

April 2018

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 April, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **4.4** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$132.8** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$14.6** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **1,489** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$11,226** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$113,095** in damage to aviation, natural and agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During April, coyotes accounted for **\$12,494** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **305** 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 April, **6** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of April, 2018.

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 April 2nd, the Ely plane responded to a request from a cattle and sheep producer in central Nye County. The rancher had just recently started to calve out and had lost 1 ewe sheep to coyote pre-

da-tion. The rancher reported seeing several coyotes near his newborn calves. With the help of Wildlife Specialist (WS) Scott Little as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 4 coyotes. WS Little also provided the rancher with technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.



On April 3rd, the Win-nemucca plane came over to help in the

East District. The plane responded to 2 different cow/calf operations in northwestern Elko County. Both ranchers had just started to calve out and reported seeing a large number of coyotes in and around the calving pastures. Both ranchers have also experienced high calf losses to coyote predation in the past. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 17 coyotes. Work will be ongoing as needed.

On April 3rd, the Ely plane responded to a ranch in northern White Pine County. The rancher had both sheep and cattle and had just recently started to calve out when coyotes killed at least 2 of his ewe sheep, valued at \$500. With the help of Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) Field Assistant (FA) Allen Eldridge as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 4 coyotes near the sheep. Work will be ongoing as need. FA Eldridge also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help prevent future losses.

On April 4th, WS Mac Crome confirmed the loss of 3 lambs, valued at \$600, to coyote predation. The damage occurred on a band of sheep in Elko County near the Utah border. WS Crome used trail snares, traps and calling to remove 4 coyotes near the location of the kills. WS Crome also requested the assistance of the Ely plane. The plane was able to remove 1 additional coyote near the kill sites. No further losses have been reported. The sheep producer has been very happy with all the help he has received from the Nevada Department of Agriculture and Wildlife Services.

On April 4th, a contract helicopter was used on Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) project 38 to protect antelope in Nye County. NDOW project 38 is the statewide coyote removal project designed to help sage-grouse, antelope and mule deer that are being negatively impacted by coyotes. During the 3 day project, 21 coyotes were removed. Work will be ongoing as the



fawning season continues.

On April 4th, the Ely plane responded to a request for assistance from a sheep producer in southeast Elko County. The sheep producer had recently started lambing and had already lost several lambs to coyote predation. With the assistance of WS Crome as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 1 coyote from near the location of the kills. Although coyote abundance in this area is low, the killing has been historically high in the area. WS Crome also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help prevent future losses.



On April 5th, the Ely plane responded to a call from 2 cattle ranchers and 1 sheep producer in northern White Pine County. All of the ranchers were calving and lambing and reported seeing and hearing several coyotes in the pastures that they were calving in. During the flight, with the help of FA Scott MacDonald as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 8 coyotes. Work will continue as needed. FA MacDonald also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On April 9th, the Ely plane responded to a request from a sheep and cattle producer in Nye County.



The rancher had lost at least 2 yearling sheep, valued at \$400, to coyote predation and was calving out near the location of the kills. With the help of WS Little as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 4 coyotes. Work will continue as needed. WS Little also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On April 11th, the Ely plane responded to a call from a cattle and sheep producer in northern White Pine County that had lost several ewes in the past 2 months to coyote predation. With the help of FA Eldridge as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 5 coyotes. FA Eldridge also provided technical assistance to help prevent future losses.

On April 15th, the Ely plane responded to a request for assistance from 2 sheep producers in western White Pine County. Both producers were about to start lambing and were hearing and seeing coyotes in their lambing fields. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 8 coyotes. Removing coyotes just before lambing in areas with high historical coyote predation has proven to significantly reduce losses. One sheep producer phoned the East District Office and expressed his appreciation for seeing the Ely plane flying on a Saturday. Work will continue as the lambing season continues.

On April 18th, the Ely plane responded to a request for assistance from eastern Elko County. WS

Crome had confirmed the loss of at least 5 lambs, valued at \$750, to coyote predation. With the assistance of WS Crome as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 4 coyotes at the location of the kills. A necropsy of 2 of the coyotes revealed both had lamb meat and wool in their stomachs. Work will continue as needed. WS Crome also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On April 21st, the Ely plane responded to a request for assistance from a sheep and cattle producer in eastern White Pine County. The rancher had lost at least 1 ewe, valued at \$250, to coyote predation and was seeing several coyotes near his sheep and cattle. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 4 coyotes. Work will continue as needed.

