

November 2013

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

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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 Industries (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 **4.6** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$51.8** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$4.2** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **804** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **no** damage and WS Specialists verified **\$9,620** in damage to other agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During November, coyotes accounted for **\$9,394** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **261** 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, **30** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of November, 2013.

Resource Protection

State Office

During June, 2013, the State Office trap loaning program was suspended because of personnel deployed to Afghanistan. The State Office hopes to resume the trap loaning program in November-December. Technical assistance to assist Nevadans with alleviation of damage will still be provided, as well as response to reasonable imminent threats to human health and safety.

East District

On November 5th, a rancher in western White Pine County contacted the East District Office concerning the loss of two lambs, valued at \$250. District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett traveled to the location and confirmed that coyotes had caused the damage. On November 8th, the Ely plane responded to the location and removed four coyotes near the kills. DS Bennett also called and shot two more coyotes, bringing an end to the damage.

On November 8th, a rancher near Alamo, Nevada called the East District office concerning the loss of one calf, valued at \$1,200, to coyote predation.



The rancher also reported that several of her live-stock were about to calve and she was seeing numerous coyotes in her pastures and the coyotes had even started coming into her yard. On November 11th, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Scott Little traveled to the location and confirmed the damage. WS Little set a dozen traps near the location of the damage. Over the next two weeks, WS Little removed ten adult coyotes, bringing an end to the problem. WS Little also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses. No further problems have been reported.

On November 11th, a sheep producer contacted the East District Office concerning the loss of four replacement yearling ewe sheep to coyote predation. The sheep producer reported that he had purchased several hundred replacement ewes valued at \$1,800 each. He had them shipped them to a location near Baker, Nevada and coyotes killed the four sheep the first night they arrived. WS Scott MacDonald placed eight traps near the kills. A few days later, WS MacDonald removed three large adult coyotes. All of the coyotes had meat and wool in their stomachs. The sheep producer was so happy with the assistance he received from Wildlife Services that he called the East District Supervisor twice to express his appreciation. Technical assistance was provided in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses. No further losses have been reported at the location.



On November 19th, WS Matt Spires confirmed the loss of one yearling ewe lamb to bobcat predation. The lamb was valued at \$127. The damage occurred in northern White Pine County. WS Spires set several traps around the lamb. On November 27th, WS Spires caught an adult male bobcat, bringing an end to the damage. The bobcat was skinned and turned into the Ely Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) office the following day. No further losses have been reported. Although rare, bobcats do prey on livestock in Nevada.

WS Derril Fry spent the month of November protecting several bands of sheep as they trailed south for the winter. WS Fry removed ten coyotes. With WS Fry's efforts, no losses were reported. The area that WS Fry has been working has had historically high losses in the past from coyote predation.

Both WS Mac Crome and WS Randy Evans spent the month of November protecting fourteen bands of sheep near Wendover, Nevada. The sheep come to eastern Nevada from both Utah and Idaho to spend the winter months. Both Specialists removed several coyotes near the sheep. This area has had historically high losses the past several years. WS Crome and WS Evans will continue to work the area throughout the next several months, staying in their field camps south of Wendover.

The Ely airplane was busy during the month protecting livestock in both the Ely and Elko area. The Elko pilot has been on medical leave since the spring, so the Ely pilot has been working both areas.

West District



During the month of November, WS John Peter was busy addressing coyote complaints around calving areas, in Humboldt County. WS Peter typically places M-44s around the calving areas each fall and into the winter months to keep coyotes at bay in the vulnerable calving areas. During the month, WS Peter removed 30 coyotes utilizing this approach. WS Peter also employs trail snares and little to no leghold traps in his area because of the tremendous amount of work it takes to keep leghold traps working with freezing temperatures and snow cover. WS Peter will continue to protect livestock in his large work area.

On November 4th, Pilot Wes Gossard and Crew Member (CM) Brandon VanderMay conducted aerial operations around several calving areas, in Lander County. During the flight, 15 coyotes were removed right in and around the calves. Although these ranches have experienced losses in the past, to date no calf losses have been reported in the calving areas. WS George Hansen provided ground support during aerial operations.

On November 5th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations around a sheep producer, in Lyon County. The sheep producer had lost two ewes (valued at \$300) to coyotes. During the long flight the aerial crew removed two coyotes. WS Nick Smith provided ground support during aerial operations.

On November 6th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning aerial operation around a calving area, in Lander County. The aerial crew arrived and immediately observed four coyotes surrounding a calf and mother cow struggling to fend off the coyotes. The crew promptly removed the four coyotes before flying the remaining area. During the flight, a total of 15 coyotes were removed. WS Hansen provided ground support during aerial operations.

