

October 2019

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

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 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 **6.7** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$126.3** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$5.1** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **509** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$21,441.00** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$18,817** in damage to agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During October, coyotes accounted for **\$7,641** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **360** 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, **6** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of October, 2019.

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

On October 3rd, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Nathan Fowler confirmed the loss of 1 lamb, valued at \$200, to coyote predation. The damage occurred on a remote band of sheep in central White Pine County. WS Fowler used traps and calling to remove the depredating coyote. WS Fowler also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.



On October 7th, Crew Member (CM) Hunter Bodenchuk confirmed the loss of 2 lambs in Eureka County. CM Bodenchuk was able to call and shoot one coyote near the kills. Soon after, both bands of sheep were moved to pivots several miles away. No further losses were reported.

On October 7th, a sheep producer near Ely reported the loss of 1 ewe, valued at \$250, to coyote predation. WS Bodenchuk and Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) Field Assistant (FA) Allen Eldridge confirmed the loss. During the next 3 days, 2 yearling coyotes and 1 adult were removed with firearms. No further losses have been reported. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations were also provided. The sheep producer called and was thankful of Wildlife Services and NDAs prompt response.



On October 7th, WS Randy Evans confirmed the loss of 1 ewe, valued at \$250. The damage took place on a band of sheep in southern Elko County. WS Evans used calling and his well trained dogs to remove 3 coyotes near the kill. No further losses have been reported. WS Evans also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On October 14th, FA Eldridge confirmed the loss of 6 ewes to coyote predation. The losses occurred on a band of sheep in western White Pine County. On 2 different occasions the Ely plane responded to the location removing 3 coyotes near the kills. FA Eldridge is monitoring the sheep and 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 October 17th and 18th, WS Evans and WS Bodenchuk both received their annual crew member training in Ely, Nevada for fixed wing and helicopters. The training is mandatory for our crew members.

On October 18th, a sheep rancher in western White Pine County called concerning the loss of 1 ewe, valued at \$250, to coyote predation. On October 21st, the Ely plane responded to the location. During the flight a pair of coyotes were removed very close to the location of the kill. No further losses have been reported.

On October 22nd, the Ely plane responded to a call concerning the loss of 7 ewes, valued at \$1,750, to coyote predation. The damage took place in central White Pine County. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 5 coyotes, including 2 near the location of the kills. No further losses have

been reported.

On October 23rd, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett, Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler, FA Eldridge and CM Wayne Rowley attended the bi-annual NDA all staff meeting in Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was an all-day meeting and covered many topics related to the NDA.

On October 24th, the Ely plane responded to a call concerning the loss of 2 ewes, valued at \$500, to coyote predation. The damage occurred on a band of sheep in northwest White Pine County. With the assistance of WS Evans as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 7 coyotes near the location of the kills. WS Evans also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to prevent future losses. No further losses have been reported and WS Evans continues to monitor the sheep in his assigned work area.



On October 28th, the Ely plane responded to a call from a sheep producer in Eureka County that had lost 2 ewes, valued at \$500, to coyote predation. He reported hearing several coyotes every night near his sheep. During the flight, the plane removed 6 coyotes near the kills. No further losses have been reported.

During the month of October, FA Eldridge removed 9 coyotes in Lincoln County. The area FA Eldridge was working had a very high loss rate on sheep last winter. In an effort to keep losses lower this year, FA Eldridge began preventative work to hopefully keep the losses down to a more acceptable level this winter. It is also more effective to run equipment before guard dogs and sheep move into the area as you aren't forced to trap areas because sheep and/or dogs would be captured.

Most East District employees spent October moving their field camps to the sheep winter grounds and started removing coyotes in areas with historically high predation losses. Removing coyotes prior to the arrival of the sheep has proven to be very effective in reducing losses.



