

February 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](http://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 February, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **8.3** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$204.2** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$4.5** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **1,056** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$9,158** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$70,184** in damage to natural and agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During February, coyotes accounted for **\$21,438** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **512** 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 February, **1** sample was processed.

*The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of February, 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 February 1<sup>st</sup>, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett confirmed the loss of 3 ewes and 2 calves to coyote predation in central Nye County. The total loss was \$1,750. 2 coyotes were removed that day by shooting. The Ely plane was also scheduled and removed 6 more coyotes near the location of the kills. 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.



On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) Field Assistant (FA) Scott MacDonald confirmed the loss of 2 pet goats to coyote predation. Although very hard to put a monetary loss on a cherished pet, the owner reported the 2 were worth \$400. On February 5<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to the location in eastern White Pine County and removed 3 coyotes. FA MacDonald also set 5 traps near the ranch, resulting in the removal of 2 more coyotes, bringing an end to the damage. No further losses have been reported. FA MacDonald also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help minimize future losses.

On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, work began on Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) project 38. Several locations were flown by the Ely plane in an effort to protect antelope from coyote predation. During the flight, 6 coyotes were removed near herds of antelope, work will continue as the antelope begin to fawn.



On February 5<sup>th</sup>, work began to reduce raven damage to a large power distribution company in eastern Nevada. The



power company had documented more than \$30,000 in damage from ravens on their power lines. Several fires had been started by raven nests as well as countless man hours to try to restore power to rural communities and farms. The power outages also posed health concerns for customers that rely on power to use medical devices. Work will continue this spring. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future problems was also provided, however the power company had already implemented many non-lethal measures to help mitigate the problem spending more than \$100,000 in an effort to help reduce losses.

During the week of February 5<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane traveled to Elko County. On February 6<sup>th</sup>, the plane responded to a sheep ranch and several cattle ranches in southern Elko County. The ranches had called requesting the plane since they were about to start lambing and calving out in a short time. All of the ranches had experienced high historic losses in past seasons. During the flight, 20 coyotes were removed.

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to several cattle ranches in central Elko County. Most of the ranches had just started calving and reported seeing a large number of coyotes in their calving pastures. During the flight, 29 coyotes were removed. All of the ranchers were very happy with the assistance they received from Wildlife Services and the Nevada Department of Agriculture.

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call in northern Elko County from a cattle rancher. The rancher has documented very high coyote predation on his newborn calves in the past several calving seasons. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 7 coyotes in the calving pastures. Work will be ongoing as needed.

On February 13<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call concerning the loss of 2 ewes valued at \$1,000. The damage occurred on a band of sheep in Lincoln County. With the help of FA Hunter Bodenchuk as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 4 coyotes near the sheep. FA Bodenchuk also placed several traps near the location of the kills and was able to remove 3 more coyotes, bringing an end to the damage. FA Bodenchuk also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.



On February 14<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from a cattle and sheep producer in northern White Pine County. The rancher had been losing ewes to coyotes for the past several weeks and was seeing several coyotes near his sheep. With the help of FA Allen Eldridge as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 4 coyotes before wind forced the plane to return to Ely. Work will continue as needed. FA Eldridge also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help prevent future losses.

On February 15<sup>th</sup>, the East District office received a call from a person in Eureka County. The reporting party stated that his wife came home around noon and observed 5 coyotes in their yard attempting to kill their puppy. She was able to scare the coyotes away but said if she had not come home when she did that their puppy would have been killed. FA Hunter Bodenchuk was in the area and responded to the small ranchette near Eureka, Nevada. FA Bodenchuk confirmed the story by looking at the tracks in the yard. FA Bodenchuk set several traps and snares around the perimeter of their property. During the next several days, FA Bodenchuk was able to remove 2 coyotes and most likely spooked the others away. FA Bodenchuk also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent these types of situations in the future.

On February 15<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from a sheep producer in western White Pine County. The producer reported the loss of at least 10 ewes valued at \$2,500 to coyote predation. With the help of DS Bennett as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 4 coyotes near the location of the kills. DS Bennett also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help prevent future losses. Work will be ongoing as needed.

On February 16<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to 2 cattle ranches in Eureka and Lander Counties. Both ranches had just recently started calving and reported seeing several coyotes in their calving pastures. During the flight, the plane was able to remove 9 coyotes from the 2 ranches. Work will be ongoing as needed.

On February 17<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane flew on NDOW project 38 in Lincoln County. During the morning flight, the plane was able to remove 8 coyotes near several groups of antelope. Work will continue as needed on the project.



