

March 2019

# 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)

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 March, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **8.4** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$286.4** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$13.5** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **551** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$4,827** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$125,001** 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 **\$79,191** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **589** 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, **28** samples were processed.

*The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of March, 2019.*

## 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 calls from a cattle rancher and sheep rancher in eastern White Pine County. The cattle rancher was just starting to calve out and the sheep producer had experienced very high losses the past 2 months to coyote predation. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 5 coyotes. Work will continue as needed.

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, the Elko plane responded to a call from a cattle rancher that had just started calving. In just a couple weeks that rancher had already confirmed 12 calves, valued at \$10,800, lost to coyote predation. The damage occurred in northern Elko County. The rancher reported seeing several coyotes eating newborn calves. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 11 coyotes where the damage occurred. Work will be ongoing as needed.

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, Crew Member (CM) Hunter Bodenchuk confirmed the loss of 3 calves, valued \$2,700, to coyote predation. The damage occurred on a ranch in central White Pine County which was too rough to fly. CM Bodenchuk used snares to remove 4 coyotes, bringing an end to the damage. CM Bodenchuk also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On March 7<sup>th</sup>, the Elko plane responded to a call from a cattle rancher in northern Elko County. The rancher had confirmed that coyotes had killed 47 calves, valued at \$35,250, to coyote predation. The coyote problem was so severe that one cow and calf were eaten by coyotes while giving birth. The rancher witnessed 21 coyotes eating the freshly killed cow. The plane had previously removed 52 coyotes in one morning. During this flight, the plane was able to remove 37 more coyotes before a snow storm forced the plane to end the flight. Work will be ongoing.

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, the Elko plane responded to a request for assistance from an Indian reservation in northern Elko County. The reservation reported at least 4 calves had been killed by coyotes. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 21 coyotes near the kills. No further damage has been reported.

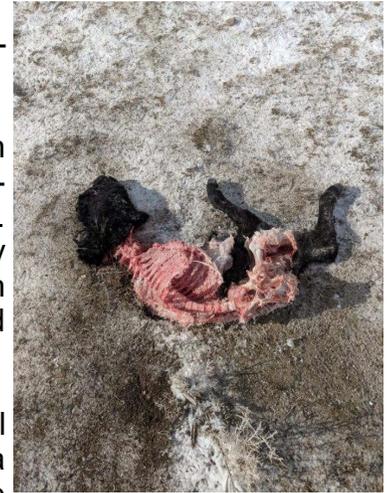
On March 11<sup>th</sup>, work began on Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) project 21 in Eastern Nevada. NDOW project 21 is designed to protect sage-grouse nests, eggs and chicks. Lek sites are identified by NDOW Biologists for protection. Work will continue during the nesting season.

On March 12<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to calls from a sheep producer and a cattle rancher in Nye County. Both ranches share an allotment. The cattle rancher had lost 5 calves, valued at \$2,500, while the sheep producer had lost 5 adult sheep, valued at \$1,250, to coyote predation. With the help of District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 6 coyotes, during the flight, including 2 coyotes feeding on a fresh sheep kill. Work will be ongoing as



needed. DS Bennett also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On March 12<sup>th</sup>, the Elko plane responded to a call from a cattle rancher in northern Elko County. The rancher was experiencing very bad coyote predation, losing at least 47 calves, valued at \$23,500, to coyote predation. The rancher reported that they saw 21 coyotes leaving one cow that they had killed while birthing. During the flight, the plane removed 65 coyotes in the calving pastures. On 2 previous flights, the plane had removed 37 and 52 coyotes (page 2), respectively. Work will be ongoing as needed.



On March 13<sup>th</sup>, Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler received a call concerning the loss of 2 adult sheep to a mountain lion in eastern Eureka County. MLS Buhler had confirmed the loss of 3 adult sheep a couple weeks prior, but snow conditions would not allow pursuit of the lion. The total value of the 5 sheep was placed at \$1,000. MLS Buhler and Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) Field Assistant (FA) Tyler Bodily responded to the call and confirmed the losses. Six well-trained tracking dogs were put on the lion's track. An adult female lion was treed about 2 miles away. No further losses have been reported since the removal. The sheep producer was very happy with the prompt assistance provided by USDA and NDA.

