

August 2016

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 August, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **3.7** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$87.3** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$6.5** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **1,590** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$44,350** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$12,160** in damage to natural and agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During August, coyotes accounted for **\$11,010** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **103** 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 August, **47** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of August, 2016.

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 August 1st, Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler received a call concerning a problem with a mountain lion. The lion had killed at least one lamb, valued at \$150. MLS Buhler and WS Scott Little traveled to the location and confirmed the loss. The kill had not been discovered by the sheep herder for several days and the lion had left the area. Throughout the next week, both MLS Buhler and WS Little checked the band of sheep for lion activity. On August 8th, the lion returned and killed two more lambs, valued at \$300. MLS Buhler put six of his tracking dogs on the lions trail. After a couple of hours the lion was treed and dispatched. The lion was an adult female that weighed 85 pounds. The lion was processed and transferred to the Ely Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) office. A necropsy of the lion revealed lamb and wool in its stomach. No further losses have been reported and technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was provided in an effort to help prevent future losses.



On August 2nd, WS Mac Crome confirmed the loss of five lambs, valued at \$750, to coyote predation. The losses occurred on two bands of sheep in northern Elko County near the Idaho border. WS Crome used calling and trapping to remove the three offending coyotes. No further losses have been reported. WS Crome will continue to monitor the livestock in his area.



On August 22nd, WS Hunter Bodenchuk confirmed the loss of two lambs, valued at \$300, to coyote predation. The kills occurred in Eastern Eureka County near the White Pine County line. WS Bodenchuk was able to call and shoot an adult female coyote near the location of the kills. No further losses have occurred. WS Bodenchuk also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On August 22nd, WS Little confirmed the loss of five lambs to raven predation. The ravens had attacked and pecked the eyes out of five different lambs on a remote ranch in Nye County. The value of the lambs was placed at \$750. WS Little traveled to the location and used eggs treated with DRC-1339 to remove the offending 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 first two weeks of August, WS Allen Eldridge confirmed the loss of at least ten lambs, valued at \$3,000. WS Eldridge used trapping to remove one large adult male coyote. The coyote was believed to have killed several times in the same area during the past several years but had eluded capture. The sheep herder was very pleased to finally remove the offending coyote. The coyote was captured in a trap set very near the band of sheep and the herder came upon the large coyote in the trap shortly after it had killed a lamb and then was caught in the trap. The herder dispatched the coyote. No further losses have been reported and technical assistance was provided in an effort to prevent more losses.

During August, the Ely Crew Member (CM) confirmed the loss of 15 lambs, valued at \$3,000, to coy-

ote predation. The Ely CM used trapping and calling to remove five coyotes near the location of the kills. Although work is ongoing, losses have been reduced. The Ely CM also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses. The sheep producer has been pleased with the Ely CM's efforts and he continues to monitor the two bands of sheep in his assigned summer work area.



During the month of August, CM Wayne Rowley was busy protecting a band of sheep in central Elko County. During the month, CM Rowley confirmed the loss of three lambs, valued at \$450. CM Rowley used his horse to ride into the remote band of sheep and was able to call and shoot three coyotes near the kills, bringing an end to the damage. No further losses have been reported to date. CM Rowley will continue to monitor the sheep until they ship to market in late September.

WS Dayne Barnes continued feral swine work in his designated work area in Lincoln County. WS Barnes is utilizing trail cameras, ATV's and mules in an effort to locate any remaining feral pigs in his area. WS Barnes was able to remove and sample eight feral swine during the past fiscal year. WS Barnes also removed several other feral swine while on assignment in Arizona helping with the feral swine program there.

WS Samantha McGann finished working two different NDOW projects in August. WS McGann worked to remove ravens for the protection of sage-grouse in Lincoln and White Pine Counties; and removed coyotes to protect mule deer in Eureka and White Pine Counties.

West District

During the month of August, Wildlife Biologist (WB) Dean Pyzik completed airport bird strike training and all the security measures required at a military installation in Clark County. WB Pyzik has begun preparations for conducting a wildlife hazard assessment while also working on operational issues as they arise. A recent flood in Las Vegas washed away debris under perimeter fences and currently there are large holes where nearby dogs have entered the airfield. WB Pyzik will continue to protect the military facility and work with Service members and Department of Defense contractors to reduce threats to human health and aviation safety and associated equipment.



WS George Hansen spent August protecting lamb bands for several sheep producers in Lander County. On August 29th, WS Hansen checked his equipment around a lamb band where the herder reported coyotes moving near the sheep, resulting in the removal of five coyotes. Protection efforts will continue.

On August 11th, District Supervisor (DS) Jack Spencer conducted a routine field inspection with WS Green at a joint-use international airport in Washoe County. DS Spencer provided snaring/trapping training for WS Green during the field inspection. Also during the inspection, WS Green captured a large domestic dog in a cage trap and transferred it to Washoe County Animal Services. WS Green is a quick learner and a great asset to the WS' program. DS Spencer is very pleased to have WS Green in the West District.