West District

During the week of October 2nd through October 6th, FA Alex Wallis protected sheep and calving areas in Lyon County. During the week, FA Wallis removed 3 coyotes with the use of calling. FA Wallis also placed out additional foothold traps around several livestock producers' areas to prevent losses. FA Wallis will continue to protect livestock in Lyon, Douglas and Carson Counties.

On October 3rd, WS Deputy Administrator Janet Bucknall conducted a ride along with several West District employees including WS John Peter, DS Jack Spencer, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay. During her visit, Deputy Administrator Bucknall stayed in a sheep camp for several days; rode with WS Peter checking M-44s; flew livestock with IP Gossard; and met with livestock producers and sheep herders out on the range. The experience was very rewarding for all parties.



On Saturday, October 5th, FA Doug Koepke responded to an area in Pershing County where ravens were pecking newborn calves and lambs. FA Koepke placed DRC-1339 treated egg baits out and the following day the problem ravens were removed. To date no other raven problems have been reported at this location.

On October 7th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay flew around several calving areas in Pershing County. The livestock producers reported coyotes moving in around their cattle operations. During the flight, 9 coyotes were removed. FA Koepke provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection work will continue.

On October 8th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay flew around several winter sheep bands in Lander County, removing 6 coyotes to reduce losses. WS George Hansen provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection work will continue.

On October 15th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay flew around several calving areas in Lander County to reduce the number of coyotes around their calving areas. During the flight, 15 coyotes were removed. WS Hansen provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection work will continue.

On October 16th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay flew around several calving areas in Humboldt County as livestock producers were reporting coyotes moving in around their calving areas. During the flight, 9 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection work will continue.

On October 21st, a homeowner in Winnemucca, NV reported that a pair of coyotes had killed their dog, valued at \$500, and were acting aggressive around people. The area was close to livestock where WS Peter had worked, so WS Peter removed the coyotes with the use of foothold traps. The homeowners were pleased with WS Peter's efforts and to date, no further reports of aggressive coyotes have been reported in the rural area.

On October 18th, a Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) Game Warden reported to FA Koepke that a lion that had killed chickens and 3 dogs, total loss valued at \$1,700, in Pershing County. The homeowner had actually seen the lion packing off 1 of the small dogs. WS Koepke placed a large cage trap at the damage site and eventually the lion was caught and euthanized. No further livestock losses have been reported.

On October 17th, DS Spencer removed an adult male lion from a snare in NDOW hunt unit 041. The equipment had been set back in August to remove the lion at the request of NDOW because it had moved into a sensitive population of California bighorn sheep.

On October 25th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay flew around several calving areas in Humboldt County. The livestock producers had reported seeing a group of coyotes harassing a cow that just gave birth. During the flight, 13 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection work will continue.

During the month of October, WS Hansen set equipment around several calving and winter sheep band locations to keep coyotes away from vulnerable livestock in Lander County. Protection work will continue.

On October 23rd, a livestock producer from Carson City County reported the loss of 1 ram sheep, valued at \$250 that had been killed by a lion. DS Spencer responded to the report as FA Wallis was attending a mandatory Nevada Department of Agriculture meeting that day. After meeting with the sheep producer, DS Spencer found 4 more dead sheep, valued at \$800, buried near a brush pile. DS Spencer placed foothold traps in the vicinity of the dead sheep, removing an adult male lion during his trap check the following day. To date there have been no other losses and the rancher thanked DS Spencer for his help.



During the month of October, Wildlife Biologist (WB) Zack Bowers continued protection efforts at a military installation in northern Nevada. WB Bowers was only present on base 11 days during the month of October, due to leave taken. During the time WB Bowers was on base, 152 individuals from 17 species were dispersed from on and near the airfield. Two problem animals were lethally removed near the airfield.

Two small mule deer bucks managed to find their way inside the perimeter fence. It's believed they came in through a large irrigation gate that had been left open. Mule deer can be unpredictable when they are stressed or feel pressured, which makes their presence on an airfield nerve-racking and dangerous. Efforts were coordinated, and carried out to try to push the deer outside the perimeter fence through opened gates. Though deer can be unpredictable in these situations, persistence and team work paid off and the deer were successfully pushed out. Many people assisted with this effort including individuals from natural resources, security and weapons.