On March 15<sup>th</sup>, the Elko plane responded to a call from 2 cattle ranchers in western Elko County. Both ranchers had just started calving out when they each lost 2 calves, total loss of \$2,000. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 29 coyotes on the 2 ranches. Both ranchers were very pleased with the help they received from USDA and NDA. No further losses have been reported.

On March 16<sup>th</sup>, the Elko plane responded to calls from 3 cattle ranchers in eastern Elko County. The ranchers had lost at least 4 calves, valued at \$2,000, to coyote predation. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 20 coyotes near the kills. No further losses have been reported. Work will continue as needed.

On March 18<sup>th</sup>, the Elko plane responded to a call from a cattle rancher in northern Elko County. The rancher had lost more than 47 calves previously and reported still seeing high numbers of coyotes in his calving pastures. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 33 coyotes from the calving pastures. Work will be ongoing as needed.

On March 19<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from a sheep rancher in Lincoln County. The rancher had lost at least 5 adult sheep, valued at \$1,250, to coyote predation. FA Allen Eldridge had previously removed 4 coyotes near the location of the kills. With the help of FA Eldridge as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 2 more coyotes near the kill sites. Work will be ongoing as needed. FA Eldridge also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help prevent future losses.



On March 19<sup>th</sup>, the Elko plane responded to 4 different cattle ranches in central Elko County. The ranches had lost a total of at least 6 calves, valued at \$3,000, to coyote predation. All of the ranchers reported seeing very high numbers of coyotes in

their calving pastures. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 28 coyotes. Work will be ongoing as needed.

On March 20<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from a cattle rancher in northwestern White Pine County. The rancher had lost at least 4 calves, valued at \$2,000, to coyote predation. The rancher reported seeing 4-5 coyotes daily in his calving pastures. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 5 coyotes. No further damage has occurred.

On March 20<sup>th</sup>, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Randy Evans responded to 2 cattle ranchers in western White Pine County reporting that ravens were killing their calves. Both ranchers had witnessed a large group of ravens attacking their newborn calves and harassing both the cows and the calves as the cows were birthing. A total of 5 calves, valued at \$2,500, had been confirmed killed. Using hard boiled eggs treated with DRC-1339, WS Evans was able to remove the depredating ravens. Both ranchers were very pleased with the help they received from the USDA. WS Evans also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On March 26<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from a rancher in northern Lincoln County concerning the loss of 2 calves, valued at \$1,000, to coyote predation. During the flight, the plane was able to remove a pair of coyotes near the kills. No further losses have been reported. Work will be ongoing as needed.

On March 26<sup>th</sup>, DS Bennett worked at a landfill in Nye County. The landfill was experiencing very bad problems with ravens and starlings. The birds were scattering trash and defecating all over the equipment at the landfill. Using cracked corn treated with DRC-1339 and hard boiled chicken eggs treated with DRC-1339, a portion of the starlings and ravens were removed. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was also provided in an attempt to help prevent future problems.



On March 27<sup>th</sup>, the Elko plane responded to a call from a cattle rancher in southern Elko County. The rancher had lost 2 calves, valued at \$1,000, to coyote predation. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 8 coyotes, bringing an end to the damage. No further losses have been reported.

On March 28<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from a cattle rancher in northern White Pine County. The rancher had lost at least 2 calves to coyote predation. The value of the calves was placed at \$1,000. With the assistance of DS Bennett as the ground crew the plane was able to remove 4 coyotes. No further losses have been reported. DS Bennett also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help prevent future losses.