During the month of November, DS Jack Spencer provided protection efforts at a local international airport and a surrounding property. Certified Airport Biologist Spencer removed several coyotes and raccoons and employed nonlethal pyrotechnics to harass Canada geese at the airport. On November 6th, two small birds were struck by aircraft and DS Spencer met with airport personnel to identify birds and address future bird problems. Protection efforts will continue.

On November 14th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations around a sheep

producer, in Lyon County. The aerial crew flew several bands of sheep and removed two coyotes. WS Smith provided valuable ground support.

On November 27th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning aerial operation around several winter bands of sheep, in Pershing County. During the flight, six coyotes were removed. WS Doug Koepke provided ground support, during aerial operations.

On November 29th, a goat rancher in Churchill County reported that 27 goats (valued at \$5,400) had been killed by a predatory animal. WS Koepke inspected the situation and confirmed that the goats were likely killed by coyotes. WS Koepke is currently working to resolve the ongoing livestock complaint.

During the month of November, a young teenager was attacked by a coyote while walking home from school in an outlying valley of Reno. The teenager fought off the coyote with a stick, preventing him from being bitten. A NDOW Game Warden called DS Spencer and requested assistance in removing the offending coyote as it posed a public safety concern. DS Spencer immediately responded and investigated the area of concern. DS Spencer found large coyote tracks in the area of a single male coyote and attempted calling in the urbanized area with no luck. In three calling stands, DS Spencer called in three dogs and two joggers. DS Spencer came back later that evening and began prebaiting the coyote in hopes of eventually trapping it. A bucket of dog food was covered with a small piece of plywood to deter birds from the pre-bait effort. After about a week, tracks indicated that a large male coyote was readily consuming the dog food. On the night of November 22nd, DS Spencer placed two leg-hold traps a short distance from the pre-bait site and on Saturday, November 23rd, DS Spencer removed the depredating large male coyote. To date, no further coyote attacks on the public have occurred in this area. Resolving such issues are often challenging, assistance from State and local authorities is appreciated.



During the month of November, Wildlife Biologist (WB) Zack Bowers continued to deter horned larks, European starlings, coyotes and other wildlife from using/crossing the airfield. In an effort to keep these species from crossing the airfield, WB Bowers has utilized harassment with propane cannons, vehicle, voice and physically chasing them off. Utilizing these methods WB Bowers and the Airfield Manager harassed ten mallards, twelve horned larks, one great-blue herons, one bufflehead, and three dogs from on and around the airfield. In addition to non-lethal methods WB Bowers lethally removed one coyote from the airfield. Coyotes present on the airfield have the potential to cause damaging strikes to aircraft. Coyotes quickly habituate to non-lethal methods and it becomes necessary to use lethal control.

Colder weather has been settling in to Northern Nevada which has brought a decrease in wildlife activity on the airfield. Some species including coyotes, common ravens, and horned larks have actually shown increased activity. During the month of November, three strikes occurred at the airfield WB Bowers is working with. Two strikes have been positively identified by the Smithsonian feather identification lab as horned larks. Identification on the third strike is still pending.

New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report

Valuing and Investing in Employees

On December 4th, State Director (SD) Mark Jensen received a Letter of Thanks and Appreciation from the Smithsonian Institute for WB Luke Barto's wildlife specimen submissions while TDY to Kandahar, Afghanistan. Over 200 specimens were submitted to the Smithsonian by WB Barto to assist the Feather Identification Lab in identifying foreign wildlife strikes to aviation. The specimens were also utilized by other departments in the Smithsonian. Identification to genus and species level is vital in reducing wildlife strikes to aviation, as it is difficult to manage for an unknown. WB Barto's willingness to go above and beyond provided the Smithsonian with specimens that they normally wouldn't have access to and reflects the professionalism and dedication of our agency and employees. Congratulations WB Barto.



Information and Communication

On November 11th –14th. SD Jensen, DS's Spencer and Bennett manned a booth at the Cattlemen and Woolgrowers annual convention in Reno. Attendance appeared to be up from last year and the booth attracted many attendees and questions.

On November 18th, SD Jensen and DS Bennett attended the N-6 Grazing board meeting in Austin, Nevada. The meeting went very well.

Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report.

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report

Future Meetings and Events

December 3rd. Bi-State sage-grouse meeting in Bridgeport, CA. SD Jensen to attend.

December 4th. N-1 Grazing Board meeting in Elko, NV. SD Jensen and DS Bennett to attend.

December 5th. Board of Agriculture meeting. SD Jensen to attend via video conference.

December 6th and 7th. NDOW Commission meeting in Reno, NV. SD Jensen to attend.

December 10th. N-2 Grazing Board meeting in Winnemucca, NV. SD Jensen to attend.

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