

May 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

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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 May, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **4.6** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$81.4** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$11.8** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **356** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$39,595** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$37,704** in damage to aviation, natural and agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During May, coyotes accounted for **\$23,890** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **228** 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 May, **31** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of May, 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 May 3rd, Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) Field Assistant (FA) Scott MacDonald confirmed the loss of 25 newborn lambs to raven predation. The damage occurred on a band of sheep in northern White Pine County. The sheep producer reported that he had just recently started lambing when a large group of ravens started attacking the young lambs. FA MacDonald used hard boiled chicken eggs treated with DRC-1339 to remove the depredating ravens. Many livestock producers are reporting many more ravens observed this year than ever before. Raven calls in the East District have increased significantly in the past few years as well. FA MacDonald also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.



Between May 6th and May 9th, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Randy Evans confirmed the loss of 11 lambs, valued at \$1,650, to coyote predation. The damage occurred on a band of sheep in southern Elko County. WS Evans used his well-trained coyote decoy dogs to call and shoot 5 coyotes near the kills, bringing an end to the damage. WS Evans also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses. Work will be ongoing as lambing season progresses. With lambing and calving season in full swing, it's the busiest time of the year in the East District. Every employee is working long hours in an effort to help prevent high predation issues. Without the hard work and dedication of these employees losses would be unbearable to many sheep and cattle ranchers. At least 5 cooperators have called the East District Office and expressed their appreciation for the hard work by both WS and NDA employees.

During the week of May 6th, WS Nathen Fowler confirmed the loss of more than 10 lambs, valued at \$1,500, to coyote predation. The damage occurred on a band of sheep in southern Elko County. Using calling, snares and foothold traps, WS Fowler was able to remove 7 coyotes near the kills. No further losses have been reported. WS Fowler also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On May 8th, the Ely plane responded to a call from a sheep rancher in northern White Pine County concerning the loss of 5 lambs, valued at \$750. During the flight, the plane removed a large male coyote, right in the middle of the ewes and newborn lambs. A necropsy of the coyote revealed it had eaten a lamb and was packing another lamb in its mouth. No further losses have been reported.

On May 9th, the Elko plane responded to a call from a sheep producer in northern Elko County. The rancher had lost several lambs and a ewe, valued at \$700, to coyote predation. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 5 coyotes. No further losses have been reported. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was also provided to help prevent future losses.

On May 9th, the Ely plane responded to call from a sheep producer, west of Ely, that was experiencing very high losses to coyote predation. Coyotes had killed at least 8 adult sheep and several lambs, valued at \$3,000. During the flight, with the assistance of FA Allen Eldridge, 2 coyotes were removed including 1 that had just killed a lamb and was in the field with several hundred ewes and newborn lambs. Work will continue as needed. FA Eldridge also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help minimize future losses.



On May 10th, the Ely plane responded to a call from a sheep producer in northern White Pine County that was having coyote problems. Coyotes had killed at least 10 lambs, valued at \$1,500. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 3 coyotes and also locate an active den. WS Nathan Fowler assisted as the ground crew and also promptly removed the den. Several lamb remains were found at the den site, indicating the adult coyotes had been killing and bringing the lambs back to the den. This time of year it's very hard to figure how many lambs are being killed because the coyotes carry many away whole. Work will continue as needed. WS Fowler also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help minimize future losses.

During the week of May 13th, FA MacDonald confirmed the loss of 2 lambs, valued at \$300. The damage occurred on a band of sheep in northwestern White Pine County. FA MacDonald used foot-hold traps to remove 4 coyotes near the kills. No further losses have been reported. FA MacDonald also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help prevent future losses.

During the week of May 13th, CM Hunter Bodenchuk confirmed the loss of 5 lambs, valued at \$750, to raven predation. The damage occurred on a band of sheep in eastern White Pine County. The sheep producer reported seeing 7 or 8 ravens attacking several newborn lambs. The sheep producer reported that 2 lambs were killed by the ravens and 3 others had to be put down due to their injuries. CM Bodenchuk used hard boiled chicken eggs treated with DRC-1339 to remove the ravens. CM Bodenchuk also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help minimize future losses.

On May 17th, WS Scott Little confirmed the loss of at least 3 lambs valued at \$450 to raven predation. The ravens had attacked and pecked the eyes out of the baby lambs. The damage happened on a band of sheep in Nye County. WS Little used hard boiled chicken eggs treated with DRC-1339 to remove the depredating ravens. WS Little also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help prevent future losses.