## West District

During the week of March 4<sup>th</sup>, DS Jack Spencer and Wildlife Biologist (WB) Carl Frey assisted a dairy in Lyon County that was losing 20 tons of high quality feed per month to European starlings and recently 3 calves, valued at \$1,215, had died from ingesting high doses of starling fecal matter. The dairy pre-baited the starlings for 5 days prior to DS Spencer and WB Frey treating with DRC-1339 treated bait to reduce the damage.

During the month of March, Humboldt cattle ranchers reported the loss of 55 calves and 2 lambs injured or killed by ravens. Because of the deep snow and cold temperatures, many newborn calves don't move around much making them more susceptible to raven predation. WS John Peter reports

never seeing so many raven damage sites. WS Peter used DRC-1339 treated egg baits to reduce the damage. WS Peter will continue to protect livestock in his large work area.

During the month of March, WS Ben Miller protected sage-grouse nests and eggs from ravens throughout western Nevada as requested by NDOW. WS Miller will continue working on this NDOW project through May.



On March 7<sup>th</sup>, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay flew around several calving areas in Humboldt County to reduce coyote damage, resulting in the removal of 11 coyotes. WS Peter provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection work will continue.

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay flew several calving and sheep areas in Humboldt County to reduce coyote damage, resulting in the removal of 12 coyotes. WS Peter provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection work will continue.

On March 12<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay flew several calving areas in Humboldt County to reduce coyote damage, resulting in the removal of 21 coyotes. WS Peter provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection work will continue.

During the month of March, FA Doug Koepke assisted a cattle producer in Lyon County that was losing calves to coyotes, by placing M-44s around the calving area, resulting in the removal of 8 coyotes. DS Spencer also conducted a field inspection with FA Koepke during the reporting period, removing an additional 3 coyotes from calving areas. Of importance, the vacant State trapping position in Lyon County, which was vacated in September, will be filled in April. No further losses have occurred and the cattle producer was pleased with FA Koepke's protection efforts.



On March 14<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay flew several calving areas and sheep bands in Lander County, resulting in the removal of 15 coyotes. Coyote damage this spring has been severe. WS Hansen provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection work will continue.

On March 16<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay flew several calving areas in Humboldt County, removing 17 coyotes. WS Peter, who provided ground support, reported that this spring, he has received more requests to protect calves and seen more calves killed by coyotes than any other time in his 34 years of service. Protection work will continue.

On March 18<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay flew several calving areas in Washoe County that had lost calves to coyotes. The work resulted in the removal of 13 coyotes. WS Peter provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection work will continue.

On March 20<sup>th</sup>, a cattle and sheep producer reported the loss of 6 sheep and 2 calves, valued at \$1,950, in a small suburban area in Douglas County. The producer did not know what was killing his livestock, so he monitored the calf carcasses at night and spotted a lion feeding on one of the calves, which he scared away. The following morning, DS Spencer set a cage trap for the lion. The lion



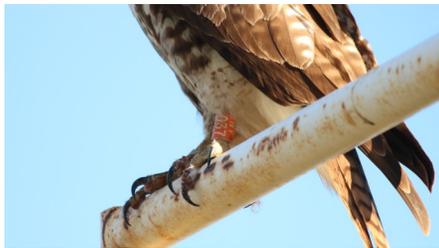
didn't return, so DS Spencer removed the trap after 3 days and provided the producer with non-lethal technical assistance to reduce future damage.

During the month of March, WB Zack Bowers continued protection efforts at a military installation in northern Nevada. WB Bowers utilized harassment with several methods to disperse 469 individuals from 24 species. Fourteen problem animals were lethally removed from on and near the airfield. The individuals removed came from one species of mammals and 3 species of birds. While horned larks still accounted for 22 percent of the individuals dispersed, this is down from previous months. Horned Larks are year round residents to the area, but their numbers peak on the airfield from November through February. Horned lark numbers appear to be decreasing in the area as expected. The area where this airfield is located has received an above average amount of precipitation this winter. Due to the types of soil in the area there are large areas of standing water, which may attract a variety of birds to the area this spring. WB Bowers will continue efforts to protect aviation safety at this facility.

