

November 2015

# 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 November, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **5.6** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$217.1** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$4.5** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **406** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$1,169** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$4,932** in damage to natural and agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During November, coyotes accounted for **\$4,694** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **448** 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 November, **158** samples were processed.

*The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of November, 2015.*

## 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 November 9<sup>th</sup>, Crew Member (CM) Wayne Rowley received a call concerning the loss of two lambs to coyote predation. The damage occurred in central Elko County on a farm flock of sheep. The value of the two lambs was placed at \$400. After confirming the losses, CM Rowley requested the assistance of the Ely airplane. On the morning of November 12<sup>th</sup>, the plane responded to the location and removed four coyotes near the location of the losses. No further losses have been reported.

On November 9<sup>th</sup>, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Allen Eldridge confirmed the loss of six adult sheep and one lamb to coyote predation. The total value of the sheep was placed at \$1,700. The damage occurred on a band of sheep located in White Pine County near the Utah border. WS Eldridge used calling and trapping to remove five coyotes near the sheep. WS Eldridge also requested the assistance of the Ely plane. A few days later, the plane was able to remove an additional four coyotes near the kill sites. No further losses have been reported and WS Eldridge continues to monitor the sheep for predation losses.



On November 18<sup>th</sup>, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett conducted a field inspection with CM Rowley. Since the new Elko pilot was in training, DS Bennett and CM Rowley assisted as the ground crew for the new pilot and an ATOC training pilot. Seven coyotes were removed during the flight. The ground crew also removed one coyote.



During November, WS Dayne Barnes confirmed the loss of two lambs valued at \$400 to raven predation. The damage occurred on a farm flock of sheep in southern Lincoln County. WS Barnes used eggs treated with DRC-1339 to remove 30 ravens that had been observed attacking the newborn lambs. To date, no further losses have been reported. WS Barnes also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendation to help prevent future losses.

During November, WS Randy Evans confirmed more than \$500 damage to a hay field in Elko County from badgers. The badgers were causing extensive damage by burrowing and digging into the field. WS Evans removed several badgers to stop the damage. WS Evans also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future damage.

During November, WS Scott MacDonald moved his field camp to his winter area and spent the month removing coyotes near several bands of winter sheep. The area WS MacDonald is working



has had historically high losses in the past. By removing coyotes just prior to the arrival of the sheep it has been demonstrated that losses can be significantly reduced.



During November, WS Scott Little also moved his camp to his winter area and was removing coyotes just prior to the arrival of several bands of sheep. WS Little has greatly reduced losses in his assigned winter area by removing coyotes in areas that have experienced high losses in the past.

During November, WS Mac Crome moved his field camp to Eastern Elko County. During the past several winters, WS Crome has been busy during the winter months removing coyotes to protect more than twelve bands of wintering sheep in his assigned areas.

**West District**

New employee Carl Frey started work in November as the new trapper for Lyon County. WS Frey was a wildlife biologist for the Idaho Game and Fish Department. WS Frey has experience trapping a wide variety of wildlife and extensive knowledge about animal behavior. The Nevada Wildlife Services program welcomes WS Frey and hopes he finds his new position both challenging and rewarding. (Picture of Carl)



On November 4<sup>th</sup>, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several cattle and sheep producers in Pershing County. Livestock losses have been minimal, though coyotes have started to move in around fall calving areas and around winter sheep bands. During the flight, eight coyotes were removed. WS Doug Koepke provided valuable ground service by locating several of the coyotes and directing the plane to the coyote's location. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On November 5<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight in Humboldt County around several calving areas. During the morning flight, 10 coyotes were removed. WS John Peter provided ground support during aerial operations. Cattle producers continue to request assistance from the aerial crew lately.



During the week November 2<sup>nd</sup> through November 6<sup>th</sup>, WS Ben Miller continued to protect bighorn sheep in northern Washoe County (hunt unit 011). WS Miller previously missed a lion that had walked around his trail snares the week prior near a guzzler. On November 5<sup>th</sup>, WS Miller removed the 125 pound male lion in the same area with the use of a trail snare. WS Miller will continue to protect these translocated California bighorn sheep.

On November 6<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around a calving area long known to have problems with coyotes. WS Peter showed up just prior to the planes arrival and voice howled to locate several coyotes for the plane. The aerial crew flew around the calves and removed 17 coyotes including a group of six coyotes running together.



On November 12<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several cattle and sheep producers in Pershing County. During the morning flight, 11 coyotes were removed. WS Koepke provided ground support.

During the week of November 16<sup>th</sup> through November 20<sup>th</sup>, WS Miller was running equipment and checking for lion sign on the Washoe County Bighorn Sheep project (hunt unit 011). WS Miller located a set of day old lion tracks, so using trailing hounds WS Miller trailed the lion for several hours before the 100 pound male finally treed and was removed. This was the 5<sup>th</sup>, lion WS Miller has removed around the bighorn sheep in the past four months. WS Miller will continue to protect bighorn sheep.

During the month of November, WS Peter placed and maintained ground equipment around calving areas in Humboldt and Pershing Counties, resulting in the removal of 48 coyotes. WS Peter will continue to protect livestock in his large work area.

On November 19<sup>th</sup>, WS Koepke checked M-44s placed around several calving and winter sheep bands in Pershing County. During inspection, WS Koepke removed five coyotes. WS Koepke will continue to protect livestock in his large and busy work area.



On November 19<sup>th</sup>, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several cattle producers in Humboldt County. During the morning flight, 10 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided valuable ground support.

