

December 2017

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 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 December, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **6.3** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **99.0** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$9.1** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **1,649** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$3,314** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$10,142** in damage to natural and agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During December, coyotes accounted for **\$4,780** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **304** 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 December, **143** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of December, 2017.

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 December 1st, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett confirmed the loss of two ewe sheep to coyote predation. The loss occurred in western White Pine County. The value of the two ewes was placed at \$250. DS Bennett set several traps near the kills and was able to trap two coyotes and shoot another. The Ely plane also responded to the location and was able to remove seven more coyotes bringing an end to the damage. No further losses have been reported. Technical assistance was also provided in an attempt to prevent future losses.

On December 1st, the Ely plane responded to a call for assistance from a sheep rancher on the Nevada/Utah border in eastern White Pine County. The rancher reported he had lost two ewes, valued at \$500, to coyote predation and was seeing several coyotes near his sheep. During the flight, two coyotes were removed near the location of the kills. No further losses have been reported and NDA Field Assistant (FA) Scott MacDonald continues to monitor the situation.

On December 2nd, the Ely plane responded to a call for assistance from two cattle ranchers and a sheep producer in western White Pine County. The sheep producer reported he had lost at least nine ewes to coyote predation and both cattle ranchers reported seeing several coyotes in their pasture where they are soon to calve out. During the flight, three coyotes were removed.



On December 2nd, the East District office received a call concerning a problem with ravens. The rancher reported that ravens had attacked and killed at least two newborn calves, valued at \$1,600. On December 6th, DS Bennett traveled to the location and confirmed the losses. Eggs treated with DRC-1339 were used to remove the offending ravens. No further losses have been reported. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was also provided in an effort to prevent future losses.

On December 2nd, a White Pine County sheep producer reported that ravens attacked a sheep in his pasture. The sheep was sick and was getting treated for its illness when several ravens attacked and pecked it so bad that it had to be put down. FA Allen Eldridge traveled to the location and confirmed the loss, valued at \$250. Eggs treated with DRC-1339 were used to remove the offending ravens. No further damage has been reported. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was also provided in an effort to prevent future losses.

On December 2nd, a cattle rancher in Nye County contacted the East District office concerning a problem with coyotes. The rancher reported he had lost two calves to coyote predation and had seen 17 coyotes in three days while checking his herd. On December 6th, the Ely plane responded to the location. During the flight, seven coyotes were removed near the location of the losses. No further losses have been reported. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was also provided in an effort to prevent future losses.



On December 5th, the Ely plane responded to the same complaint from two cattle ranchers and one sheep producer in western White Pine County. During this flight, seven additional coyotes were removed. Both cattle ranchers and the sheep producer were very pleased with the help they received from the Ely plane and the Wildlife Services' program.



On December 7th, the Ely plane responded to a call from a sheep producer located on the Eureka/White Pine County line. The sheep producer reported that his herders were seeing and hearing a bunch of coyotes near three bands of sheep. The area has a history of high losses to coyote predation. During the morning's flight, the plane was able to remove 13 coyotes near the sheep. The rancher was very pleased with the assistance he received from the Ely plane and Wildlife Services.

On December 7th, the Elko plane responded to a call from a cattle rancher in eastern Elko County. The rancher was getting ready to calve out and was seeing several coyotes in his calving pastures. During the day's flight, 17 coyotes were removed. The rancher was very pleased with the assistance he received and said that without the help of the Nevada department of Agriculture and the USDA Wildlife Services, his losses would be considerably higher.

On December 14th, FA MacDonald confirmed the loss of one ewe sheep, valued at \$250, to coyote predation. The damage occurred on a band of sheep in White Pine County near the Utah border. FA MacDonald used traps to remove three coyotes near the kill bringing an end to the damage. The sheep producer was very happy with all of FA MacDonald's help and hard work and said that he no doubt saved many more sheep by removing the coyotes near the band of sheep.

Also on December 14th, WS Mac Crome confirmed the loss of two ewes valued at \$500. The damage occurred on a band of sheep in eastern Elko County near the Utah border. Using calling and snares, WS Crome was able to remove two adult coyotes near the location of the kills. No further losses have been reported and WS Crome continues to monitor the ten bands of sheep in his assigned work area.

On December 15th, FA Hunter Bodenchuk confirmed the loss of one ewe sheep, valued at \$250. While investigating the kill, FA Bodenchuk sight shot one adult coyote. FA Bodenchuk also set several trail snares near the kill. Two additional coyotes were snared. No further losses have been reported. FA Bodenchuk also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to prevent future losses.