On February 20<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from a sheep producer in eastern Eureka County. The producer reported that he had lost 2 ewes to coyote predation. During the morning flight, with the help of FA Hunter Bodenchuk as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove 8 coyotes near the location of the kills. Work will be ongoing as needed.

On February 21<sup>st</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from an Indian reservation in northern Elko County. The reservation was just starting to calve and reported seeing several coyotes in their calving pastures. The reservation has also experienced very high losses to coyotes in past years. During the flight, 14 coyotes were removed. The reservation was very pleased with the assistance from the Nevada Department of Agriculture and the USDA Wildlife Services programs.

On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Ely plane responded to a call from a cattle rancher in central Elko County that reported the loss of 2 calves, valued at \$500 each. During the flight, 21 coyotes were removed from the location of the 2 kills. Work will be ongoing as needed. The rancher phoned the East District office and expressed his appreciation for the Nevada Department of Agriculture and the USDA Wildlife Services programs and said he could not stay in business without the two programs assistance.

On February 24<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane flew on NDOW Project 38 in southern White Pine and Lincoln Counties. During the operation, 25 coyotes were removed near antelope fawning areas. Work will continue on this project thru the antelope fawning season.

On February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2 cattle ranches and sheep allotments were flown. The sheep rancher has lost more than 20 yearling sheep to coyote predation during the last month and both adjoining cattle ranches were just starting to calve out and reported seeing several coyotes harassing newborn calves. With the help of FA Hunter Bodenchuk as the ground crew, 6 coyotes were removed including one coyote feeding on a freshly killed sheep. Work will be ongoing as needed. FA Bodenchuk also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

During the month of February Wildlife Specialist (WS) Scott Little confirmed the loss of 4 calves, valued at nearly \$2,000, to raven predation. Shortly after the calves were born, a group of ravens attacked the calves, pecking out their eyes and pecking at other soft tissues which eventually killed the calves. WS Little 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 month of February, Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler and intermittent MLS Casey Shields worked on NDOW project 37. NDOW project 37 is the statewide mountain lion project. NDOW identifies areas where lions are preventing wildlife species from meeting management objectives. On February 26<sup>th</sup>, one adult female lion was removed on project 40 in White Pine County to protect mule deer. Work will continue as needed. The lion was skinned and turned into NDOW.

Work began in February on NDOW project 43. WS Billy Taylor will be working at Overton State Wildlife Management Area removing raccoons, skunks and coyotes that are greatly impacting wild turkey recruitment. Work will continue for about 2 months.



During February, FA Eldridge confirmed the loss of 6 ewes, valued at \$1,500. The damage occurred on several bands of sheep in northern White Pine County. FA Eldridge was able to remove 8 coyotes near the kill sites using calling, shooting and traps. Work will continue as needed. FA Eldridge also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

During the month of February, FA Scott MacDonald confirmed the loss of one ewe valued at \$250. The damage occurred on a band of sheep in eastern White Pine County. Several other ranchers reported hearing and seeing several coyotes near the flocks. FA MacDonald was able to remove 16 coyotes using shooting, trapping and calling. FA MacDonald no doubt saved the 2 sheep producers from suffering more losses. FA MacDonald, on several occasions, also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

During the month of February, FA Bodenchuk confirmed the loss of 12 ewes, valued at \$3,000, to coyote predation. FA Bodenchuk was able to remove 12 coyotes using shooting, snares, calling and trapping during the month. Work will be ongoing as needed.

During February, WS Mac Crome confirmed the loss of 3 ewes, valued at \$900, to coyote predation. The damage occurred in eastern Elko County near the Utah border. WS Crome used trail snares, calling, trapping and shooting to remove 6 coyotes near the location of the confirmed losses. No further losses have been reported. WS Crome also provided non-lethal technical assistance to help to prevent future losses.



## West District

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and Crew Member (CM) Brandon VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several cattle and a sheep producers in Pershing County to reduce ongoing damage and reduce damage in calving areas. During the flight, 5 coyotes were removed. FA Doug Koepke provided ground crew efforts. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several calving areas in Humboldt County after receiving several requests from cattle producers. During the flight, 17 coyotes were removed right in close around the calving area. WS John Peter provided ground crew efforts. Aerial protection efforts will be ongoing in the West District.

