

February 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 February, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **9.6** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$326.9** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$11.2** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **157** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$4,867** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$29,218** 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 **\$10,745** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **1,317** 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, **10** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of February, 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 February 1st, the East District office received a call concerning the loss of three calves, valued at \$2,400, to coyote predation. The damage occurred in Lincoln County. The rancher reported seeing a group of at least five coyotes in the pasture she was calving in. During the next two weeks, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Dayne Barnes was able to remove several coyotes, bringing an end to the problem. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was also provided to help stop future losses. No damage has occurred since the offending coyotes were removed.



On February 5th, the East District office received a call concerning the loss of two ewes valued at \$500. On February 9th and 10th, the Ely plane responded to the remote ranch in western White Pine County. During the two flights, four coyotes were removed near the location of the kills. No further losses have been reported. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was provided to the rancher in an attempt to prevent future losses.

During the week of February 8th, Nevada Wildlife Services was able to utilize the Utah/Nevada Wildlife Service's helicopter to fly on Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) project 40, in hunt unit 144. The hunt unit has been identified by NDOW for mule deer protection from coyotes. During the four and a half day operation, 306 coyotes were removed in mule deer fawning areas. Additionally, 80 coyotes were also removed in the same hunt unit by the Elko and Ely fixed wing planes prior to the arrival of the helicopter.



On February 17th, WS Allen Eldridge confirmed the loss of five ewes, valued at \$1,250, to coyote predation. The damage occurred on a remote band of sheep near the Utah border in White Pine County. WS Eldridge requested the assistance from the Ely plane. A few days later the Ely plane responded to the location and removed three coyotes from near the kill sites. WS Eldridge also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On February 22nd, the East District Office received a call from a cattle rancher in western White Pine County experiencing a problem with ravens. The rancher reported that about 100 ravens were attacking his newborn calves. The rancher reported that the ravens had killed at least two calves, valued at \$1,600. On February 23rd, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett and WS Hunter Bodenchuk traveled to the area and confirmed the losses. Hard boiled chicken 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 to help prevent future losses.



On February 22nd, a cattle rancher in Nye County called concerning a problem with ravens and coyotes. The rancher reported he had lost four calves to raven predation and two calves to coyote pre-

dation. The rancher reported seeing about thirty ravens pecking on newborn calves. He also had found four calves that had been attacked and killed by ravens. On February, DS Bennett responded to the location and placed out hard boiled eggs and removed the offending ravens. The Ely plane also responded and was able to remove two coyotes near the location of the kills. DS Bennett also shot one additional coyote. No further losses have been reported. Technical assistance, in the form of non-lethal recommendations, was also provided in an attempt to prevent future losses.

On February 24th, WS Scott MacDonald confirmed the loss of four lambs, valued at \$800, to coyote predation. On February 26th, the Ely plane responded to the location in Lincoln County. During the morning's flight, the plane was able to remove three coyotes near the location of the kills. WS MacDonald also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to prevent future losses.

During the month of February, both the Ely and Elko planes have been flying antelope fawning areas in Elko, Lincoln, Nye and White Pine Counties for NDOW project 38. The goal of the project is to increase antelope recruitment and abundance.



West District



On February 3rd, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and Crew Member (CM) Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning aerial operation around several calving areas in Humboldt County. The aerial crew arrived at first light and promptly removed 65 coyotes, including a group of 11. One rancher called DS Spencer and expressed how pleased he was to have IP Gossard and CM VanderMay and WS Peter protecting his livestock. Protection efforts are ongoing and request for the aerial crew from cattle producers have been pouring in.

During the month of February, DS Jack Spencer conducted several routine field inspections and training sessions with WS Carl Frey on trail snaring and M-44 usage to protect livestock in his large work area. On February 2nd, DS Spencer and WS Frey set up a call box, raven decoys and 21 trail snares around a State prison that runs a cattle and dairy operation in Douglas County. Prison officials were concerned that newborn calves would likely fall victim to coyotes, unless they could be removed. DS Spencer noted that WS Frey is an extremely fast learner and has a deep appreciation for livestock protection. During the next several inspections of the call box, raven decoy and trail snare set up, WS Frey removed five coyotes from the immediate area. Protection efforts will be on going and DS Spencer will continue to conduct field inspections with employees.



Also during the month of February, WS Frey removed six coyotes with the use of M-44s and one coyote with the use of a foothold trap to protect calves from predation. WS Frey will continue to protect livestock in his large work area.

On February 4th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight in Humboldt County around several calving areas. One calving area, in particular, lost two calves (valued at \$900) as reported by a cattle producer. During the flight, 22 coyotes were removed around the calving areas. WS Peter provided ground support during aerial operations and to date no further livestock losses have been reported.

During the month of February, WS Ben Miller continued to protect California bighorn sheep in northern Washoe County (hunt units 011-013), maintaining and setting trail snare call box systems and covering ground along corridors and resources that lions would likely exploit. During the reporting period, WS Miller had not seen any recent lion sign in hunt unit 011, but did remove two lions from hunt unit 013 with the application of firearms. During February 8th through the 12th, DS Spencer conducted a field inspection with WS Miller. WS Miller will continue to use his expertise to protect bighorn sheep from lion predation.



On February 8th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight in Humboldt County around several calving areas and a sheep producer. The operation resulted in the protection of livestock and the removal of 23 coyotes. WS Peter provided ground support, locating several coyotes for the aerial crew.



