

July 2012

The Trapline

United States Department of
Agriculture

Animal & Plant Health
Inspection Service

Wildlife Services



Cooperating with:

Nevada

Department of Agriculture

Division of Resource Protection



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 Resource Protection (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 July, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **4** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$62** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$8.5** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **464** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$14,178** in damage and WS Specialists verified another **\$12,107** in damage to other agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During July, coyotes accounted for **\$8,200** 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 July, **32** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of July, 2012.

Resource Protection

State Office

During July, 2012, the State Office trap loaning program checked out **32** cage traps. The species distribution for the traps loaned out were: raccoons (**11**), ground squirrels (**18**) and striped skunks (**3**). Information regarding baits to use, trap placement tactics, handling of trapped animals and safety precautions to take when working with the wildlife species were provided for all equipment loaned.

East District

On July 2nd, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Billy Taylor confirmed the loss of four lambs, valued at \$800, to coyote predation. The predation took place over a four day period in central White Pine County. On July 2nd, WS Taylor set several traps near the kill locations. During the next several days, WS Taylor removed two large adult male coyotes utilizing the traps. No further losses have been reported. In addition to the non lethal techniques already in place, WS Taylor provided technical assistance on other non lethal recommendations to the sheep producer to help prevent future predation problems. The cooperator is very pleased with WS Taylor's hard work and dedication to preventing losses. WS Taylor has done an excellent job while working for the Nevada Wildlife Services Program.

On July 1st, a farmer in northern Nye County contacted the East District Office concerning a problem with black-tailed jack rabbits. The rabbits had consumed approximately \$10,000 worth of his alfalfa crop. The producer reported that he had attempted several non lethal techniques including rabbit fencing and harassment/hazing but nothing was working. The rancher offered to provide the shotgun shells if Wildlife Services would help. During the next several weeks, three wildlife specialists removed a large number of jack rabbits in and around the alfalfa fields to reduce the losses. The alfalfa farmer was very pleased with the help he received from Wildlife Services.



On July 2nd, WS Mac Crome confirmed the loss of three lambs to coyote predation. The sheep producer reported the lambs' value at \$600. The same day, WS Crome was able to call and shoot one adult coyote near the kills. WS Crome also requested the assistance of the Ely plane. The following day, the Ely plane responded and removed one additional coyote. No further losses have been reported on this band of sheep. WS Crome provided technical assistance recommendations to the sheep producer.



On July 9th and July 10th, WS Matt Spires confirmed the loss of three lambs, valued at \$600, to coyote predation. WS Spires placed several traps near the location of the kills. On the next visit, WS Spires removed two coyotes from the traps. After the two coyotes were removed, no further losses have been reported on this band of sheep. WS Spires also provided technical assistance non lethal recommendations, many of which were already being utilized by the sheep producer at the time the lambs were lost (guard dogs, night penning, and harassment).

On July 9th, WS Crome confirmed the loss of four lambs to coyote predation. The value of the four lambs was placed at \$800. On July 11th, the Ely plane responded to the location. With the assistance of WS Crome as the ground crew, the plane removed one coyote near the site of the kills. WS Crome also removed three additional coyotes near the kill site, ending the problem. No further losses have been reported from this particular band of sheep. WS Crome provided technical assistance on non lethal methods. The sheep producer is very pleased with WS Crome's

hard work and dedication in solving his depredation problems in a timely manner, thereby avoiding the loss of more of his sheep.

During the first few days of July, WS Scott Little confirmed the loss of four lambs to coyote predation. The value of the depredated lambs was placed at \$800. Despite very long days of searching for the offending coyote, WS Little could not remove the coyote. On July 19th, after more than two weeks of searching, WS Little spotted the coyote near the sheep. One well placed shot brought the damage to an end. No further losses have been reported and WS Little continues to monitor the area for depredations.

On July 12th, WS Nathan Fowler confirmed the loss of one ewe and one lamb, valued at \$500. The depredations occurred in northern Elko County. On July 18th, WS Fowler was able to call and shoot one adult coyote near the site of the damage. WS Fowler also requested the assistance of the Elko plane. The aircrew was able to remove three coyotes near the band of sheep. WS Fowler provided technical assistance on non lethal recommendations to help prevent future damage from occurring. No further losses have been reported and WS Fowler continues to monitor the sheep in his designated work area.

On July 13th, Crew Member (CM) Jerred Taylor responded to a call concerning the loss of four lambs, valued at \$800. CM Taylor drove to the remote location and confirmed that coyotes had killed all four lambs. CM Taylor called several locations near the kills but could not locate the offending coyotes. CM Taylor set several traps near the kills. The following week, CM Taylor was able to trap the offending coyote, bringing an end to the damage. The sheep producer was very pleased with the help he received from CM Taylor and the Wildlife Services Program, which he expressed to District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett.

