

September 2017

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 September, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **6.3** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$124.2** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$8.3** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **2,697** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$37,147** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$35,849** in damage to natural and agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During September, coyotes accounted for **\$11,007** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **334** 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 September, **6** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of September, 2017.

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

During the last week of August, a lion killed two ewes and 11 lambs in central Eureka County. The value of the losses was placed at \$2,700. On August 31st, Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler traveled to the location and confirmed the losses. The sheep herder had taken pictures of the lion on two occasions but did not have a gun to shoot the lion. Using his mule and six well trained dogs, MLS Buhler was able to track and trail the depredating lion and tree it. One well-placed shot brought the damage to an end. The lion was a two year old female. No further losses have been reported. MLS Buhler rode into the sheep camp a few days later to make sure no further predation had occurred.



On September 1st, Crew Member (CM) Wayne Rowley confirmed the loss of three lambs valued at \$600 to coyote predation. The damage occurred on a remote band of sheep in central Elko County. The only way to check on the sheep and stop the damage was with the use of CM Rowley's horse. CM Rowley was able to call and shoot one large adult male coyote near the location of the kills. No further losses have been reported. CM Rowley also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses. CM Rowley will continue to protect the sheep until they come off the mountain and are shipped later in September or early October.

On September 1st, Field Assistant (FA) Scott MacDonald confirmed the loss of one ewe valued at \$300. The damage happened on a small farm flock of sheep in eastern White Pine County. During the next several weeks, FA MacDonald used traps to remove two adult coyotes near the ranch house bringing an end to the damage. No further losses have been reported. FA MacDonald also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses. FA MacDonald will continue to check with the rancher to make sure he is not having additional predation problems.

On September 8th, the Ely plane responded to a call concerning the loss of seven lambs valued at \$1,400. The rancher reported that coyotes had killed all seven lambs in a pasture near his house. With the help of WS Scott Little and FA Hunter Bodenchuk, the plane was able to remove three coyotes near the kills. FA Bodenchuk also set several traps near the pasture that was experiencing the predation. During the next two weeks an additional two coyotes were removed. Work will continue as needed to protect the sheep. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was also provided.

On September 14th, FA Allen Eldridge confirmed the loss of one lamb, valued at \$200, to raven predation. The rancher reported seeing several dozen ravens attacking his young lambs. FA Eldridge traveled to the location in central White Pine County and used hard boiled chicken eggs treated with DRC-1339 to remove 24 ravens near the kill site. No further losses have been reported. FA Eldridge also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.



On September 15th, the Ely plane responded to a call concerning the loss, of at least 10 lambs, valued at \$2,000. With the assistance of FA Allen Eldridge as the ground crew, the plane was able to

remove two coyotes near the sheep. Work will be ongoing in the area until the lambs are shipped to market. The sheep producer was very thankful for the help he received from Wildlife Services and the Ely plane.

On September 20th, the Ely plane responded to a sheep producer in northern White Pine County after the sheep producer reported the loss, of at least one ewe and six lambs, valued at \$1500. The sheep producer reported that the lambs were killed and completely eaten in one night. With the help of FA Eldridge as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 10 coyotes during the morning's flight. Work will continue in the area and FA Eldridge will continue to monitor the band of sheep for future problems.



On September 22nd, the Ely plane responded to a call for assistance from a sheep producer in southern White Pine County. The sheep producer had lost eight lambs, valued at \$1,600, to coyote predation. With the help of District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 12 coyotes. The night prior, the area received 8-9 inches of fresh snow that helped the aerial operation in locating the depredating coyotes.

On September 28th, the Ely plane responded to a request from a sheep producer in northern White Pine County. The producer had lost several lambs that were confirmed by FA Eldridge during the past several weeks. With the help of FA Eldridge, the plane was able to locate and remove seven coyotes near the sheep. Work will continue in the area.

On September 29th, the Ely plane responded to several sheep producers and cattle producers in eastern Nye County and western White Pine County. One sheep producer had lost one lamb and 10 chickens valued at just over \$400 to coyote predation. With the help of DS Bennett, the plane was able to remove 10 coyotes during the morning's flight. No further losses have been reported and work will continue in the area.

