

October 2014

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 October, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **5.2** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$63.9** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$5.3** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **83** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$202** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$13,843** in damage to utilities and other agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During October, coyotes accounted for **\$9,343** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **304** 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 October, **5** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of October, 2014.

Resource Protection

State Office

The State Office cage trap loaning program has been suspended. Those in need of a cage trap will be directed to their local private pest control company. Information and technical assistance to assist Nevadans with alleviation of damage will still be provided, as well as response to imminent threats to human health and safety.



During the first week of October, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Scott MacDonald hustled on prepping his equipment for winter and also set-up a camp in eastern White Pine County while responding to depredations occurring in northern White Pine County. In response to the loss of six adult



sheep and six lambs, valued at \$2,400, WS MacDonald removed one coyote by calling and the Ely plane helped out by removing an additional coyote.

On October 2nd, a rancher in northern Elko County called and reported that coyotes were starting to build up on their calving grounds. In response to the call, the Ely plane and Elko Crew member (CM) Wayne Rowley flew the calving grounds on October 9th, removing 18 coyotes. Though down a pilot, WS will continue to assist when able.



On October 5th, WS Mac Crome confirmed the loss of one adult ewe, valued at \$200, to coyote predation. In response to the loss, WS Crome removed one coyote on October 6th with the use of ground equipment, and shot an additional coyote off of a kill on October 7th. No further losses have been reported and WS Crome continues to monitor the sheep in his work area.

On October 9th, WS Scott Little verified the loss of two adult sheep to coyote predation, loss valued at \$500. In response to the loss, WS Little hung trail snares which resulted in the removal of two coyotes on October 17th, resolving the problem. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was made although some were already in place.

On October 10th, the Ely plane and CM Rowley provided some preventative flying for a producer in Eureka County who experiences historical livestock losses during the early winter months. Although non-lethal practices are already in place and greatly reduce loss, direct control is necessary to reinforce the nonlethal approaches. During the aerial operation, 64 coyotes were removed.



On October 28th, Crew member Wayne Rowley conducted some preventative work in southern Elko County. Coyotes have historically caused damage to a producer's sheep as they come down to their wintering grounds. To reduce the coming losses, CM Rowley used calling to remove three coyotes. As previously mentioned, the east district is currently short-handed, but will still provide assistance when able.

During the month of October, WS Randy (Paul) Evans verified the loss of three lambs, valued at \$2,400, to coyote predation in southern Eureka County. In response to the depredations, WS Evans was running wide open utilizing calling, trapping and the Ely plane to remove 16 coyotes to stop the damage. Protection efforts are ongoing.



West District

On October 1st, Pilot Wes Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several winter sheep bands in Lyon County. The sheep producer reported that the colder temperatures were bringing in more coyotes around the sheep. During the early morning flight three coyotes were removed. WS Nick Smith provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection efforts are ongoing.

On October 6th, WS John Peter inspected equipment he had placed around a calving area in Humboldt County. The rancher had also requested assistance about feral pigs that were also causing damage to his barley fields. Upon inspection WS Peter removed eight coyotes around the calving area by method of trail snares and one feral boar near the barley fields. The rancher was very pleased with the protection efforts. WS Peter is a very skilled trapper with nearly 30 years of experience. Protection efforts are ongoing.

During the month of October, WS Ben Miller was busy placing equipment around bighorn sheep areas in hunt unit 013. WS Miller reported that a male lion was occasionally visiting water-holes right in amongst the bighorn sheep. WS Miller placed a call box and snares in areas to intercept the lion before it has a chance to kill any bighorn sheep. The temperatures have been unseasonably warm which keep bighorn sheep near the water which seems to draw in lions.



On October 6th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several winter sheep bands in the high mountains of Lander County. The sheep producer reported that coyotes had been killing sheep every few days high on the mountain. During the flight, six coyotes were removed. The livestock losses ceased for the time being, however, as the sheep move into new areas there will likely be more coyote associated losses. WS George Hansen provided ground support.



During the week of October 7-10th, WS Hansen was busy inspecting equipment near several sheep bands in Lander County. The sheep producer reported that coyotes were showing up daily around the sheep, but no losses had occurred because WS Hansen was removing them before they could cause any damage. The result of the equipment check was the removal of 15 coyotes that WS Hansen had caught around the sheep. The rancher was pleased to have the coyotes removed before they started killing his sheep. This is a true testament to all the hard work and dedication WS Hansen does on the

job every day.

On October 20th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around two winter sheep bands in Lander County. During the flight, five coyotes were removed. WS Hansen provided ground support.

On October 21st, WS Peter worked around two sheep bands in Humboldt County that just moved into an area that usually has coyote problems. WS Peter walked around the sheep and made calling stands as he hiked long distances. During the day, WS Peter removed seven coyotes with the use of calling. Protection efforts will be on going.