On July 19th, a sheep producer in northern White Pine County contacted Wildlife Services concerning a possible problem with a lion. The following day, Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler responded to the remote location. MLS Buhler confirmed that a lion had killed several lambs and one ewe several days earlier. Due to the remoteness of the location, MLS Buhler set up a tent camp near the sheep. Over the course of the next ten days, MLS Buhler attempted to remove the offending lion. On the night of July 27th, the lion returned and killed several more lambs. That same day MLS Buhler was able to trail, tree and dispatch the 145 pound male lion, bringing an end to the damage. In sum, the lion caused more than \$3,000 worth of damage, by killing at least 16 lambs and one ewe. No further losses have been reported. MLS Buhler provided technical assistance recommendations, many of which were already being utilized including guard dogs, night penning and herding. The lion was skinned and turned into the Ely Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) Office.



On July 23rd and 24th, Staff Biologist (SB) Jack Sengl assisted DS Bennett while on vacation, by conducting a field inspection with WS Crome. Field inspections are designed to allow supervisors the chance to inspect equipment, firearms and vehicles to assure that everything is safe and in compliance with Wildlife Service's policies and directives. During the field inspection, WS Crome removed one coyote by utilizing his decoy dog during an early morning call stand (the coyote had been voice located the previous night, was removed in sight of the sheep, and a necropsy showed mutton in its' stomach) and two additional coyotes with the use of ground equipment.



On July 25th and 26th, SB Sengl conducted a field inspection with WS Spires. The wind held true, which allowed the Elko plane to lend in a hand on both days with WS Spires and SB Sengl ground crewing. Despite the use of guard dogs and herders night penning the sheep, losses continue to occur (most recently, one lamb at \$200). The ground squirrels were observed going underground a month earlier than normal, likely adding to the depredations. The air crew was able to remove 11 depredating coyotes from the vicinity of the sheep and kills, with WS Spires removing an additional three coyotes with the use of ground equipment to stem the killing. Work is ongoing.



On July 30th, WS Virgil Fullerton confirmed the loss of four lambs, valued at \$800. This is the first damage confirmed in WS Fullerton's designated work area this summer. Since the damage just occurred, work is ongoing to help resolve the problem. WS Fullerton has placed several traps near the location of the kills in northern White Pine County.

Despite wildfires, flash flooding with roads and highways washed away, WS Dayne Barnes continued wildlife protection efforts in Lincoln County. July saw flash flooding and several roads and highways washed out due to the large thunderstorms that passed through Lincoln County during the first few weeks of July. WS Barnes utilized trapping, calling and spotlighting to remove a number of coyotes near mule deer and bighorn sheep herds in his designated work area. WS Barnes also maintained six trail cameras at remote water sources to help identify potential predation problems. WS Barnes used his mule to cover most of his designated work area identifying predation issues. Wildlife Services was in direct contact with the local NDOW Biologist concerning this project designed to protect primarily desert bighorn sheep but also other wildlife found in Lincoln County.

During July, WS Little worked on a very serious coyote problem in western White Pine County. Despite WS Little's exhaustive efforts, a pair of coyotes killed seven lambs, valued at \$1,400. The pair of coyotes would not kill in the same location twice but would move around in a very large roadless area, killing a lamb every few days. WS Little spent the entire month, off and on, attempting to remove the elusive pair of coyotes. On July 31st, with the help of his well trained coyote decoy dogs, WS Little was able to call and shoot the pair of coyotes.

During July, WS Derril Fry was busy protecting several bands of sheep in southern Elko County. Through WS Fry's hard work, no losses were reported during the month of July. WS Fry was able to remove several coyotes near the sheep, preventing losses from occurring. On several occasions, WS Fry also provided technical assistance to his sheep producers in the form of non lethal recommendations. WS Fry's cooperators are very pleased with his hard work and dedication in preventing losses.

West District

On July 2nd, a livestock producer reported to WS Nick Smith that two ewes (valued at \$800) had been killed by a black bear. This ranch experiences three to four different livestock attacks most years from black bears that reside on and near the property. WS Smith inspected the situation, determined that a black bear had indeed caused the damage and reported the situation to NDOW, as they are the managing agency for black bears. NDOW determined that if the offending bear returns, then removal would be allowed. To date, the offending black bear has not returned.



On July 9th, Pilot Wes Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning flight on the California border where coyotes were killing lambs. WS/CA George Affonso assisted with locating several of the coyotes on the ground and directing the coyote's location to the aerial crew. WS Affonso located three coyotes at one location and the aerial crew removed all three coyotes in a single pass. This is a testament to a well-oiled aerial team. During the flight, a total of 14 coyotes were removed by the aerial crew. Protection efforts are ongoing. Our thanks go out to WS Affonso for providing ground support.

During the week of July 9th thru July 13th, WS Doug Koepke was busy placing equipment around several sheep bands in Washoe County. On July 12th, WS Koepke removed four coyotes within close proximity of the sheep by utilizing leghold traps and trail snares. Protection efforts are ongoing.

During the week of July 9th thru July 13th, WS John Peter rode his mules around several bands of sheep in Humboldt County, checking equipment and voice howling for coyotes. On July 12th, WS Peter located three coyotes leaving a lamb band at daylight. WS Peter headed off toward the direction of the coyotes



with his well trained coyote dogs and mules. After a couple hours and a number of call stands, WS Peter's dogs decoyed the three offending coyotes into range, which were promptly removed.

