboldt County. During the week, WS Peter removed 13 coyotes all in the calving areas. The M-44 device can easily be placed right in with the cows to remove coyotes living in calving areas.

On Saturday March 31<sup>st</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay flew around a lambing area in Humboldt County. The aerial crew spotted several groups of coyotes sitting on or near den sites. During the flight, 13 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground crew efforts. Protection efforts will be ongoing as spring lambing is currently underway for some sheep producers in the West District.

During the month of March, DS Spencer visited WS Peter, WS Koepke and FA Bentz to re-train and freshen up on the safe use and handling of the M-44 device. There have been recent changes in policy governing M-44 use and DS Spencer was in the field with employees making sure all the new training and policy regulations were



followed.

On Saturday March 31<sup>st</sup>, DS Spencer backpacked into NDOW hunt unit 041 at the request of NDOW to remove lion(s) that had killed several collared bighorn sheep. DS Spencer's hounds found a two day old female track and through the trailing process, DS Spencer located some corridors to hang snares. DS Spencer placed a call box, decoy and trail snares in various locations where old bighorn sheep and mule deer kills were found. Protection efforts are ongoing.

During the month of March, Wildlife Biologist Zack Bowers continued protection efforts at a military installation in northern Nevada. WB Bowers utilized harassment with several methods to disperse 346 individuals from 16 species. 13 problem animals were lethally removed from the airfield. The individuals removed came from 2 species of mammals and 5 species of birds. WB Bowers will continue efforts to protect aviation safety at this facility.



Also during the reporting period, WB Bowers was busy knocking down nests. Nests are generally knocked down in the off season, then if the birds try to rebuild, the material is knocked down on a regular basis until the birds either give up or move to another location. During the month of March, this included 2 magpie nests, 3 raven nests (1 active), 4 red-tailed hawk nests and 1 Swainson's hawk nest.

During the month of March, efforts to deter nesting at the heron/egret rookery continued. These efforts have encouraged the herons to nest elsewhere. WB Bowers is hopeful that the cold weather operational problems are now a problem of the past (at least for this year). WB Bowers did some investigating on his own time and observed great blue herons nesting out towards Stillwater. This indicates that the herons may have relocated to nest trees that they have used in the past. The propane cannon also seems to be working on the great egrets which are also back in the area.

During the month of March, WB Dean Pyzik reported 2 wildlife strikes to aircraft at a military installation in southern Nevada, based on snarge/feathers submitted, the Smithsonian identified the species as white-throated swift and black-throated sparrow.

Also during the reporting period, WB Pyzik removed 13 mammals from the installation while dispersing 1,202 birds with his truck, firearms and pyrotechnics. Of those 1,202 birds dispersed while patrolling and conducting perimeter checks, finch and ring-billed gulls accounted for 60% of the birds. The majority of the mammals removed were black-tailed jackrabbits which are removed because they are a direct threat to aviation (strike hazard) and an indirect threat to aviation by drawing in birds of prey, coyotes and feral dogs into occupied airspace, runways and taxiways.

During the month of March, WS Cameron Green and WS Rick Laffins continued implementing a wildlife hazard management plan at a joint use aviation facility in Washoe County. Specifically, 6,265 animals (primarily Canada geese and Gull species) were dispersed from the facility and adjoining properties using vehicles, pyrotechnic devices and firearms. Firearms and snares were also utilized to remove 88 animals that failed to respond properly to non-lethal approaches. 6 red-tailed

hawks were captured, banded and translocated during the month of March. On March 19<sup>th</sup>, WS Laffins observed 5 goslings at an offsite survey location with a banded adult. On March 21<sup>st</sup>, WS Laffins saw both adults with the goslings and they were both banded birds indicating they have been captured, banded and translocated before but have since found their way back to Reno.



WS Laffins surveyed 25,090 animals during structured “point-count” wildlife surveys on the airfield and offsite in the general zone during the month.

WS Green and WS Laffins investigated a bird strike this month where a bird was struck by an inbound jet causing significant damage to the hydraulic system of the aircraft.

NDOW Project 43 began this month at Mason Valley WMA, which is designed to protect the nests and eggs of turkeys and pheasants during the breeding season from predation by coyotes, raccoons, skunks and ravens. To that end, WS Laffins and WS Green removed eleven coyotes and four raccoons during the month. Work will continue for about 12 weeks.



### **New and Developing Methods**

Nothing to Report

### **Valuing and Investing in Employees**

During the reporting period, WB Carl Frey departed for his Temporary Duty Assignment (TDY) in the Middle East to protect our Service members from the threat of Wildlife Strikes to aircraft at DoD facilities. WB Frey and his partner were picked out of a pool of applicants for the TDY that will end in August. Although WB Frey will be sorely missed, the experience that WB Frey will gain are well worth it.

### **Information and Communication**

On March 29<sup>th</sup>, State Director (SD) Mark Jensen and DS Spencer attended the N-3 grazing board meeting in Fallon. The meeting went well and SD Jensen provided an overview of work completed and plans for the year.

### **Emerging Trends/Issues**

Nothing to Report

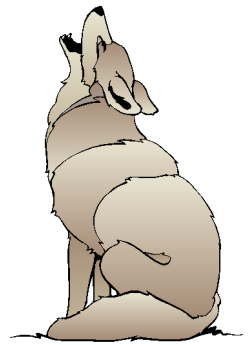
### **Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)**

Nothing to Report

### **Future Meeting and Events**

Nothing to Report

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