On December 19th, FA Eldridge confirmed the loss of one ewe sheep, valued at \$250. The damage occurred on a band of sheep north of Ely, Nevada. Sensing the coyote or coyotes involved were still in the area, FA Eldridge was able to locate and shoot one coyote on December 19th and another the following

morning near the location of the kill. No further losses have been reported and FA Eldridge provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On December 19th, the Elko Crew Member (CM) confirmed the loss of at least thirty newborn goats to raven predation. The rancher reported that a group of ravens had begun attacking and pecking the eyes and other sensitive areas of his baby goats resulting in the losses valued at \$4,207. The damage occurred in central Elko County. Using hard boiled chicken eggs treated with DRC -1339, the offending ravens were removed. No further losses have been reported. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was also provided in an effort to help prevent future losses.



During the month of December, WS Dayne Barnes continued to monitor and check for feral swine activity in eastern Nevada. WS Barnes routinely checks several trail cameras as well as looks for pig sign through his assigned work areas. WS Barnes also recently started utilized a thermal imaging device in an attempt to locate any remaining wild pigs in Nevada.

Also during December, WS Randy Evans removed three coyotes for antelope protection as part of Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) project 40.

West District

During the first week of December, WS George Hansen was busy checking equipment around calving and winter sheep bands in Lander County. During the week, WS Hansen removed 10 coyotes with the use of trail snares and foothold traps. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock in his large work area. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On December 16th, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted aerial operations around calving and winter sheep bands in Lander County. Livestock losses have been minimal, unfortunately, large groups of coyotes have been moving in around livestock despite non-lethal approaches such as guard dogs. During the flight, 16 coyotes were removed. WS Hansen provided ground support, spotting several of the coyotes and sending the plane to the location of the coyotes.



On December 6th, FA Carl Frey inspected a large dairy in Lyon County that reported coyotes had killed four dairy calves (valued at \$3,800) in the weaning pens. The dairy workers reported seeing a large group of coyotes leaving the calving pens that very morning. FA Frey placed foothold traps in the area and had already scheduled the plane to fly some sheep and cattle places in the area, so the dairy was added to the list. On December 7th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay flew around the dairy, removing seven coyotes within half of mile of where the calves had been killed. FA Frey also removed three additional coyotes with foothold traps that he had set. To date, no further livestock losses have occurred and the dairy owner was pleased with

the protection efforts.

On December 15th, DS Jack Spencer conducted a routine field inspection with WS Cameron Green at an international airport in Reno. Most of the day was spent using a non-lethal approach to harass large Canada geese from the airport. Each winter roughly 10,000 Canada geese migrate into the Reno area and can become a problem for aircraft. The International airport usually has several bird strikes each month, fortunately, most of the recent bird strikes have been from smaller birds with minimal damage to aircraft. DS Spencer also put a financial proposal together for the airport to see if they would like to continue funding for a part time Wildlife Specialist. WS Green will continue to protect the airport from constant wildlife threats.



During the month of December, WS Ben Miller was busy checking equipment around translocated California bighorn sheep in northern Washoe County (hunt unit 013). WS Miller has been running trail snares and call boxes adjacent to the areas where the bighorn sheep reside. During the month, WS Miller did not see a single lion track. This is really good news as it provides the sheep relief during typical lean times before novel lions move into the area. For perspective, last year during November and December, WS Miller removed three lions from the protection area. WS Miller will continue to monitor and protect these bighorn sheep for a couple more months before switching to protecting sage-grouse in the Virginia Mountains (hunt unit 022).

During the month of December, FA Frey ran M-44s, foothold traps, trail snares and call boxes around several sheep, calving and winter sheep bands in Lyon, Carson and Douglas Counties. FA Frey had minimal losses and much of that is attributed to his expertise in utilizing ground equipment around vulnerable livestock. During the month, FA Frey removed 26 coyotes with various approaches to keep losses low. Several cooperators made positive comments to DS Spencer about all the hard work FA Frey has been providing to his many livestock producers. FA Frey will continue to protect livestock in his large work area.



During the month of December, FA Doug Koepke protected calving areas and winter sheep bands in several counties. FA Koepke has been busy running mostly M-44s, because of the snow and freezing conditions. Livestock losses have been occasional, but with winter bearing down, coyotes require a higher caloric intake and often increased livestock losses are the response. FA Koepke will continue to protect livestock.