During the month of August, WS Doug Koepke has transitioned from working on farm flocks of sheep, goats and cows in Churchill County to moving sheep bands in Pershing and Washoe Counties. WS Koepke has started placing equipment around several sheep bands and calving areas. WS Koepke will continue to protect livestock in his large work area.

During the month of August, WS Carl Frey removed several problem coyotes in Lyon County by using firearms and the M-44 device. WS Frey is still having great success utilizing the call box to lure in offending coyotes away from livestock and into nearby ground equipment. WS Frey will continue to protect livestock in his large work area.

During the first week of August, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard received annual aerial training with ATOC IP Scott Jensen in Northern Nevada. The Instructor Pilots conducted aerial hunting training activities for two days on some calving areas in Humboldt County, resulting in the removal of 26 coyotes. IP Gossard is very well recognized as an expert pilot in the WS Program and will continue to seek out development opportunities.

During the week of August 29th, CM Brandon Vandermay and IP Gossard conducted crew member training at the ATOC training center in Utah. Although CM VanderMay has been recertifying his crew member certification for many years, this training was IP Gossard's initial training. Both passed successfully.

During the month of August, WS Ben Miller has been busy placing trail snares around several small pockets of bighorn sheep inhabiting northern Washoe County (hunt units 011 and 013). WS Miller has not seen any lion sign around the bighorn sheep lately, lions range over large areas and it's just a matter of time before one or more move in around the bighorn sheep population, especially being so close to California, a state where lions are not managed, and Oregon, a state with lion hunting restrictions.

During the week of August 22nd through August 26th, DS Spencer conducted a field inspection with WB Pyzik at the prior mentioned military installation in Clark County. As with any new position, considerable time is spent on procedural training required for all hands and trade specific training. A report of three coyotes on the military facility provided DS Spencer an opportunity to provide training to WB Pyzik on how to trap coyotes. WB Pyzik is fitting in nicely and takes great pride in protecting the Service members and their equipment. DS Spencer will continue to conduct field inspections as required.



On August 23rd, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning aerial operation around a flock of sheep in Lander County. A sheep producer reported that despite having several guard dogs, coyotes had killed six of his sheep (valued at \$1,200). During the flight, three coyotes were removed. WS's Hansen and Frey provided valuable ground support by howling up the offending coyotes and directing the plane to the coyote's location. The offending coyotes were all large old males running together. To date, no further livestock losses have been reported and the rancher was pleased with the livestock protection efforts.



On August 25th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning aerial operation around a lamb band in Lander County. A sheep producer reported that despite having four guard dogs, coyotes killed one lamb (valued at \$165). During the flight, four coyotes were removed. WS Hansen provided ground support. To date, no further livestock losses have been reported and the rancher was pleased with the livestock protection efforts.

During the month of August, WS John Peter worked around several lamb bands in Humboldt County. Specifically, WS Peter removed nine problem coyotes by using decoy dogs/shooting and six coyotes with M-44's. WS Peter is now transitioning to protecting calves on fall calving grounds.

During the month of August, 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. Fifty-one birds from eight species were dispersed from the airfield. Wildlife numbers are finally starting to subside. Based on almost five years of work at this facility, August is generally the lowest period for BASH concern. Activity generally begins to pick up again in September when cooler temperatures usually arrive.

During the month of August, no bird strikes were reported. As an update from July's bird strikes that were reported, the two samples sent to the Smithsonian were identified. One sample was identified as a mourning dove which are common to the area. The other sample was identified as a western tanager. While western tanagers are observed around the airfield on occasion, they are normally in low densities. This example shows that even in low numbers, birds can be a hazard to aviation safety anytime they are in conflicting airspace with aircraft.

During the month of August, WB Bowers got a report of an American kestrel in a non-aircraft related building. Upon inspection, it turned out to be a Cooper's hawk. WB Bowers provided guidance on how to get the hawk out of the building, which included recommendations for leaving the bay doors open in order for the accipiter to escape. WB Bowers advised that if the accipiter didn't go out on its own through the open bay doors, that it may be possible to trap the hawk and relocate it outside of the airfield environment. WB Bowers checked back on the situation later and was told that the hawk left on its own through the open bay doors.

During the month of August, WB Hunter Moyles and WS Cameron Green continued protection work on an international airport in Washoe County. WB Moyles and WS Green work together on the air-

field because it is a joint-use facility. WS Green spends all of his time there, while WB Moyles is only there once or twice a week when he is not working on the other military installations. During the month, WB Moyles and WS Green continued to deter wildlife from using/crossing the airfield property.



In an effort to deter these avian/mammalian species from crossing the airfield, WS Green utilized several methods of harassment. WB Green dispersed 374 birds and mammals from the airfield. Wildlife dispersed from the airfield included 13 species of birds and mammals. Many of these birds were congregated around a drainage ditch which holds water on a year around basis. Despite receiving decent levels of precipitation this spring, the area has been in drought conditions for the past several years now and wildlife is concentrated around water sources. Persistent harassment is necessary as birds and other wildlife are reluctant to leave the water source located on airport property.

