

April 2015

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 **4.3** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$47** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$4.4** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **89** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$11,309** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$17,488** in damage to natural and agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During April, coyotes accounted for **\$5,747** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **170** 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, **2** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of April, 2015.

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 link: <http://agri.nv.gov/Wildlife>. Where wildlife biology and damage management methods are offered by species.

East District

During the first two weeks of April, Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler and MLS Casey Shields traveled back to NDOW hunt unit 074 near Contact, Nevada after the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) reported that a lion had killed a radio collared Rocky Mountain Bighorn ram. Both lion specialists hunted the area near the location of the kill. On April 4th, a fresh lion



track was found in the same canyon that the sheep had been killed. After a several hour



pursuit, an adult male lion weighing approximately 125 pounds was removed. No further lion sign was observed. Several bighorn sheep sightings were also provided to NDOW.

On April 2nd, the Ely Crew Member confirmed the loss of two calves, valued at \$1,800, to raven predation. The two calves were killed at two separate locations in Nye County. In response to the depredations, the Ely Crew Member placed eggs treated with DRC-1339 near the kill sites where the ravens would find and eat them. The project successfully stopped further damage. As the East District is down several Specialists and a Pilot, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett is very thankful that the Ely Crew Member will take on additional duties to help stop the killing.



On April 16th, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Mac Crome confirmed the loss of two lambs, valued at \$300 to coyote predation. The damage occurred on a remote ranch in central Elko County. WS Crome contacted the Ely plane for assistance. On April 20th, with the assistance of WS Crome as the ground crew, the Ely airplane responded to the ranch. During the morning's flight, six adult coyotes were removed and one active den was located and removed as well. No further losses have been reported and WS Crome provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On April 16th, a rancher in northern Elko County contacted the East District Office concerning a problem with ravens. The rancher reported he had witnessed about 30-40 ravens attacking two of his newborn calves. One calf had already been pecked to death and the other calf died a short time later from its injuries. On April 21st, DS Bennett traveled to the ranch and was able to remove several ravens near the location the rancher identified. No further losses have been reported. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was also provided in an effort to help reduce



future losses. The rancher called the East District Office and expressed his appreciation for the assistance provided by Wildlife Services. He also reported that in the several years he has owned the ranch that he has witnessed ravens population explode in his area.

On April 27th, WS Crome confirmed the loss of one lamb valued at \$150 to coyote predation. WS Crome was able to remove one adult coyote utilizing calling and shooting near the kill site. On April 30th, the Ely plane responded to the location and with the assistance of WS Crome as the ground crew was able to remove an additional four coyotes near the kill site. WS Crome will continue to monitor the band of sheep for losses. To date, no further losses have been reported. WS Crome also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent any future losses.



During April, WS Randy Evans began removing ravens in Eureka County to protect sage-grouse eggs as part of a state-wide NDOW funded plan of increasing recruitment. As many as five sage-grouse lek complexes have been identified in Eureka County by NDOW Biologists for raven removal. The project will continue until the end of sage-grouse nesting season.

Throughout April, Crew Member (CM) Wayne Rowley removed ravens throughout Elko County to benefit sage-grouse by protecting their eggs from the nest raiders. CM Rowley will continue to work on this NDOW project as time permits until the end of the sage-grouse nesting season.

Throughout the month of April, twenty five coyotes were removed by fixed wing in Elko and Eureka Counties to respond to livestock losses and to reduce future predation issues in areas that have had historic losses, as the current stock of lambs are hitting the ground. Though short-handed, the East District will continue to solve problems with the resources at hand while waiting for replacement Specialists and Pilot.



During the month of April, WS Dayne Barnes continued monitoring his feral swine surveillance and capture/removal equipment. Currently focused on the eastern feral swine, WS Barnes continues to



tweak current equipment and baiting strategies to remove and sample these estray animals for diseases such as pseudorabies, tularemia, leptospirosis and even plague. An additional benefit to the removal of these estray animals, is to reduce



the damage that even a small population can incur on riparian areas and springs that wildlife depend upon, particularly during such drought stricken times as these. Feral swine also cause considerable damage to crops and spread disease during the process.

West District

On April 8th, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several lambing bands in Humboldt County. During the flight, 10 coyotes were removed and two dens located. Protection efforts are ongoing and WS John Peter provided ground support.



On April 10th, IP Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several lambing bands and nearby calving areas in Washoe County. During the flight, four coyotes were removed and two dens located. Protection efforts are ongoing and WS Doug Koepke provided ground support. One sheep producer called the West District supervisor and “thanked” the employees working so hard to protect his lamb bands from excessive coyote predation.

On April 10th, DS Jack Spencer removed one coyote with a trail snare from an airport in Reno. The coyote was seen and chased off at the airport property by airport operations personnel, however, the problem coyote would occasionally show up a week or so later. DS Spencer will continue to help protect the airport, until a new airport biologist can be hired.

During the month of April, WS Ben Miller continued protecting sage-grouse eggs on the Virginia Mountains (hunt unit 022) multi-agency project (United States Geological Survey (USGS), NDOW and WS) in Washoe County. This sage-grouse nest protection project is aimed at protecting sage-grouse eggs from ravens. Past video surveillance cameras placed by USGS on sage-grouse nests, clearly show ravens pushing the hens off their nests and consuming the eggs in western Nevada. WS Miller works hand and hand with USGS researchers while placing DRC 1339 treated egg baits near grouse nesting areas, but staying far enough away not to disturb the nesting birds. During the month, WS Miller removed 96 ravens. WS Miller will continue protection efforts until mid-May, when nearly all of the sage-grouse eggs have hatched.