On July 17th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay assisted CA WS by conducting aerial operations on a small sheep ranch in northern California. During the early morning flight, a total of nine coyotes were removed. No other livestock losses have been reported since the effort.

During the month, WS Ben Miller was busy placing equipment around the mule deer fawning grounds on the Washoe County Mule Deer project (hunt unit 014), which resulted in the removal of several coyotes that were close to does with fawns. WS Miller reports observing a very high percentage of mule deer fawns even amidst drought conditions. WS Miller will continue to protect mule deer and bighorn sheep on the Washoe County mule deer project.

On July 17th, a sheep producer in Lander County reported that two lambs, valued at \$400, had been killed by coyotes. On July 19th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight that resulted in the removal of six coyotes. WS Hansen provided technical assistance to the sheep producer and ground support during aerial operations.



On July 23rd, Pilot Gossard conducted a training flight to see if WS Smith would be compatible with aerial activities. Pilot Gossard reported that WS Smith did well and DS Spencer is sending WS Smith to Wildlife Services' aerial training center to get him trained as the backup gunner for the West District.

On July 30th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several calving areas in Humboldt County. During the flight, a total of 15 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground support by locating many of the coyotes from the ground and directing the plane to

the coyote's location.

On July 24th, a sheep producer in Carson City County reported that he looked from his front porch and saw two adult sheep, valued at \$400, piled up in the corner of his pasture. DS Spencer has removed stock killing lions from this ranch in the past and the last time DS Spencer was on the property, he suggested that the sheep producer purchase a mountain lion tag and when he walks to a depredated sheep, pack a rifle and take his dogs with him in case the lion has returned to the kill. The sheep producer followed DS Spencer's advice and as he approached the depredated sheep, he and his pet dogs treed the male lion. The sheep rancher harvested and tagged the offending lion. No further livestock losses have been reported. DS Spencer will continue to promote technical assistance to his many livestock producers.

During the month of July, WS Koepke was busy checking equipment on several sheep and cattle producers in Pershing, Lyon and Churchill Counties. During the month, WS Koepke removed nine coyotes responsible for killing sheep and calves. WS Koepke will continue to protect livestock in his large work area.

During the month of July, Wildlife Biologist (WB) Zack Bowers continued conducting a Wildlife Hazard Assessment (WHA) at a military installation in northern NV. The WHA involves conducting structured surveys on the airfield and the surrounding area, as well as general observations. This data is collected for a 12 month period in order to determine seasonal and spatial trends of wildlife usage on the airfield and surrounding area. Once this is complete, recommendations can be made regarding species management, habitat alterations, and agricultural management practices.



On July 23rd, the airfield manager discovered the remains of a bird on the runway. WB Bowers identified the remains as that of a horned lark, which appeared to be struck by aircraft. As per Naval instruction, WB Bowers sent feathers from the remains to the Smithsonian Institute's Feather Identification Lab for species confirmation. WB Bowers also filled out the report in the military's web system and will complete the report when species confirmation is received from the Smithsonian. WB Bowers has noticed an increase in horned lark numbers recently, although they are far from being at the high levels they occurred at over the winter.

On July 13th, DS Spencer met with the Airfield Manager at the prior mentioned military installation. The meeting covered many aspects of the work being conducted as well as the relationship between the two organizations. DS Spencer also conducted a ride along with WB Bowers while on site. The cooperator is very pleased with all the hard work WB Bowers has done.

Throughout the month of July, Wildlife Biologist (WB) Luke Barto continued to protect aviation safety at a local airport, removing: 17 feral pigeons, one striped skunk, two ground squirrels and one feral cat. Domestic animals, such as cats and dogs, can become a threat to aviation safety when on an airfield. Domestic animals captured on airport property are transferred to the Washoe County Animal Control.

Throughout the week of July 9th, WB Barto removed a total of 28 California gull chicks from two nesting colonies in Reno. Gull chicks learning to fly close to an airport are high level safety threats to incoming and outgoing aircraft.

Throughout the week of July 23rd, WB Barto met with personnel from the local Air National Guard, joint use Airport Authority, and BASH Inc. to discuss wildlife hazard management on/around northern Nevada joint use airports. The group looked at wildlife hazard management and potential hazards in the critical and general zones by van and helicopter. It was quite apparent to all parties that considerable focus, effort and resources have been contributed by the Airport Authority and the ANG to maintain aviation safety at the central site.



New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report.

Valuing and Investing in Employees

During the reporting period, WB Bowers was presented with a certificate of merit "In recognition of a continued level of extra effort and positive attitude which has resulted in a successful working relationship with the Fallon Naval Air Station.". Congratulations Zack!

Also during the reporting period, CM VanderMay was presented a plaque and lapel pin for ten years of dedicated public service.



Information and Communication

On July 25th State Director Mark Jensen attended the Greater Sage-grouse Advisory Committee meeting in Carson City.

On July 31st SD Jensen attended the Nevada Board of Agriculture meeting in Reno, NV.

Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report.

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report.

Future Meetings and Events

August 10th and 11th, NDOW Commission meeting in Winnemucca, SD Jensen to attend.

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Wildlife Services



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