During the month of February, WS Doug Koepke was out placing M-44s, trail snares and traps around many calving areas in Churchill, Pershing and Humboldt Counties, resulting in the removal of 34 coyotes. One large calving operator in particular reported he had lost 11 calves (valued at \$4950) to coyotes since last fall. WS Koepke removed several coyotes and the aerial crew removed another six offending coyotes on February 10th. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On February 16th, a livestock producer in Humboldt County reported that two calves (valued at \$811) had been injured and had to be euthanized because of ravens. WS Peter placed DRC-1339 treated egg baits out, removing 30 ravens. To date, no further livestock losses have been reported.

On February 17th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations around several calving areas in Humboldt County. During the effort, nine coyotes were removed, including a group of seven located right in the middle of cows and calves. WS Peter provided ground support during aerial operations.

On February 24th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations around several calv-

ing areas and a winter sheep band in Lander County. During the effort, nine coyotes were removed. WS George Hansen provided valuable ground support during aerial operations.

On February 23rd, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations around several calving areas in Pershing County. One cattle producer reported that two calves (valued at \$900) had been killed by coyotes. During the effort, 14 coyotes were removed. WS Koepke provided ground support during aerial operations.

On February 25th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations around a lambing area in Lyon County. A large sheep producer is currently beginning to lamb and herders reported a few coyotes moving near the lambs, but no losses to date. During the operation five coyotes were removed including a large male very close to the sheep. WS Frey provided valuable ground support during aerial operations.



On February 26th and 27th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial activities around several antelope fawning areas in Nye County for NDOW project 38, resulting in the removal of 14 coyotes, nine of which DS Spencer located for the plane. The operation was cut short both days because of high winds. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

During the month of February, 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. Five species of birds and one species of mammal were dispersed from the airfield. Two species of mammals were lethally removed. Wildlife numbers on and around the airfield are about average compared to the previous four February's. Although not showing increased numbers in structured surveys, general observations indicate high numbers of red-tailed hawks, common ravens and pigeons on and near the airfield.

During the month of February there were two incidents of feathers/remains found either on aircraft or runway. It is believed that the remains found on the airfield could be associated with the remains found on the aircraft. Initial identification of the remains are that of horned larks, but confirmation from the Smithsonian is pending.

During the month of February, raven numbers remained high on and near the airfield. A feedlot near the airfield has been requesting assistance with ravens. The large number of ravens has been consuming a large amount of cattle feed which results in the ravens defecating on the feed. This leads to concerns of sickness and disease for the cattle consuming the feed. WB Bowers keeps a close eye on this particular feedlot due to its proximity to the airfield. WB Bowers has been routinely counting around 70 ravens at this feedlot. WB Bowers intended to treat the feedlot with the toxicant DRC-1339. However, a shortage of toxicant forced WB Bowers to utilize other methods. WB Bowers enlisted the aid of WS Carl Frey, resulting in the removal of 11 ravens. Although this is not a large percentage of the ravens present, they are fairly intelligent birds and many of them vacated the area for the time being as a result of this effort. This not only helps the feedlot, but the airfield also benefits from reduced numbers of ravens crossing active runways on a daily basis.

WB Bowers again utilized WS Frey while he was in situ to help collect European starlings for the National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC). NWRC wanted starlings for a study of isotope levels in order to create an isotopic contour base map for wintering subpopulations of European starlings associated with agricultural depredation. WB Bowers appreciated WS Frey's professionalism and assistance.

During the month of February, WB Hunter Moyles continued protection work on an international airport in Reno and several Nevada Air National Guard installations. During the month, WB Moyles continued to deter wildlife from using/crossing the airfield property. In an effort to deter these avian/mammalian species from crossing the airfield, WB Moyles utilized several methods of harassment. WB Moyles disperse 305 birds and mammals from the airfield. Wildlife dispersed from the airfield included eight species of birds and mammals. WB Moyles will also continue to monitor the airfield and surrounding area using formal surveys and general observations.

During the last part of February, WB Moyles has noticed a decrease in Canada Geese, and ducks on surrounding properties. Hazing has still been employed to keep the large geese away from the airfield. During the month, WB Moyles hazed 183 Canada geese, and 122 ducks off of airport property. Methods used to deter wildlife include the use of: pyrotechnics, cracker shells and vehicular harassment. Decreased activity on the airport is due to the warm temperatures and the start of the green up.

On February 9th, WB Moyles started to observe an increased presence of CA ground squirrels and marmots on the airport property. The increased presence of these rodents on the property is due to the warm weather the Reno area has been getting. The increased activity of the rodent population has drawn more raptors to the area as well which is a higher risk for aircraft strikes. WB Moyles started rodent removal efforts and will continue to do so throughout the summer.



On February 11th, WB Moyles set a modified Goshawk trap in an effort to remove raptors from the airport property which resulted in the capture one red-tailed hawk. The red-tailed hawk was banded and released in a new area away from the airport. Raptor control efforts will continue throughout the season.



On February 18th, WB Moyles received a phone call from a military airbase reporting that they had a Barn owl inside one of their expensive aircraft. WB Moyles responded to the call and searched all aircraft on the field and could not find the owl. WB Moyles suggested some changes to the method of storing the aircraft to alleviate concern of the owl getting back into the aircraft.

Along with several non-lethal harassment techniques, WB Moyles also had to deploy some lethal means to eliminate aircraft strike potential at a large airport in Reno. During the month, WB Moyles removed some offending species for public safety including: one Eurasian collared dove; two marmots; two pigeons; five starlings, and 13 CA ground squirrels utilizing trapping, and shooting. Wildlife haz-

ard management plan implementation 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

On February 18th, State Director (SD) Mark Jensen and DS Bennett attended the Predatory Animal and Rodent Committee (PARC) Meeting in Elko.

Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report

Future Meetings and Events

March 28th-April 1st, WS National Firearms Committee meeting in Mississippi. SD Jensen to attend.



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