

September 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

775-851-4848

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 September, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **4.1** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$41.1** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$8.9** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **343** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$22,195** in damage and WS Specialists verified another **\$5,613** in damage to other agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During September, coyotes accounted for **\$4,943** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **191** 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, **20** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of September, 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 September 1st, Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler received a call concerning a problem with a mountain lion. The sheep rancher reported the loss of three lambs to lion predation. The following morning, MLS Buhler responded to the sheep ranch in Nye County. Upon arriving, MLS Buhler found the three lambs that had been killed the day before, as well as three fresh lambs that had just been killed. The value of the six lambs was placed at \$750. WS Buhler placed six of his best dogs on the track. A short distance later an adult female lion was treed and shot. The lion was in very good condition and its stomach full of lamb. The lion was skinned and turned into the Ely, Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) Office. MLS Buhler also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses. The sheep producer was very pleased with MLS Buhler's quick response and stopping the depredations.



During the month of September, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Derril Fry documented the loss of three lambs, valued at \$251, to coyote predation. WS Fry utilized calling, trapping and snaring to remove six coyotes near the location of the kills. WS Fry also called upon the Ely plane on at least two occasions to help stop the predation. The plane was able to remove several more coyotes near the



bands of sheep experiencing the losses. No further losses have been reported and WS Fry will continue to monitor the situation. WS Fry provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future problems.

On September 16th, WS Scott Little received a call from a sheep herder west of Ely, Nevada that reported he had just spotted a coyote on a fresh lamb kill. WS Little was only about four miles from the location and headed to the location at a high rate of speed. Upon arriving at the location, WS Little started the hike into the band of sheep. When WS Little arrived, he saw an adult coyote chasing a lamb. One well-placed shot brought an end to the

damage. The offending coyote had killed eight lambs, valued at \$960. The herder and sheep owner were very pleased with the quick assistance provided by WS Little.

During September, WS Mac Crome confirmed the loss of three lambs, valued at \$251 to coyote predation. WS Crome used traps and calling to remove seven coyotes near the kills. WS Crome also acted as the ground crew on several occasions for the Ely plane. The lambs in WS Crome's area

were shipped during the month; however the adult ewes will remain for several more weeks. WS Crome will continue to monitor the sheep for predation problems before moving his camp to his winter range.

During September, WS Scott MacDonald was busy protecting two bands of sheep in Eureka County and three bands of sheep in northern White Pine County. Although WS MacDonald did not have any reported predation, he did remove eight coyotes near the sheep, no doubt preventing some losses. The location that WS MacDonald removed the coyotes has a long history of losses. The two sheep producers have been very pleased with all of the hard work WS MacDonald has provided. WS MacDonald spent the past week cleaning up his camp and equipment and is gearing up to move his camp to his winter range in preparation for the arrival of several bands of sheep from neighboring states.

During the month of September, WS Randy Evans was very busy dealing with predation issues near Ely, Nevada. WS Evans purchased a horse and prepared all of his equipment. WS Evans has been riding into a remote band of sheep high on the Schell Creek Mountain Range. WS Evans will continue to work this area for the next month or so.

During September, WS Dayne Barnes continued his wildlife protection efforts in Lincoln County. WS Barnes has used his mules and dogs to check several water sources for potential predation issues that might impact desert bighorn sheep and mule deer. WS Barnes is working on an NDOW project for the protection of sheep, deer and other wildlife in his assigned area.

During September, WS Matt Spires confirmed the loss of four lambs, valued at \$335 to coyote predation. The predation took place high in the Schell Creek Mountains north of Ely, Nevada. WS Spires utilized calling and traps to remove four coyotes near the kills. WS Spires also acted as the ground crew for the Ely plane on several occasions during the month.



Most all sheep producers shipped their lambs to market during the middle part of September. The majority of sheep in eastern Nevada have spent the past several months in the highest reaches of the mountain ranges. Later in the month the adult sheep will begin the long journey to their winter ranges.

West District



Throughout the month of September, West District employees remained busy protecting livestock and natural resources from predation by utilizing: trapping, snaring, calling, M-44 devices and the plane. 97 coyotes were removed in response to the loss of:



one calf (\$785), four sheep (\$511), eight lambs (\$668) and 17 chickens (\$324).

On September 13th, Pilot Wes Gossard and Crew Member (CM) Brandon VanderMay conducted aerial operations around several sheep bands in Humboldt County. During the flight, six coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground support and protection efforts are ongoing.

During the week of September 3rd through September 6th, WS George Hansen was busy checking ground equipment around several sheep bands on the Elko/Lander County border. On September 3rd, WS Hansen removed three coyotes, on September 4th, trapped four coyotes and on September 6th, removed six additional coyotes. WS Hansen employed the use of leghold traps, trail snares and M-44s. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock in his work area.