On November 19<sup>th</sup>, WS Peter conducted M-44 training for WS Frey by demonstrating safe and effective use, including checking M-44's he'd placed around a problem calving area. WS Peter has extensive experience in safely using equipment to protect livestock and always looks forward to extending that knowledge to new employees through such training opportunities. Many thanks John!

On November 20<sup>th</sup>, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several cattle and sheep producers in Lander County. During the flight, seven coyotes were removed. WS George Hansen provided valuable ground support, spotting several of the coyotes for the aerial crew.



On November 23<sup>rd</sup>, DS Spencer conducted a site visit with WS Frey in Lyon County. During the visit, WS Spencer introduced WS Frey to several livestock producers. The aerial crew flew several calving and winter sheep bands in the area during the site visit, removing eight coyotes. WS Frey received training on locating coyotes and providing ground support for the aerial crew by DS Spencer.

On November 24<sup>th</sup>, DS Spencer and WS Frey conducted an early morning calling stand near a sheep ranch that lost four ewes (valued at \$800) to coyotes, resulting in the removal of a large male coyote. To date, no other sheep losses have been reported.

During the month of November, 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. Six species of birds and one mammalian species were dispersed from the airfield. Wildlife numbers on and around the airfield have increased. Species showing increased numbers compared to previous Novembers are blackbirds, ravens, mourning doves, red-tailed hawks, northern flickers, and western meadowlarks.

During the month of November, one strike occurred on the airfield. The Smithsonian Institute was able to confirm that it involved a house finch. This is another example of unusual patterns of bird activity this year. House finches have only occurred in runway surveys during the months of June through September. While they have been observed on the surrounding property during the months of January through November, there numbers are typically low in November with a peak during the months of June through August.



During the month of November, WB Hunter Moyles continued protection work on an international airport in Reno. During the month, WB Moyles continued to deter wildlife from using/crossing the airfield property. In an effort to deter these avian/mammalian species from crossing the airfield, WB Moyles utilized several methods of harassment. WB Moyles dispersed 111 birds and mammals from the airfield. Wildlife dispersed from the airfield included six species of birds and mammals. Many of these birds were congregated around a drainage ditch which holds water on a year around basis. WB Moyles will start to monitor the airfield and surrounding area using formal surveys and general observations.

During the last part of November, WB Moyles notice an increase in Canada Geese on surrounding properties. Increased hazing will be employed to keep the large geese away from the airfield.

On November 10<sup>th</sup> and November 20<sup>th</sup>, WB Moyles removed two Red-tailed hawks from the airport property. WB Moyles will continue to trap and translocate avian predators to reduce the threat to aircraft.

On November 17<sup>th</sup>, WB Moyles was conducting night time protection efforts when he received a call from airport operations personnel requesting assistance with a dog on the runway. WB Moyles responded along with airport personnel and were able to move the dog off the runway before it could cause a hazard to aircraft.

Along with several non-lethal harassment techniques, WB Moyles also had to deploy some lethal means of control to eliminate aircraft strike potential at the above mentioned airport. During the month, WB Moyles removed several offending species for public safety including: one Mallard, two red-tail hawks, and two pigeons by utilizing trapping and shooting. WB Moyles will continue to implement the current Wildlife Hazard Management Plan to reduce wildlife threats to aviation.



## **New and Developing Methods**

Nothing to Report

## **Valuing and Investing in Employees**

During the reporting period, WS Frey received his National Rifle Association (NRA) certifications for Basic Rifle, Pistol and Shotgun Training from SB Sengl, one of four Nevada Wildlife Services NRA certified instructors. WS requires that all employees receive such training prior to utilizing any firearms on the job. During the same training, WB Moyles received his agency required annual firearms refresher training.



During the reporting period, the new Elko pilot, IP Josh Pavia completed pilot training at the WS Aviation Training Center and began flying full time in Elko. Timing couldn't be better as he has some time to learn the country and begin livestock protection efforts in Elko County.

## **Information and Communication**

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) continues to be a threat to poultry operations in the US. As part of APHIS's mission to protect the health and value of America's agricultural and natural resources, APHIS has responded to numerous animal and plant health emergencies over the

years. By far, the worst in U.S. history was the outbreak of HPAI earlier this year. It was absolutely devastating to the poultry and egg industries, especially in the Midwest.



This fall and winter WS and NDOW are working together to sample waterfowl for any indication of HPAI. Although drought has greatly reduced the number of watersheds that can be sampled, the Central Lahontan and Lower Colorado-Lake Mead watersheds remain viable. As such, efforts will be focused in these watersheds. During the reporting period, Fall sampling goals were achieved. Many thanks to the waterfowlers for their participation and patience. Winter sampling is due to begin the first weekend of December and will continue through January.

On November 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>, State Director (SD) Mark Jensen, DS Bennett, SB Sengl and WS Peter attended and manned a booth at the Nevada Cattlemen's and Woolgrowers meeting in Winnemucca. In addition to meeting with livestock producers and members of the public, SD Jensen provided a program overview to sheep producers at the Woolgrower's Breakfast.

On November 16<sup>th</sup>, SD Jensen, DS Bennett and WS Evans attended the N-6 grazing board meeting in Austin. SD Jensen provided a program overview to the grazing board during the meeting.



## **Emerging Trends/Issues**

Nothing to Report

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

Nothing to Report

## **Future Meetings and Events**

Nothing to Report





USDA APHIS

# Wildlife Services



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