On April 12th, a goat/sheep producer from Lander County requested assistance from the aerial crew as coyotes started causing problems in his kidding and lambing area. On April 13th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around the birthing area. During the flight, eight coyotes were removed. Protection efforts are ongoing and WS George Hansen provided ground support.

During the month of April, WS Peter was busy riding mule-back through several lambing bands in Humboldt County. WS Peter has leghold traps, trail snares and M-44s placed for ground protection, additionally, he actively uses decoy dogs at various calling stations to target dominant coyotes hanging around the sheep. WS Peter is a highly skilled trapper and an expert in every



conceivable method allowed for livestock protection. This is WS Peter's 30th, spring lambing season!

On April 16th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several lambing bands in Lyon County. The aerial crew also inspected a calving area where a producer was missing several calves, however, after a ground and aerial inspection, not a single calf carcass was found and it is thought the calves were likely stolen. During the flight, seven coyotes were removed and two dens located. Protection efforts are ongoing and WS Nick Smith provided ground support.

On April 13th, a cattle producer who runs cattle near Reno reported that one calf (valued at \$600) had been killed by a coyote. The cattle producer also reported that he actually saw a large coyote harassing a calf the day prior and scared it off. This property is within the city limits, so he could not discharge a firearm to remove the coyote. DS Spencer examined the calf and confirmed that its' death was caused by coyote(s). On April 13th, DS Spencer placed out leg hold traps near the calf carcass and a few days later removed a large male coyote. To date, no further livestock losses have occurred and the rancher was pleased with the protection efforts.



On April 17th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several lambing bands in Washoe County. During the flight, five coyotes were removed and one den located. Protection efforts are ongoing and WS Koepke provided ground support.

On April 20th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several lambing bands in Lander County. During the flight, two coyotes were removed and one den located. Protection efforts are ongoing and WS Hansen provided ground support.

On April 21st, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several lambing bands in Washoe County. During the flight a total of three coyotes were removed and one of the coyotes was leaving the scene of a freshly killed lamb. Protection efforts are ongoing and WS Koepke provided ground support.

On April 21st, DS Spencer conducted a routine field inspection with WS Miller on the Virginia Mountains in Washoe County (hunt unit 022) placing DRC-1339 treated egg baits in road-less areas.

On April 23rd, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several lambing bands in Humboldt County. During the flight, three coyotes were removed. Protection efforts are ongoing and WS Peter provided ground support.

On April 23, a sheep producer in Lander County reported that ravens had started pecking eyes and orifices of newborn calves. WS Hansen treated the calving areas with DRC-1339 treated egg baits and the following day removed 12 offending ravens. No further livestock losses or injuries have been reported, since the removal of the ravens.



On April 26th, IP Gossard and CM Vander-May conducted an early morning flight around several lambing bands in Lyon County. The sheep producer reported that in the past few days coyotes had killed two lambs (valued at \$300). During the flight, two coyotes were removed in close proximity to the lamb carcasses. The aerial crew also located three coyote dens. Protection efforts are ongoing and WS Smith provided ground support.

On April 27th, Pilot Gossard and CM Vander-May conducted an early morning flight around several lambing bands in Washoe

County. The sheep producer reported that in the past few days, coyotes had killed 14 lambs (valued at \$2,100). During the flight, four coyotes were removed in close proximity to the lamb carcasses. Protection efforts are ongoing and WS Koepke provided ground support.

During the month of April, DS Spencer received reports of 13 cats and dogs killed by coyotes in the Reno area. One homeowner reported that in the past year, coyotes have been packing dead pets to his yard and eating them on his front lawn. DS Spencer provided technical assistance and various non-lethal means to help homeowners dissuade coyotes from entering their yards. In the next couple of months pet losses by coyotes usually increase as coyotes feed their young.



During the month of April, Wildlife Biologist (WB) Zack Bowers continued to deter wildlife from using/



crossing the airfield at a military installation in northern Nevada. In an effort to keep these species from crossing the airfield, WB Bowers has utilized harassment with several methods. WB Bowers dispersed 222 birds from on and around the airfield. The most common and abundant species dispersed include mallards, cinnamon teal, red-tailed hawks and white-faced ibis. Many of these birds are congregated around two drain ditches which hold water year round. The area has been in drought conditions for several years now and wildlife is concentrated around water sources. Persistent harassment is necessary in this situation as birds and other wildlife are reluctant to leave

this water source. WB Bowers continues to monitor the airfield and surrounding area using formal surveys and general observations.

New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report

Valuing and Investing in Employees

It is with the deepest regret we inform you of the passing of WS Pilot Ken Baer after battling cancer for two years. Ken served as a pilot in the east district of the Nevada Wildlife Services Program.

Ken was a veteran and served honorably in the United States Air Force from 1972 to 1976. Ken enjoyed flying and was a pilot for Nevada WS for 7 years. Ken also flew for California WS for over 4 years but started his career with Colorado WS in 2003.



Ken loved shooting and the shooting sports and was an avid cowboy action shooter. Ken also enjoyed fishing, hunting, and shooting his air rifles often spending time looking for squirrels in the alfalfa fields of eastern Nevada. Ken is survived by his son and two daughters and will be deeply missed.

Information and Communication

On April 6th-10th, State Director (SD) Mark Jensen was in Vermont with Regional and HQ personnel conducting a program review on the Vermont/New Hampshire WS Program. Program reviews are designed to ensure that programs are following policy, responsible, accountable, effective and efficient. Additionally, it provides face time for all parties.

Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report

Future Meetings and Events

NDOW Predator Committee meeting May 14th in Reno. SD Jensen to attend.

PARC meeting June 2nd in Reno at NDA headquarters. SD Jensen to attend.

USDA APHIS

Wildlife Services



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