On September 5th-6th, WS Doug Koepke conducted calling near several sheep bands in Washoe County. During the two days of calling efforts, WS Koepke removed four coyotes. WS Koepke will continue to protect livestock.

On September 5th, a livestock producer from Lyon County reported that the two of their children's show lambs (valued at \$1,000+ depending on sale) were killed by a lion. WS Nick Smith inspected the situation and placed leghold traps around the sheep carcasses that evening. Eight hours later, WS Smith inspected his traps and found that he had caught the adult offending female lion which he euthanized.

On September 26th, WS Ben Miller conducted routine equipment checks in remote locations of the Washoe County mule deer project (hunt unit 014). During equipment inspection, WS Miller discovered that he had trail snared an estimated 130 pound male lion near a group of 26 mule deer bucks. WS Miller continued on, checking his trail snares and removed an additional five coyotes. WS Miller reported seeing 30-60 mule deer bucks a day while checking equipment. Some of these bucks sported antlers over 40 inches wide while others had various non-typical points, so hunters with 014 tags during the upcoming deer season, should be in for good bucks and lots of them. WS Miller will continue to protect mule deer and bighorn sheep in hunt unit 014.



During the month of September West District employees are getting M-44 equipment ready to place in the field to better cover the large voids where there are no longer any trappers left. From the Arizona border to the Oregon border and all of western Nevada there are only four livestock trappers left, so tools such as the M-44 device allows for once a week check that ultimately helps with mileage and time constraints.

During the month of September, Wildlife Biologist (WB) Zack Bowers continued to deter great blue herons, mallards, 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 harassed two hundred ninety four mallards, eight wood ducks, five great-blue herons, and twenty barn swallows from on and around the airfield. WB Bowers has the ability to utilize pyrotechnics on the airfield as

well. However, due to the dry conditions WB Bowers has refrained from using them. In addition to non-lethal methods WB Bowers lethally removed two coyotes and one black-tailed jackrabbit 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.



During the month of September, WB Bowers gave a presentation at the quarterly bird animal strike hazard (BASH) meeting to airfield personnel. The presentation provided a summary of the wildlife hazard assessment (WHA), and provided an update of recent wildlife activity and efforts used to reduce the presence of hazardous species on and around the airfield. WB Bowers also pointed out potentially hazardous species likely to increase in numbers in the coming months. Habitat modification often provides the best long term solution for reducing hazardous species on and around airfields. The habitat modifications made in the WHA were discussed as well as the potential of prioritizing the recommendations in order to facilitate funding.

During the month of September two strikes occurred at the airfield WB Bowers is working with. One strike has already been positively identified by the Smithsonian feather identification lab as a barn swallow. WB Bowers has been harassing barn swallows from the airfield using a variety of methods. With colder temperatures moving into the area WB Bowers is looking forward to the swallows heading to warmer climates. WB Bowers will continue to look for means of reducing the attractiveness of the airfield to swallows. Positive identification on the other strike is still pending.

New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report

Valuing and Investing in Employees

Nothing to Report

Information and Communication

On September 20th and 21st, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett and State Director (SD) Mark Jensen attended the NDOW Commission meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada. Many of the NDOW/Wildlife Services projects were discussed during the two day meeting.

On September 28th, DS Bennett and Staff Biologist (SB) Jack Sengl provided presentations at the Nevada Trapper's Association's annual trapper's education day near Mount Charleston. DS Bennett covered the role of our agency and also discussed the evolution of trap-



ping equipment while SB Sengl discussed disease and methods to reduce risk of disease while working with wildlife.

September found WB Luke Barto hard at it on his temporary duty assignment in Kandahar Afghanistan (KAF), which is located in the middle of the Indus Flyway and is at the foothills of the Hindu Kush mountain range, making Kandahar a major resting location for migrating birds. Spring migration occurs between April to June and fall migration between August to September, with this year being no exception. Thousands of birds were attracted to the many attractants on the airfield with house sparrows, rosy-colored starlings and laughing doves being the major threats to aircraft during the fall migration.



Throughout the month of September there were a total of 22 strikes reported, and one involving a Common rock thrush reporting \$46 in damages to replace rivets. A total of 1,230 animals were removed and 775 were harassed to protect aviation safety during September. One jackal, one jungle cat and one Indian mongoose were among the more interesting species removed.



Habitat projects throughout the month of September include a controlled burn of Phragmites weed in one of the settling ponds on base. Phragmites is used by common moorhens, barn swallows and common teal for cover and perches.

Emerging Trends/Issues

Due to the federal government shutdown, this edition of "The Trapline" is abbreviated. Apologies to our cooperators and the public.

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report

Future Meetings and Events

Nothing to Report

This Page Intentionally Left Blank



USDA APHIS

Wildlife Services



USDA-APHIS-WS
8775 Technology Way
Reno, NV 89521