On April 26th, the Ely plane responded to a request for assistance from a sheep producer in northwestern White Pine County. The rancher had just started to lamb out and had lost at least 5 lambs, valued at \$750, to coyote predation. The plane was able to remove a pair of adult coyotes near the location of the kills. No further losses have been reported. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses was also provided.



On April 27th, the Ely plane responded to a request for assistance from at least 2 different sheep producers in Eureka County. Both producer had just started to lamb out and reported hearing and seeing several coyotes near the newborn lambs. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 8 coyotes near the sheep.

On April 30th, the Ely plane responded to a request for assistance from a sheep producer in northern White Pine County. The sheep producer had started lambing and had already lost several of his lambs to coyote predation. With the assistance of FA Eldridge as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 6 coyotes in and around the sheep. Work will continue as the lambing season continues. FA Eldridge also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

During the month of April, Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler worked on NDOW Project 40 near Eureka, checking for mountain lion activity near mule deer. MLS Buhler also checked out at least 2 possible lion kills on livestock during the month. One was confirmed to be a lion kill, but it had moved on. The other call turned out be coyote predation and the Ely plane was dispatched, which removed the depredating coyotes.

During the month of April, FA Eldridge was very busy protecting several bands of sheep in his assigned work area. FA Eldridge confirmed the loss of 3 ewe sheep, valued at \$750, to coyote predation. FA Eldridge used calling, shooting and trapping to remove 8 coyotes near the location of the kills. FA Eldridge also provided non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help prevent future losses.

During the month of April, WS Randy Evans confirmed \$1,060 damage to an alfalfa field by badgers burrowing and digging in the pastures. WS Evans was able to snare 4 badgers bringing and end to the damage. WS Evans also confirmed the loss of 2 baby goats and 1 calf to raven predation. WS Evans used DRC-1339 treated hard boiled eggs to remove the responsible ravens. No further losses have been reported.

During April, WS Little confirmed the loss of at least 2 lambs, valued at \$300, to raven predation.

WS Little used DRC-1339 treated hard boiled chicken eggs to remove the damaging ravens. No further losses have been reported. WS Little also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

During the month of April, FA Scott MacDonald removed 13 coyotes near 2 bands of sheep in preparation for lambing. Removing coyotes near the sheep just prior to the lambs being born is a very effective way to help prevent high losses due to coyote predation. Work will be ongoing as the sheep begin to have their young.

During the month of April, Crew Member (CM) Wayne Rowley confirmed the loss of 6 calves and 1 lamb to coyote predation. The value of the losses was placed at just over \$3,000. CM Rowley called the Ely plane for assistance. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 12 coyotes near the location of the kills. Work will be ongoing as needed.

During the month of April, FA Hunter Bodenchuk confirmed the loss of 2 lambs, valued at \$300, to raven predation. FA Bodenchuk used hard boiled chicken eggs treated with DRC-1339 to remove the depredating ravens near the 2 kills. FA Bodenchuk also provide technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.



West District

Spring lambing is in full swing in the West District as 8 sheep BLM permittees began the process of raising sheep.

During the month of April, WS George Hansen checked equipment around several lamb bands in Lander County. The livestock losses have been minimal, however, as lambs hit the ground, coyotes, ravens and lions move in on vulnerable livestock. WS Hansen has spent nearly 30 years protecting livestock.

On April 5th, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted a morning flight around a sheep producer in Washoe County. During the flight, 2 coyotes were removed and the aerial crew located one den for the ground crew to remove. This long time sheep producer just started lambing and immediately coyotes began moving in around his young vulnerable lambs. FA Doug Koepke provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection efforts will be ongoing throughout the lambing season.

On April 9th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around a sheep producer in Humboldt County. Dur-



ing the flight, 6 coyotes were removed. WS John Peter provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection efforts will be ongoing throughout the lambing season.

On Sunday April 8th, DS Spencer provided ground support during a 2 day helicopter flight around several antelope fawning grounds in Lyon County (NDOW hunt units 29, 203 and 204) as part of NDOW project 38, which is designed to increase antelope recruitment by reducing fawn predation. WS Evans and a contract pilot removed 15 coyotes and located 2 dens all within the vicinity of the antelope. Special thanks to WS Evans for providing West District crew member duties during aerial operations.