Also during the month of March WB Bowers received a call from a very excited birder who spotted a red-tailed hawk down in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. The birder had taken some pictures with a high quality camera and was able to detect and read the information on the band. He reported the information to the United States Geological Survey (USGS) bird banding lab and was given WB Bowers contact information as well.



The hawk had been trapped in September at a joint use airport in northern Nevada as a hatch year bird (meaning it had hatched earlier that year). At that point it was banded with a federal metal band, as well as the orange and white auxiliary band that the Wildlife Services (WS) airport program is using at airports across the country. The red-tailed hawk was then translocated over 140 miles to the east. Then at some point between September, 2018 and March, 2019 the hawk traveled over 1,200 miles to Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. According to the birder that reported it, this red-tailed hawk was eating white-winged doves and appeared quite content.



On March 7<sup>th</sup>, WS Cameron Green and WB David Carrasco protected aviation safety at a military facility in southern Nevada. Specifically, an American kestrel was caught using a Bal-Chatrri trap which was then translocated near Mesquite, NV.

During the following weeks, at the same facility, WB Carrasco continued to protect aviation safety. Of interest, WB Carrasco trapped a red-tailed hawk with the use of a Bal-Chatrri trap, which State Director (SD) Mark Jensen translocated to suitable habitat near Beatty, Nevada. Additionally, WB Carrasco removed a female coyote from the facility with the use of a foothold trap. WB Carrasco will continue to use an integrated approach to protect the flying Service members and the military aircraft from the threat of wildlife strikes.

On March 26<sup>th</sup> thru the 28<sup>th</sup>, WB Carrasco visited the State office in Reno for the first time and met the staff. He crossed trained with WB Frey and WS Green at a joint use facility in Washoe County where he participated in implementing a wildlife hazard management plan, including the raptor capture/translocation program of which WB Carrasco handled: a red-tailed hawk and an American kestrel captured with a Bal-Chatrri trap; and a great horned owl captured with the use of a modified Swe-

dish goshawk trap. WB Carrasco also conducted cross training with WB Bowers at a military facility in northern Nevada. Cross training such as this is an extremely effective wildlife hazard management tool as you can learn from the experiences of others and put them to use at your facility.



WB Frey and WS Green continued to implement a wildlife hazard management plan at a joint-use facility in Washoe County. Non-lethal approaches were used to disperse over 545 threats to aircraft in the reporting period, with lethal approaches used on individuals that failed to respond to non-lethal approaches. Waterfowl represented the greatest threat by number and size, although the numbers are starting to decrease thanks to constant harassment. Twelve raptors (birds of prey) were captured and translocated away from the facility.



WB Frey and WS Green captured and relocated 12 birds of prey. Each bird was banded and relocated to a safer place away from airport in suitable habitat. One of the red-tailed hawks relocated in September of 2018 was spotted in Cabo Mexico identified by our colored leg bands (See page 6).

WB Frey and WS Green continued work on NDOW project 43 at Mason valley WMA. The goal of the project is to increase turkey recruitment by removing mesopredators that raid the turkey nests and eat the polts. This project likely also benefits waterfowl, mule deer and livestock in the area. This project is expected to end in April.



**New and Developing Methods**

Nothing to Report

**Valuing and Investing in Employees**

Nothing to Report

**Information and Communication**

Nothing to Report

**Emerging Trends/Issues**

Nothing to Report

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

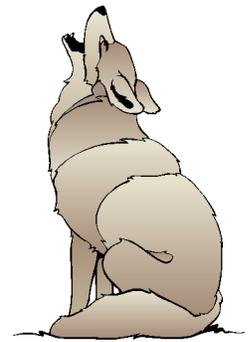
Nothing to Report

**Future Meeting and Events**

April 4<sup>th</sup>. N-3 Grazing Board in Fernley, NV. SD Jensen and DS Spencer to attend.



USDA-APHIS-WS  
8775 Technology Way  
Reno, NV 89521



USDA APHIS  
**Wildlife Services**