During the month of September, FA MacDonald confirmed the loss of 11 lambs on two different bands of sheep in Central White Pine County. The value of the 11 lambs was placed at \$2,200. FA MacDonald used traps to remove 11 coyotes near the location of the kills. No further losses have been documented and FA MacDonald continues to monitor the livestock in his assigned work area. FA MacDonald also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to both sheep producers in an effort to help prevent future losses.

During the month of September, FA Eldridge confirmed the loss of two lambs, valued at \$400, to coyote predation. FA Eldridge used traps and calling to remove three adult coyotes near the kills. No further losses have been confirmed. FA Eldridge also provided non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help prevent future losses.

WS Mac Crome was very busy protecting several bands of sheep in northern Elko County. WS Crome confirmed the loss of four lambs valued at \$800 to coyote predation. WS Crome was able to remove three coyotes near the kills. One coyote was a large adult male that was shot as it fed on a freshly killed lamb. WS Crome will continue to work the livestock in his area. WS Crome also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to reduce future loss-

es.



During the month of September, CM Nathan Fowler was busy helping protect sheep while he was not flying. During the month, CM Fowler confirmed the loss of at least 15 lambs valued at \$3,000 to coyote predation. The damage occurred on to different allotments in White Pine County. CM Fowler used traps and calling and shooting to remove seven coyotes near the kills. The sheep producers were very pleased with the effort they received from CM Fowler. CM Fowler also provided technical assistance in an effort to prevent future losses.

During September, WS Scott Little confirmed the loss of six lambs valued at \$1,200 to coyote predation. WS Little was able to remove two coyotes near the kills. Work is continuing around the several bands of sheep in WS Little assigned work area. WS Also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to reduce future losses.



During the month of September, WS Mike Eldridge continued to work on NDOW Project 37 to protect desert bighorn sheep from lion predation. WS Eldridge was able to confirm the loss of two bighorn sheep to mountain lion predation. WS Eldridge removed one two year old male lion near the kill locations. This is the same project and area that the female lion was removed from last month due to bighorn sheep predation. Work will continue in the area.

During the last two weeks of September, DS Bennett confirmed the loss of two lambs, valued at \$400, to coyote predation. DS Bennett used traps to remove one adult male coyote near the last kill. No further losses were reported on the band of sheep. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was provided to help prevent future losses.

West District

On September 1st, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around two cattle producers in Humboldt County that have experienced historic losses. During the flight, five coyotes were removed. WS John Peter used his decoy dogs to push several coyotes out of brushy areas for the aerial crew to remove. Protection efforts will be ongoing as fall calving is well underway in the West District.

During the first two weeks of September, several cattle producers reported some loss and harassment of small calves in the West District. During morning flights at various calving areas, 49 additional coyotes were removed. The aerial crew will continue to fly



as weather permits.

During the reporting period, WS Mark Bentz continued protection efforts at calving areas in Lyon and Douglas Counties, removing 12 coyotes with the use of snares and foothold traps. WS Bentz will continue to protect livestock in his work area.

During the reporting period, WS Peter continued protection efforts around numerous calving areas in northern Humboldt County. Utilizing firearms, foothold traps and snares, WS Peter removed 19 coyotes. WS Peter will continue to protect livestock in his work area.

On September 22nd, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several cattle producers in Pershing County. During the flight, 11 coyotes were removed. WS Doug Koepke provided ground crew efforts. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

During the week of September 18th through September 22nd, WS Hansen continued to check ground equipment around numerous calving areas in Lander County. During his trap check, WS Hansen removed 11 coyotes from snares and foothold traps. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock in his work area.

On September 25th through September 26th, DS Jack Spencer conducted field inspections with IP Gossard, CM VanderMay and WS Peter in Humboldt County. DS Spencer also met with a livestock



producer's manager north of Winnemucca to see if he was happy with the protection services he has received. The manager had nothing but positive comments for the protection efforts the aerial crew and WS Peter have provided for them over the years. The aerial crew showed up just after the meeting and removed 18 coyotes, 11 of which were called in for the plane by DS Spencer and



WS Peter. Aerial operations are almost always more efficient with the assistance of an effective ground crew.