On May 24th, the Ely plane responded to a call from a sheep producer in southern Elko and northern White Pine County. The sheep producer reported that at least 24 lambs, valued at \$3,600, had been killed by coyotes. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 4 coyotes near the sheep. No further losses have been reported. WS Nathan Fowler will continue to monitor the sheep in that area for more predation problems.

During the week of May 20th, a helicopter was brought in from Utah to fly several different sheep ranches. Although the weather was very bad during the week, 18 coyotes were removed and 1 den was located and removed. All removed coyotes were in very close proximity to several bands of sheep that were experiencing high losses to coyote.

During the week of May 20th, FA Eldridge confirmed the loss of at least 8 lambs, valued at \$1,200, to coyote predation. The damage occurred on a band of sheep near Ely, Nevada. On May 28th, FA Eldridge was able to call and shoot a coyote near the kills and had another large male in a snare. Work will continue as needed. FA Eldridge also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to



help prevent future losses.

On May 28th, WS Little confirmed the loss of 3 lambs, valued at \$450, to coyote predation. The damage occurred on a band of sheep in western White Pine County. WS Little used his well-trained coyote decoy dogs to call and shoot 2 large male coyotes near the kills. No further losses have been reported. WS Little continues to monitor the livestock in his work area. WS Little also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help prevent future losses.



On May 30th, the Ely plane responded to a call from a sheep producer in southern Elko County. The sheep producer reported that he had lost 27 lambs valued at \$4,050 to coyote predation. With the assistance of WS Fowler as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 2 coyotes near the kills. Work will be ongoing as needed.

On May 31st, the Ely plane responded to a call from a sheep producer in southeastern Elko County. The producer had lost more than 30 lambs, valued at \$4,500, to coyote predation. With the help of WS Evans as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 2 coyotes near the location of the kills. Work will be ongoing as needed.

West District

On Saturday, May 11th, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several lambing areas in Washoe County for several sheep producers that have reported losses of 109 lambs to coyote predation, valued at \$12,800, since lambing season began. During the flight, 3 coyotes were removed. The aerial crew also located a coyote den for removal. NDA FA Doug Koepke provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection work will continue.

During the month of May, Wildlife Specialist (WS) George Hansen maintained equipment around several lamb bands in Lander County. During the week, WS Hansen removed 2 coyotes near the lamb bands. Livestock losses in the area have increased lately with the recent addition of lambs birthing on the high desert. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock in his large work area.

On May 1st, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several lambing areas in Lander County. During the flight, 3 coyotes were removed, all of which were in the sheep. WS Hansen provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection work will continue.

On May 3rd, District Supervisor (DS) Jack Spencer, IP Gossard, WS John Peter and CM VanderMay provided a morning aerial livestock protection demonstration in Humboldt County. This particular area had lost 2 calves, valued at \$800, to coyotes. An Aviation Training Operations Center (ATOC) manager and safety officer were present to watch field staff locate coyotes and direct the aerial crew to their location. During the flight,



20 coyotes and 1 den were removed. The ATOC representatives expressed their appreciation for a day in the field watching protection efforts in northern Nevada.

On May 13th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several lambing areas in Pershing County. The sheep producer reported the loss of 4 lambs, valued at \$800, to coyotes. During the flight, 3 coyotes were removed. FA Koepke provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection work will continue.

On May 15th and May 17th, DS Spencer conducted a field inspection with Wildlife Biologist (WB) David Carrasco at a military facility in southern Nevada. DS Spencer inspected WB Carrasco's field equipment, including snares and foothold traps set to remove coyotes before they access active runways. A turkey vulture was also removed during the inspection as it was conducting low level flying in the approach of an active runway. WB Carrasco's transition to this project has gone very well and it is apparent that he is mission oriented and a team player.

On May 21st, DS Spencer and WS Hansen provided ground support for the helicopter aerial crew on a sheep producer in Lander County. The sheep producer reported coyotes killing newborn lambs on several lamb bands. During the morning flight, DS Spencer and WS Hansen located 3 coyotes and directed the helicopter to the coyote's location for removal. During the morning flight, 5 coyotes were removed around the lamb bands, which should greatly reduce losses. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On May 7th, a livestock producer from Humboldt County reported that 1 of their horses had been attacked by a lion. Although the horse survived, it received substantial cuts and tears in the neck and flank areas that required a lot of stitches from a veterinarian. WS Peter inspected the situation and placed a call box and trail snares in the immediate area to catch the lion if it returns. WS Peter will continue to monitor the situation.