On August 8th WB Moyles and WS Green toured around the facilities with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector where they talked about habitat modifications and exclusion options that the facility has employed and could potentially employ. WB Moyles and WS Green will continue to employ wildlife management techniques recommended by the FAA.

Throughout the month of August, WB Moyles started monthly surveys on offsite military drop zones and landing strips. During the surveys, WB Moyles observed 245 avian and mammalian species on his structured surveys. Surveys will continue to get a good baseline of wildlife presence and potential strike hazards to aircraft.

As one year has passed since WB Moyles started working on the International airport and military installations he has: dispersed 5,524 avian and mammalian species from the airfields, translocated 27 raptors, transferred of custody 200 species (mostly Canada geese to NDOW), removed 27 nests from the Aircraft Operating Area (AOA), and removed 800 avian and mammalian species from the AOA. Of the 800 species removed, 513 have been CA ground squirrels which are a prey base for many other species. During the last year, there has been 14 aircraft strikes. Of the 14 strikes there was one major damaging strike that cost roughly \$90,000.



Along with several non-lethal harassment techniques, WB Moyles and WS Green also had to deploy some lethal means of control to reduce aircraft strike potential at the above mentioned airport. During the month, WB Moyles and WS Green removed several offending species for public safety including: five pigeons, six doves and 158 ground squirrels by utilizing trapping, shooting and toxicants. Aircraft protection methodology will continue to be employed at the large airport to better minimize the potential for wildlife strikes to aircraft. Protection efforts are ongoing.

New and Developing Methods

Nothing to report.

Valuing and Investing in Employees

Nothing to report.

Information and Communication

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has confirmed the presence of highly pathogenic H5N2 avian influenza (HPAI) in a wild mallard duck from a state wildlife refuge near Fairbanks, Alaska. CDC considers the risk to the general public from these HPAI H5 infections to be low. No human infections with Eurasian H5 viruses have occurred in the United States. As a reminder, the proper handling and cooking of poultry and eggs to an internal temperature of 165 °F kills bacteria and viruses, including HPAI.

H5N2 HPAI has NOT been found in the U.S. – in either wild or commercial birds – since June 2015. However, anyone involved with poultry production from the small backyard to the large commercial producer should review their biosecurity activities to assure the health of their birds. To facilitate such a review, a biosecurity self-assessment and educational materials can be found at http://www.uspoultry.org/animal_husbandry/intro.cfm

The United States has the strongest AI surveillance program in the world, and USDA is working with its partners to actively look for the disease in commercial poultry operations, live bird markets and in migratory wild bird populations. The wild mallard duck was captured and a sample tested as part of ongoing wild bird surveillance. Since July 1, 2016, USDA and its partners have tested approximately 4,000 samples, with a goal to collect approximately 30,000 samples before July 1, 2017. Approximately 45,500 samples were tested during wild bird surveillance from July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016.

Since wild birds can be infected with these viruses without appearing sick, people should minimize direct contact with wild birds by using gloves. If contact occurs, wash your hands with soap and water and change clothing before having any contact with healthy domestic poultry and birds. Hunters should dress game birds in the field whenever possible and practice good biosecurity to prevent any potential disease spread. Biosecurity information is available at: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/2015/fsc_hpai_hunters.pdf

In addition to practicing good biosecurity, all bird owners should prevent contact between their birds and wild birds and report sick birds or unusual bird deaths to State/Federal officials, either through their state veterinarian or through USDA's toll-free number at 1-866-536-7593. Additional information on biosecurity for backyard flocks can be found at <http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov>.

Additional Background

Avian influenza (AI) is caused by an influenza type A virus which can infect poultry (such as chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, domestic ducks, geese and guinea fowl) and is carried by free flying waterfowl such as ducks, geese and shorebirds. AI viruses are classified by a combination of two groups of proteins: hemagglutinin or "H" proteins, of which there are 16 (H1–H16), and neuraminidase or "N" proteins, of which there are 9 (N1–N9). Many different combinations of "H" and "N" proteins are possible. Each combination is considered a different subtype, and can be further broken down into different strains. AI viruses are further classified by their pathogenicity (low or high)— the ability of a particular virus strain to produce disease in domestic chickens.

In Nevada, WS collaborates with NDA and NDOW in sampling efforts. During the reporting period, NDOW provided 85 waterfowl samples from live captures to be tested for HPAI. The Summer sampling provides an opportunity to monitor the potential disease reservoir (Central Lahontan watershed and it's waterfowl) for HPAI. The upcoming fall sampling will begin mid October where 185 samples will be taken from hunter harvested migratory dabbling ducks. Winter sampling will begin in December where 170 samples will be collected.



Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report

Future Meetings and Events

Nothing to Report

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