On September 28th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several cattle producers in Lander County. During the flight, 16 coyotes were removed. WS Hansen located several of the coyotes. Protection efforts will be ongoing as fall calving is well underway.

On September 29th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around a sheep producer and several cattle producers in Humboldt County south of Denio, NV. During the flight, 27 coyotes were removed. WS Peter used his decoy dogs to push coyotes out of brushy areas and trailed up several offending coyotes lingering around a winter sheep band. Protection efforts will be ongoing and with the cooler temperatures coyotes are starting to move in around livestock.





During the month of September, Wildlife Biologist (WB) Zack Bowers was on leave quite a bit and as a result only had nine working days in the month to report on. However, WB Bowers continued protection efforts at a military installation in northern Nevada. WB Bowers utilized harassment with several methods to disperse 86 individuals from 10 species. WB Bowers will continue efforts to protect aviation safety at this facility.

During the month of September, WB Dean Pyzik reported two bird strikes at a military installation in southern Nevada. Total wildlife strikes to aircraft for Fiscal Year (FY 17) was 33 bird strikes, causing \$14,176 in damage. One red-shouldered hawk was trapped in a modified Swedish goshawk trap and translocated to reduce the chance of the bird being struck or sucked into a jet intake.



Also during the reporting period, WB Pyzik removed nine mammals from the installation while dispersing 1,662 birds with his truck, firearms and pyrotechnics. Of those 1,662 birds dispersed, mourning doves accounted for 68% of the birds dispersed while patrolling and conducting perimeter checks at the installation. Mammals removed consisted of rabbits to directly and indirectly reduces the potential for wildlife strikes to aviation as a removed rabbit will not be struck by an aircraft, nor will it draw in avian/mammalian predators into arriving/departing aircraft.

During the month, the presence of migratory birds in Reno/Sparks has been increasing steadily. The Reno Wildlife Services airport staff have been working together on the joint-use facility, employing harassment and lethal control to reinforce the non-lethal component of wildlife hazard management. There were 1,342 birds and mammals dispersed from the airfield. WS Cameron Green removed two coyotes from the Aircraft Operating Area with some quick and coordinated assistance from airport operations staff. Several waterfowl and wader species that are migrating through are posing a threat to aircraft. The most notable is the return of Canada geese, requiring the lethal removal of nine to encourage the dispersal of 184. Other species included mallards with six removed and 78 hazed. The waders posing a threat are the great egret and great blue heron with one each removed from the facility. In all, 71 threats were removed from the airfield with around 50% of which were pigeons that draw in birds of prey (raptors).

There has been a huge influx of migratory red-tailed hawks coming through the area and with the open spaces and agricultural areas around the aviation facility the trend is expected to continue. Wildlife Services airport staff banded and translocated 12 red-tailed hawks. By banding the raptors, WS and aviation managers are able to track return rate data and learn optimal cardinal distances to move these birds with higher confidence that they won't return and challenge aviation safety. So far only one has returned, which prompted its removal.





WB Carl Frey and WS Green also caught two American kestrels during the month. Both were banded and translocated. The American kestrel is a part of a national study involving airports and translocation distances. Nevada has been included in the banding of the birds for this study. So both legs are banded one with a metal band and one with a Wildlife Service's specific auxiliary band that is orange and white.



orange and white.

Also during the reporting period, WB Frey continued day and night Wildlife Hazard Surveys at a military installation in California as well as one in Nevada. A total of 1,882 birds and mammals were surveyed throughout the month.

New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report

Valuing and Investing in Employees

During the reporting period, DS Spencer received his 20 year pin for completing 20 years of federal service.

On September 25th, 26th and 27th, CM Rowley and CM Fowler attended crew member training at the training center. Both employees passed the training with 100%. Attending trainings on an annual basis ensure for safe aerial operations.

Information and Communication

On September 27th, WS Crome removed an Elko County coyote that was heavily infected with oral papillomatosis (oral warts). A rarity in Nevada. Although not zoonotic, the virus can be passed among canid species. Fortunately for WS Crome, he had the foresight to ask about the anomaly and followed proper sterilization procedures to prevent his dogs from becoming infected.



Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report

Future Meeting and Events

Nothing to Report.

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