During the month of April, WS Peter and WS Ben Miller placed DRC-1339 treated egg baits around known sage-grouse nesting locations in Humboldt, Lander and Washoe counties. The goal of the 2 NDOW projects (NDOW project 21-state-wide sage-grouse nest/egg protection and project 21-02-Washoe County sage-grouse study) is to increase sage-grouse recruitment by limiting egg predation by common ravens. These sage-grouse egg/nest protection efforts will continue until mid-May.



On April 6th, a sheep producer from Lyon County reported that a lion had killed a “pile” of his sheep on the lambing grounds near his house. WS Mark Bentz inspected the situation and confirmed that 9 sheep (valued at \$2,250) had been killed by a lion along with small newborn lambs. WS Bentz placed foothold traps, a cage trap and several trail snares around the sheep carcasses. The following morning, WS Bentz located 3 more depredated sheep (valued at \$250) and more lambs were missing. WS Bentz inspected his equipment, removing a 135 pound collared male lion. The depredating lion and its collar were taken to NDOW. No further livestock losses have occurred since the removal of the lion. This sheep producer also uses guard dogs to deter predators, although, predators can still avoid non-lethal measures. The sheep producers were very pleased with WS Bentz’ protection efforts.

On April 10th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around a sheep producer in Lander County. During the flight, 2 coyotes were removed. WS Hansen provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection efforts will be ongoing throughout the lambing season.

On April 11th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around a sheep and cattle producer in Pershing County. During the flight, 10 coyotes were removed and the aerial crew located a den, which was reported to the ground crew for removal. Protection efforts will be ongoing throughout the lambing and calving season.

On April 12th, WS Peter inspected M-44 devices he had placed previously following the loss of 2 calves (valued at \$900) to predation in Humboldt County. During the M-44 inspection, WS Peter removed 11 coyotes. The livestock producer was pleased with WS Peter’s protection efforts. This spring is WS Peter’s 33rd year protecting livestock in northwestern Nevada.



On Saturday April 14th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around a sheep producer in Humboldt County to get ahead of the losses. During the flight, 13 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection efforts will be ongoing throughout the lambing season.

On April 17th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around a sheep producer in Lander County. During the flight, 7 coyotes were removed, with several in the lamb bands. Even with herders and guard dogs present, coyotes still manage to cause damage to livestock. WS Hansen provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection efforts will be ongoing throughout the lambing season.

During the week of April 17th through April 20th, FA Koepke checked M-44 devices around 2 sheep producers in Washoe County. During the M-44 inspection, WS Koepke removed 5 coyotes taken by M-44 devices. FA Koepke will continue to protect livestock in his large work area.

On April 20th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around a sheep producer in Humboldt County. WS Peter was riding his mule up through the lambing area and jumped 3 coyotes that ran up into the mountains. The aerial crew promptly removed the coyotes. WS Peter performed a necropsy on the coyotes and discovered all 3 had lamb remains in their stomach contents. An additional 6 coyotes were removed by the aircrew. WS Peter provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection efforts will be ongoing throughout the lambing season.

On April 23rd, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around a sheep producer in Washoe County. During the flight, 2 coyotes were removed. FA Koepke provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection efforts will be ongoing throughout the lambing season.

On April 25th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around a sheep producer in Lander County. During the flight, 2 coyotes were removed. WS Hansen provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection efforts will be ongoing throughout the lambing season.

On April 26th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around a lambing area in Humboldt County. During the flight, 2 coyotes were removed right in close around the newborn lambs. WS Peter provided ground support. Aerial protection efforts will be ongoing in the West District.

On April 26th, a livestock producer in Washoe County reported the loss of a goat to a mountain lion (valued at \$320) to the state office. DS Spencer made a site visit and confirmed that the goat had been killed by a lion and likely a large male based on the tracks. DS Spencer also noticed that the producer employed the use of two guard donkeys to protect his goat herd from coyotes. DS Spencer and FA Bentz decided to place a large cage trap where the goat was buried to reduce the chance that a free-ranging pet was caught in a foothold trap or neck snare. A local NDOW warden assisted with placing the trap and fielding questions from citizens. One neighbor reported something had killed a deer in his yard a week prior and another neighbor feared for their 4 small children with a lion living in their backyard. On April 27th a male lion was removed from the property where the goat had been killed. The live-



stock producer was extremely pleased with the removal of the depredating lion. To date no further livestock losses have been reported by the goat producer.