During the month of December, WS John Peter ran foothold traps, snares and M-44s around several calving and winter sheep bands in Humboldt County. The aerial crew has been unable to fly, so WS Peter has stepped up his game by providing more ground equipment in dismal weather conditions. On December 20th, WS Peter removed 17 coyotes with M-44's and the following day, WS Peter removed 12 more coyotes. Removing 29 coy-



otes around problem areas in two days takes a high level of trapping expertise and work ethic. WS Peter will continue to offer livestock protection efforts regardless of inclement weather.

During the month of December, Wildlife Biologist (WB) 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. To that end, 388 birds from 13 species were dispersed from the airfield. One species of mammal and one species of bird were lethally removed. Mallards and horned larks were both on and near the airfield in relatively high numbers.

During the month of December, WB Bowers provided bird/animal aircraft strike hazard (BASH) training to between fifty and sixty air traffic control personnel at the above mentioned military installation. The training was well received and it is believed that this training will likely be given on an annual basis. Air traffic control personnel play an important role in the BASH program, so WB Bowers believes providing this training was time well spent.

During the month of December, WB Dean Pyzik spent a week up in Reno at the state office for some cross training. WB Pyzik visited WB Bowers at a military installation in northern Nevada, where he did a ride along and observed the operations at that military installation. During the two days of cross training at Reno airport, WB Pyzik received a snare making 101 class from WB Hunter Moyles. WB Pyzik also got the opportunity to get some "hands on" training in trapping and handling of Red-tailed hawks from WB Moyles and WS Green. This training will come in handy as WB Pyzik implements these skills at the military installation in southern Nevada.



After a rainy night in southern Nevada, WB Pyzik had a flock of about 500 California gulls show up at his military installation in southern Nevada. During this occurrence, tower was notified about the large flock of gulls and they continued to let jets take off, thankfully no bird strikes occurred.

WB Pyzik removed seven Black-tailed jack rabbits from the installation while dispersing 3,069 birds. WB Pyzik has seen a major increase of house finches and gold finches which accounted for 60% of the birds dispersed while patrolling and

conducting perimeter checks at the installation.

New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report

Valuing and Investing in Employees

During the reporting period, DS Bennett became the 21st recipient of the Spalsbury Award, a very high honor indeed. In brief, William (Bill) Spalsbury was a dedicated and beloved employee of the



APHIS Wildlife Services (WS) program who died when a commercial jetliner crashed on take-off from Denver's Stapleton International Airport on November 15, 1987. Since 1997, the Spalsbury Award has been awarded annually to the Western Region Wildlife Services Employee who exemplifies the traits of professionalism, dedication, and personal integrity that Bill was known for. At a future date, the plaque will be awarded to DS Bennett with a picture of Joe receiving the plaque being displayed at the Western Regional office along with his fellow award recipients.

Also during the reporting period, DS Bennett and Staff Biologist (SB) Jack Sengl received plaques for their part in the 2015 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Task Force. In 2015, DS Bennett and SB Sengl detected the HPAI in South Eastern Nevada during emergency winter sampling efforts. Weekends and holidays were sacrificed to assist the National Wildlife Disease Program with sampling the birds for detection of the virus and providing data for models to better predict the behavior of what turned out to be a pandemic. Of interest, the positive sample came from a hen Mallard duck.



During December, WB Moyles accepted a transfer to the Oregon program where he will again be protecting Service members from the threat of wildlife strikes. Hunter was a really good hand who brought people together, was ready to help anyone on any project and will be sorely missed. Fair winds and following seas to you.



Information and Communication

Winter waterfowl sampling for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) commenced during the reporting period with SB Sengl, WS Miller and WS Green hitting several locations in the Central Lahontan watershed to swab hunter harvested puddle ducks on the weekends. As always, the waterfowlers have been very contributory and patient this year despite having poor conditions to harvest in. Without their assistance, disease monitoring would be extremely difficult and as always we extend our thanks and appreciation.

On December 16th, DS Bennett attended the N-1 Grazing Board meeting in Elko, Nevada. These grazing boards provide money to help support the aerial work in Nevada. The meetings are also a way for Wildlife Services to report back to the ranchers on operational issues in the state. The meeting went very well.

Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report

Future Meeting and Events

Nothing to Report

USDA APHIS

Wildlife Services



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