During the month of October, WB David Carrasco used a Bal-chatri trap to capture 3 American kestrels at a military facility in southern Nevada to protect the flying service members and their aircraft. Once banded, the kestrels were translocated away from aircraft in an area with suitable habitat. Additionally, 250 horned larks were dispersed away from an active runway, while 10 horned larks, 5 rock doves and 1 coyote were lethally removed to reinforce non-lethal methods which required the lethal removal of 10 additional larks to reinforce the non-lethal methods.

During the month of October, WS Cameron Green and WS Reed Thomas continued to implement a wildlife hazard management plan at a joint-use aviation facility in northwestern Nevada. As the weather turned colder, an increase in the number of raptors was noted, resulting in the trapping, banding and translocation of 8 individuals. Additionally, 3 double-crested cormorants, 45 California gulls, 9 great egrets and many other small birds were hazed from the airport property, for a total of 688 birds hazed away from the facility.

New and Developing Methods

WS Green and WS Thomas spent some time making design improvements to a Bal-chatri trap WS Green developed during his first year as a Wildlife Specialist. The trap is specifically designed for catching raptors, particularly red-tailed hawks. The design of this trap allows it to roll as the bird lands on it, causing it to quickly get its talons/legs ensnared in the fishing line loops.

Valuing and Investing in Employees

On October 3rd, Deputy Administrator Bucknall presented WS Peter with the National “Wildlife Specialist of the Year” award at the ranch where he began his career for all of his hard work, perseverance, innovation, livestock protection efforts and dedication to the USDA Wildlife Services Program since 1985. Congratulations to WS Peter for receiving this accolade!

During the reporting period, WB Carrasco attended a Department of Defense Bird/Animal Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH) meeting in southern Nevada and received outstanding compliments for his work.



Information and Communication

During the week of October 1st through October 4th, State Director (SD) Mark Jensen, DS Spencer and WB Bowers crewed a booth at the American Fisheries Society and The Wildlife Society's joint annual meeting held in Reno, Nevada. Many WS' employees from throughout the U.S. were also in attendance, including WS Deputy Administrator Janet Bucknall, who held a town hall style meeting for WS' employees in attendance. The Deputy Administrator also made a visit to the WS' State Office in Reno, where she visited with the office staff about local and national perspectives.



On October 30th, the Director of the NDA and the Administrator of the NDA Division of Animal Industry accompanied DS Bennett and MLS Buhler for a day long field trip near Ely, Nevada. Several ranches were visited and the group ground crewed for the Ely plane and checked field equipment on 2 ranches.

Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report



Future Meeting and Events

The Nevada Wildlife Services Program has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) entitled “Environmental Assessment for Predator Damage Management in Nevada.” The EA analyzes the potential environmental impacts of alternatives for WS involvement in predator damage management in Nevada. The EA is available for review and comment prior to issuing a decision on the al-

ternative to be selected and its associated environmental impacts. The proposed action is to implement an integrated approach using a variety of methods to reduce predator damage to agricultural resources, property, human health and safety, and natural resources.

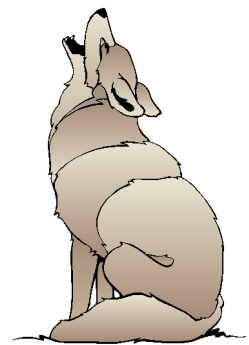
WS is requesting that the public review and provide their comments on the EA by December 27th, 2019.

Interested parties may view and provide comments on the EA by clicking on the following link: <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=APHIS-2016-0077-0024>

November 20th-November 22nd. Nevada Cattlemen's and Woolgrower's annual convention meeting in Elko, NV. SD Jensen, DS Spencer and CM Wayne Rowley to attend.



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