On October 22nd, DS Spencer conducted a field inspection with Pilot Gossard, CM VanderMay and WS Hansen in Lander County. DS Spencer and WS Hansen provided ground support for the aerial crew which resulted in the removal of eight coyotes around calving/sheep areas. DS Spencer also talked with several ranchers in the area and they were pleased with the protection efforts the aerial crew and WS Hansen provide, but expressed the need for the Austin trapper position to be brought back. DS Spencer will continue to meet employees and livestock producers in the field.



On October 23rd, DS Spencer conducted a field inspection with WS Peter in Humboldt County. WS Peter took advantage of DS Spencer's presence and put him to work setting equipment. During the day, DS Spencer and WS Peter placed dozens of trail snares for feral pigs on several ranches. One rancher reported that feral pigs destroyed \$2,000 worth of barley hay. Four feral pigs were removed including a large boar. DS Spencer had a cattle producer mention that he was very pleased with all the livestock protection efforts WS Peter has provided for him over the years. DS Spencer will continue to provide field inspections when time allows.

During the month of October, WS Doug Koepke was busy protecting sheep, cattle and goats in Churchill County. Each fall, WS Koepke receives numerous calls about livestock losses for smaller livestock operators in this area. One goat producer lost 20 kids, valued at \$2,000, so WS Koepke removed two coyotes and provided some non-lethal methods to help the producer in the future. WS Koepke will continue to protect livestock.



During the month of October, 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. WB Bowers harassed eight species of birds from on and around the airfield including red-tailed hawks, mallards, blackbirds and great blue herons. WB Bowers continues to monitor the airfield and surrounding area on a daily basis in order to stay on top of the situation.

Throughout the month of October, WB Luke Barto continued to apply wildlife hazard management strategies in an effort to protect aviation safety at a local airport. Continued surveillance both on and around the airport is critical in developing trends in wildlife movements, which in turn allows biologists and airport managers to take the appropriate proactive management approaches, such as habitat reduction and exclusion projects which when completed prior to wildlife moving into an area, can reduce or prevent wildlife from utilizing an area entirely.

In addition to continued surveillance, WB Barto also employs non-lethal dispersal in conjunction with direct control methods to reduce avian and mammalian threats to aviation safety. WB Barto harassed a large murder of approximately 200 American crows that despite harassment, continued to roost nearby, as well as 75 Mallard ducks and one mule deer. This is the second mule deer to find itself on airport property throughout the year and a total of seven in the last two years. Fortunately the deer did not gain access to the Airfield Operating Area (AOA).



Lethal reinforcement of non-lethal approaches resulted in the removal of 12 rock doves, two killdeer, two American crows and one California gull.

Also of interest, a small domestic canine was harassed and hazed off the airfield where it was later captured and transferred to Washoe County Animal Services. Airports often surrounded by urban areas can be susceptible to domestic threats to aircraft as much as wildlife.

Four wildlife strikes were reported throughout the month of October at the above mentioned airport, with one resulting in approximately \$200. Wildlife positively identified includes one Brewer's blackbird and one Western meadowlark.

A wildlife hazard working group was called to meeting to address future projects and review annual and seasonal changes in wildlife habitat and movements.

New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report



Valuing and Investing in Employees

During the month of October, Pilot Gossard received his Instructor Pilot (IP) rating and is now a certified flight instructor. DS Spencer was happy to assist in promoting Pilot Gossard's training and development. Thanks to IP Gossard's hard work, the Nevada Wildlife Services Program now has two Instructor Pilots. Congratulations IP Gossard!

Information and Communication

On October 9th, District Supervisor (DS) Jack Spencer was interviewed by the Sparks Tribune regarding urban coyotes and pet losses reported by residents. Coyotes thrive on anthropogenic food sources in urban areas and come into conflict with homeowner's and their pets. Coyotes also benefit from protection that comes from urban areas such as: congested firearms areas where firearm discharge is prohibited; and trapping regulations that prevent trapping from occurring within specified distances of houses and other special designated areas unless special authorization from managing agencies is received. DS Spencer recommended non-lethal methods such as barrier exclusion, fencing and keeping pets in coyote proof kennels. WS will continue to provide technical assistance to assist in reducing the potential threat of losing pets to coyotes.

On October 14th-17th, WB Barto attended a military overseas orientation briefing in Washington D.C.. As WB Barto had already been overseas, he spent much of the time just helping other biologists with familiarization of customs and experiences.

Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report

Future Meetings and Events

October 14th-17th, overseas military detail orientation, WB Barto to attend in Washington D.C..

November 3rd, 4th and 5th, Cattlemen's and Woolgrower's meeting in Elko, State Director (SD) Mark Jensen, DS Spencer and Staff Biologist Jack Sengl to attend.

November 17th-December 12th, SD Jensen will detail to the Regional office to act as the Assistant Regional Director.

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