During the month of April, Wildlife Biologist (WB) Zack Bowers continued protection efforts at a military installation in northern Nevada. WB Bowers utilized harassment with several methods to disperse 994 individuals from 24 species. 25 problem animals were lethally removed from the airfield. The individuals removed came from one species of mammal and 10 species of birds. WB Bowers will continue efforts to protect aviation safety at this facility.

Also during the reporting period at the above mentioned facility, WB Bowers was busy knocking down nests. Nests are generally knocked down in the off season, then if the birds try to rebuild the material is knocked down on a regular basis until the birds either give up or move to another location. During the month of April, this included 1 raven nest, 1 red-tailed hawk nest and 2 Swainson's hawk nests (one of which was active).

During the month of April, at the above mentioned facility, efforts to deter nesting at the heron/egret rookery continued. These efforts have encouraged the herons to nest elsewhere. The cannon was working fairly well for the great egrets as well, which came back in force during the month of April. However, the cannon was turned off by a trespasser over a weekend which allowed the egrets to get fairly comfortable. This resulted in an increase in effort to encourage the egrets to nest elsewhere. A second propane cannon, along with pyrotechnics and cracker shells did the trick. The propane cannons will remain at the location, and will be routinely monitored until it is believed the nesting season for these species is over.

During the month of April, WB Dean Pyzik reported 5 wildlife strikes to aircraft at a military installation in southern Nevada, based on snarge/feathers submitted. Of the strikes, 2 were identified by the Smithsonian Institute as a Brewer's sparrow and bat.

Also during the reporting period, WB Pyzik removed 7 mammals from the installation while dispersing 320 birds with his truck, firearms and pyrotechnics. Of those 320 birds dispersed while patrolling and conducting perimeter checks, dove and great-tailed grackle accounted for 61% of the birds. The majority of the mammals removed were black-tailed jackrabbits which are removed because they are a direct threat to aviation (strike hazard) and an indirect threat to aviation by drawing in birds of prey, coyotes and feral dogs into occupied airspace, runways and taxiways.

During the month of April, WS Cameron Green and WS Rick Laffins continued implementing a wildlife hazard management plan at a joint use aviation facility in Washoe County. Specifically, 113 animals (primarily Canada geese and gulls) were dispersed from the facility and adjoining properties using vehicles, pyrotechnic devices and firearms. Firearms and snares were also utilized to remove 50 animals that failed to respond properly to non-lethal approaches. To reduce potential threats to aviation by birds of prey, 5 red-tailed hawks and 1 Cooper's hawk were captured and translocated to suitable habitat away from aircraft.

WS Laffins surveyed 20,928 animals during structured "point-count" wildlife surveys on the airfield and offsite in the general



zone during the month.

WS Green and WS Laffins removed 12 coyotes and one mink this month from Mason Valley Wildlife Management Area for NDOW Project 43 this month, which is designed to increase turkey and pheasant recruitment by protecting the nests and hatchlings from coyotes and other nest raiders. This project will continue for a few more weeks.

New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report

Valuing and Investing in Employees

WS Green attended an Advanced Rifle School in Phoenix, AZ this month to continue to advance our firearms training curriculum.



WS Laffins attended Basic Airport Training this month in White Plains, NY and is now officially recognized as a Qualified Airport Biologist. The training will prove valuable as WS Laffins is conducting a wildlife hazard assessment.

During the reporting period, Budget Technician (BT) Jennifer Mowbray was awarded a certificate of merit and cash award by the WS Aviation Training and Operations Center (ATOC) for finding a billing error for a flight following program that was causing overcharging. The billing department corrected the problem thanks in great part to BT Mowbray's discovery. This has saved our Program nationally thousands of dollars. Thanks Jen!



Information and Communication

WB Carl Frey continued to protect Service members and military aircraft in the Middle East during his extended Temporary Duty Assignment (TDY). WB Frey has been introduced to many species and circumstances that are unique to the Middle East and will afford him with new tools and approaches when he returns to Nevada.



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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