On Saturday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several cattle and a sheep producers in Pershing County. The aerial crew spotted several groups of coyotes, including one group of 6 harassing a newborn calf. From the air the aerial crew could easily see where the cow walked the grassy field into a mud pit trying to guard her newborn calf from the problem coyotes. The aerial crew promptly removed the coyotes, saving the calf. During the flight, 22 coyotes were removed. WS Koepke provided ground crew efforts. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On February 6<sup>th</sup>, WS Peter continued his pre-baiting efforts for bringing in some feral pigs seen on a ranch in Humboldt County. WS Peter was conducting ground crew efforts on a nearby ranch and

because of the recent rains causing muddy roads, he requested the aircrew inspect his pre-baiting site for feral pigs. The aircrew inspected the site and observed 10 adult feral swine feeding on WS Peter's bait. The aircrew went to work and in a few minutes removed 7 of the feral swine ranging from 200-250 pounds each. WS Peter collected DNA samples from the pigs and once the roads become passable again, will place trail snares out for the remaining invasive feral swine.



On February 7<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several calving areas in Humboldt County after receiving several requests from cattle producers. During the flight, 33 coyotes were removed right in close around the calving area. WS Peter provided ground crew efforts. Cattle producers were pleased with the protection efforts. Fixed wing protection efforts will be ongoing in the West District as the requests for help on calving grounds increases.

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several hundred cows calving in Washoe County after receiving requests for assistance from cattle producers. During the flight, 17 coyotes were removed, some actively feeding on afterbirth. WS Koepke provided ground crew efforts. Fixed wing protection efforts will be ongoing and the cattle producers commented to DS Jack Spencer on how much they appreciate the work of his employees.

During the week of February 12<sup>th</sup> through February 15<sup>th</sup>, DS Spencer, FA Koepke, FA Bentz and WS Rick Laffins conducted a starling removal project for several dairies in Churchill County. Dairy producers reported that the invasive European starlings were causing thousands of dollars of damage and spreading diseases to newborn calves. With so many thousands of birds, moving about, concerns of fecal contamination to feed and dairy are taken very seriously. These dairy/feedlot starling projects often don't need to be repeated for several years, which is fortunate as these projects entail a lot of work and coordination: location and number of depre-



dating starlings have to be determined; observations to ensure non-target birds are not affected are conducted; media advisories are prepared; location of starling roosts has to be determined; all treated bait has to be prepared and put out prior to the birds arriving at first light; treated bait is monitored for non-target presence; and all remaining bait and expired birds that are found are properly disposed of. The hard work paid off and side benefits of the project include protecting Service members who train in Fallon with various fighter jets.



On February 13<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several cattle producers in Humboldt County. Several cattle producers reported that coyotes were starting to move in around the calving grounds. During the flight, 17 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground crew efforts. Protection efforts will be ongoing in the West District.



On February 20<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several cattle producers in Humboldt County. Several cattle producers reported that coyotes were starting to move in around the calving grounds. During the flight, 28 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground crew efforts. Protection efforts will be ongoing in the West District.

On February 21<sup>st</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several cattle producers in Lander County. Several cattle producers reported that coyotes were starting to move in around the calving grounds. During the flight, 22 coyotes were removed. WS Hansen provided ground crew efforts. Protection efforts will be ongoing in the West District.



On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several cattle producers in Humboldt County. Several cattle producers reported that coyotes were starting to move in around the calving grounds. During the flight, 8 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground crew efforts. Protection efforts will be ongoing in the West District.

On February 27<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several cattle producers in Humboldt County. Several cattle producers reported that coyotes were starting to move in around the calving grounds. During the flight, 6 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground crew efforts. Protection efforts will be ongoing in the West District.

On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, DS Spencer conducted a field inspection with WB Zack Bowers at a military facility in Churchill County. During the inspection, DS Spencer assisted WB Bowers with the removal of empty red-tailed hawk nests found in trees near air station runways. The nests were removed using a long telescopic pole. Hopefully the effort will discourage mating pairs from nesting near aircraft. Habitat modification is one of the most important forms of wildlife damage management at airports/air stations. WB Bowers will continue to implement his Wildlife hazard management/BASH plan to protect our service members and DS Spencer will continue to conduct field inspections with employees when applicable.



On February 28<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several cattle producers in Humboldt County. The producers reported that coyotes were starting to move in around the calving grounds and a few large groups of coyotes were spotted. During the flight, 33 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground crew efforts. Protection efforts will be ongoing in the West District.

During the month of February, WS Ben Miller continued work on NDOW project 22-01 maintaining trail snares around an augmented bighorn sheep population in Washoe County (hunt unit 013). The project is designed to increase the population by eliminating mortality caused by lions. WS Miller will continue to protect these sheep from lion predation. Protection efforts are ongoing.