On May 30th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several lambing areas in Lander County. During the flight, 4 coyotes were removed from in and around the sheep. The aerial crew also located a den for removal. These sheep bands have been flown many times, but the sound and sight of the lambs continue to draw in coyotes. WS Hansen provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection work will continue.

The month of May has been unseasonably cold, switching from rain to snow accompanied by wind in West District. The weather conditions made road travel difficult for trappers and the weather was not favorable at all for flying in the West District. The one bright side to all the moisture is at least there will be enough feed and water for livestock producers this year.

During the month of May, WB Zack Bowers continued protection efforts at a military installation in northern Nevada. WB Bowers utilized harassment with several methods to disperse 2,007 individuals from 28 species. Twenty seven problem animals were lethally removed from on and near the airfield that failed to respond to other methods. The individuals removed came from 2 species of mammals and 7 species of birds. The area where this airfield is located has received an above average amount of precipitation this winter/spring. Due to the types of soil in this location, there were still large areas of standing water in May, which attracted a variety of birds to the area. WB Bowers will continue efforts to protect aviation safety at this facility.

Many birds of concern to aviation safety are trying to nest on and near the airfield at the above mentioned facility. Some species are very persistent in their efforts to nest in a particular location. The problem is that some of these locations are areas of concern to aviation safety. Examples of these species are red-tailed hawks, Swainson's hawks, common ravens, killdeer and swallows. WB Bowers removed 3 nests, none of which were active. The nests were being constructed by red-tailed hawks and Swainson's hawks. Some of these species continuously try to rebuild the nest, which can take a considerable amount of time and effort to remove every week. WB Bowers is hopeful that in the future the preferred nest trees will be removed.

Also during the month of May, WB Bowers was dealing with a very concerning species in terms of Bird/animal aircraft strike hazard (BASH). American white pelicans are a species that many people are surprised to hear about in the deserts of northern Nevada. However, they have been nesting on an island in Northern NV for many years. American white pelicans are a large bird with a wing span up to 9 ½ feet, and can weigh over 16 pounds. They are also a gregarious species flying in large flocks, which is a hazardous situation when on, or near an airfield. In this situation they are attracted to the carp in the drains and ponds, on and near the airfield. This being the 3rd wet year in a row for this area, carp are abundant. The American white pelican's daily flights between nesting and feeding sites, coupled with their tendency to fly in a funnel cloud shaped flock while in thermals, results in quite a bit of time that they have been spending in conflicting air-space with aircraft. WB Bowers has been dispersing the American white pelicans from the area in the early morning hours well before the airfield opens, in an effort to reduce the time they are in conflicting airspace. WB Bowers will continue to monitor this situation.

WB Carl Frey and WS Cameron Green continued to implement a wildlife hazard management plan at a joint use aviation facility in northwestern Nevada. Waterfowl activity has reduced greatly due to nesting and migration. WB Frey also saw a reduction in birds of prey using the airfield. Three birds of prey were captured and translocated away from the facility. A total of 474 hazards were addressed at the facility.

WB Frey has worked with a local fenced business with considerable grass and water features to reduce the damage caused by nesting and loafing Canada geese. The use of live capture techniques and trained canine harassment has been implemented and has proven successful. This work is also benefitting aviation safety at a nearby



joint use facility.

During the first week of May, WB Carrasco captured and translocated 2 adult great horned owls using a modified Swedish goshawk trap to protect flying Service Members at a military installation in southern Nevada. Both adults were assessed, banded and translocated to the Overton wildlife management area.

New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report

Valuing and Investing in Employees

During the reporting period, WS Peter was selected by Deputy Administrator, Janet Bucknall, as the “National WS Specialist of the Year” for 2018.

On May 31st, WB Carrasco received an email from the Department of Defense Natural Resource Division thanking him and WS for doing an outstanding job presenting at the Earth Day event.

Information and Communication

Nothing to Report

Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

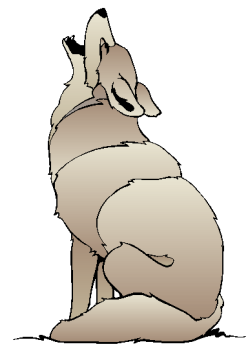
Nothing to Report

Future Meeting and Events

June 14th. N-4 Grazing Board in Eureka, NV. SD Jensen and DS Bennett to attend.



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