During the month of February, FA Bentz checked equipment around winter sheep bands and calving areas in Lyon and Douglas Counties. During the month, FA Bentz reported very few livestock loss-

es, largely in part due to his dedication and hard work protecting livestock in his large work area. FA Bentz will continue to protect livestock.

During the month of February, WB Bowers continued protection efforts at a military installation in northern Nevada. WB Bowers utilized harassment with several methods to disperse 300 individuals from 14 species. One species of mammal and one species of bird were removed from the airfield. WB Bowers will continue efforts to protect aviation safety at this facility.

Also during the reporting period, WB Bowers coordinated the removal of some rock doves (pigeons) from a couple of structures within the weapons compound at the above mentioned facility. This project was coordinated with Weapons (department), who also supplied some man power for the effort. It was decided to conduct this project on a closed airfield day (Saturday) in order to minimize conflict with any weapons or airfield operations. WS Rick Laffins made the trip over from Reno to assist on a Saturday, and brought some much needed skilled wing-shooting to compliment the effort. WB Bowers would like to thank all involved in this project that benefitted the weapons compound, but aviation safety as well.

During the month of February, the great blue herons returned to the above mentioned facility in high numbers. As many as 93 were counted at the trees they use for nesting (which is called a rookery) on one occasion. Working in close cooperation with the facilities Natural Resources department, WB Bowers placed a propane cannon at the heron/egret rookery. WB Bowers programmed the cannon to operate at night in an effort to encourage the herons/egrets to nest elsewhere. Despite having some cold weather operational problems, the propane cannon is having great success. Daily observations at the rookery have dropped from an average of 30-40 individuals, to one or two. WB Bowers has observed some great blue herons at another nest tree, which is located at Rattlesnake reservoir. This indicates that the herons may have translocated to nest trees that they may have used in the past. Hopefully the propane cannon will continue to be successful with the herons and with the egrets, which will likely try to return to the rookery within the next 3 to 6 weeks.

During the month of January, WB Dean Pyzik reported zero wildlife strikes to aircraft at a military installation in southern Nevada. Also during the reporting period, WB Pyzik removed 8 mammals from the installation while dispersing 623 birds with his truck, firearms and pyrotechnics. Of those 623 birds dispersed while patrolling and conducting perimeter checks, starlings and finches accounted for 47% 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.



WB Carl Frey completed the necessary surveys for the Wildlife Hazard Assessments (WHA) at a northern California military installation and a northwestern Nevada military installation. Day and night time surveys were conducted to gauge the wildlife presence, abundance and behavior at the facilities so that potential wildlife threats to aviation can be identified and managed against.

With the observation period complete, WB Frey is in the process of writing the WHA, which entails data compilation, trend analysis and providing formal recommendations to reduce the wildlife threats



to aviation safety, aircraft and other property. To that end, WB Frey traveled to Sandusky, Ohio to develop WHA writing skills and techniques as well as get in some valuable cross training. He was able to see the newest research and experiments going on within NWRC's airport program involving Canada geese. He was also able to see the new risk analysis process that is used to identify which species usage situations present the greatest potential for damaging strikes to aircraft. WB Frey also completed a ride along with 2 Ohio WS' airport biologists. The different wildlife hazards encountered vary greatly from one airport to the other. WB Frey was grateful for their time and sharing of knowledge.



During the month of February, WS Cameron Green and WS Laffins continued implementing a wildlife hazard management plan at a joint use aviation facility in Washoe County. Specifically, 10,783 animals (primarily Canada geese and California gulls) were dispersed from the facility and adjoining properties using vehicles, pyrotechnic devices and firearms. Firearms and snares were also utilized to remove 51 animals that failed to respond properly to non-lethal approaches. Three red-tailed hawks were also captured and translocated this month to reduce the probability of a wildlife strike.

WS Laffins surveyed 47,535 animals during structured "point-count" wildlife surveys on the airfield and offsite in the general zone during the month.

Also during the reporting period, a California gull dispersal project was conducted at the Southeast Connector route utilizing pyrotechnics to reduce threats to aviation safety, which represents the large increase in dispersed animals this month (mentioned above).



### **New and Developing Methods**

Nothing to Report

### **Valuing and Investing in Employees**

Nothing to Report

### **Information and Communication**

NWSP has been in the process of backfilling behind our vacated Elko pilot position. Until we can fill this position, we will continue to utilize the Ely, Winnemucca and out of state pilots to help out with calving and lambing.

### **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-WS  
8775 Technology Way  
Reno, NV 89521



# USDA APHIS Wildlife Services

---

