

February 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

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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 **5.6** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **144.3** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$4.8** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **1,559** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$1,300** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$13,140** 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 **\$8,812** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **254** 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, **6** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of February, 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 February 1st, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Scott Little confirmed the loss of three calves, valued at \$1,500, to coyote predation. The damage occurred on a cattle ranch in western White Pine County. WS Little set several snares near the location of the kills. During the next two weeks, WS Little was able to remove six coyotes bringing an end to the damage. No further losses have been reported. WS Little also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help prevent future losses.



On February 3rd, Crew Member (CM) Wayne Rowley received a call concerning a problem with ravens. On February 6th, CM Rowley traveled to the ranch in southern Elko County and confirmed the loss of one calf and one kid goat, valued at \$600. Using eggs treated with DRC-1339, CM Rowley was able to remove twenty ravens, bringing an end to the damage. CM Rowley also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On February 14th, WS Scott Little confirmed the loss of two ewes, valued at \$500. The damage occurred on a sheep ranch in south eastern Nye County. WS Little placed several traps near the kills, during the next two weeks, WS little removed three coyotes, bringing an end to the damage.

On February 14th, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett confirmed the loss of one newborn calf to raven predation. The rancher reported seeing 30-40 ravens attacking one of his newborn calves. The rancher was not able to save the calf since the ravens had already pecked at its eyes and soft tissue. DS Bennett observed at least twenty ravens in the field with the cows and calves. Using hard boiled chicken eggs treated with DRC-1339, DS Bennett was able to remove twenty ravens from the pasture. To date, 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. The rancher was very pleased with the help he received from the Wildlife Services' program. He commented that without the help his losses would have been much higher.



On February 14th, WS Mac Crome confirmed the loss of two ewes, valued at \$500, to coyote predation. The damage happened on a band of sheep in Elko County, near the Utah border. The following morning, WS Crome positioned himself near the two kills and waited. A short time later, a large adult male coyote appeared near the dead sheep. One well-placed shot brought an end to the damage. No further losses have been reported and WS Crome continues to monitor the eleven bands of sheep in his assigned work area. WS Crome also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On February 21st, CM Rowley confirmed the loss of four newborn goats to raven predation. The ravens had attacked the baby goats shortly after they were born and killed them by pecking their eyes out. CM Rowley used eggs treated with DRC-1339 to remove the offending ravens. To date, no further losses have been reported. CM Rowley also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On February 24th, the Elko plane responded to a cow-calf operation in southern Elko County that had lost one calf to coyote predation. The rancher reported that he had just recently started calving and was seeing a high number of coyotes in his pastures. During the morning's flight, nine coyotes were removed. No further losses have been reported.

On February 24th, the Ely plane responded to a request in western White Pine County concerning the loss of one calf and the loss of at least four ewes on the adjacent ranch. The total loss was set at more than \$1,500. During the morning's operation, ten coyotes were removed. Both ranchers were very happy with the assistance provided by the Ely plane and Wildlife Service's.



On February 25th, the Elko plane responded to several cow-calf ranches in central Elko County. Several ranchers had phoned the Elko office with concerns about coyote predation. All the ranchers were just starting to calve out and were hearing and seeing high numbers of coyotes in their calving pastures. All of the ranches had also experienced very high losses due to coyote predation in previous years. During the morning's flight, eighteen coyotes were removed. Work will be ongoing as

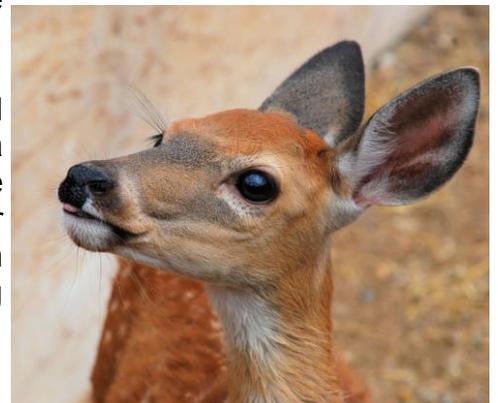
the cattle ranchers begin their calving season.

On February 25th, the Ely plane responded to a cattle and sheep ranch in Lincoln County. The cattle ranchers said that coyotes had attacked and killed his very first calf of the season. Across the road the sheep producer had lost at least eight ewes to coyote predation. The loss from both ranches was set at \$2,500. During the flight, seven coyotes were removed. Work will be ongoing in the area.

On February 28th, the Elko plane responded to a ranch in northern Elko County. The rancher reported that coyotes had killed two calves, valued at \$1,000. The rancher has experienced extremely high losses in the past several years during this time of year. During the morning's flight, twenty nine coyotes were removed in only two hours of flying. The operation was cut short due to high winds in the area. Work will be ongoing.

On February 28th, the Ely plane responded to two sheep ranches and one cattle ranch in western White Pine County. All three ranches have experienced very high historical losses to coyote predation. During the morning's flight, fourteen coyotes were removed. Removing coyote's just prior to lambing and calving season is a very effective way to help reduce losses.

During February, CM Nathan Fowler and WS Randy Evans worked on Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) project 40 in Eureka County. The project is designed to remove coyotes to protect mule deer fawns and sage-grouse from coyote predation. CM Fowler and WS Evans used calling, trapping and snaring to remove ten coyotes. Work will be ongoing until after the mule deer fawning and sage-grouse nesting season is over.



During the month of February, WS David (Billy) Taylor began work on NDOW project 43 at Overton Wildlife Management Area. The project is designed to improve wild turkey recruitment by removing nest predators including raccoons, skunks and coyotes. To date, twelve raccoons and four coyotes have been removed near the locations that the wild turkeys have historically used for nesting and brooding. Work is ongoing.

During the month of February, WS Dayne Barnes continued his feral swine removal/monitoring efforts in Eastern Nevada. WS Barnes used trail cameras and a thermal imaging device along with looking for tracks and other sign to identify feral swine activity. This project is funded by the USDA and is designed as a five year project to eliminate feral swine in Nevada. Since the year 2000, 79 feral swine have been removed by Wildlife Services in Nevada.

On February 15th, DS Bennett attended the Predatory Animal and Rodent Committee (PARC) meeting in Elko, Nevada. During the meeting, NDOW presented its' FY 2018 draft predator plan. PARC members will now have the opportunity to provide comments and input concerning the plan.

West District

During the month of February, WS Rick Laffins worked on foothold traps, an ATV and his camp in preparation for his upcoming NDOW funded project designed to increase wild turkey and waterfowl recruitment. WS Laffins will begin avian protection efforts on the Mason Valley Wildlife Management area in Lyon County in March.

On February 9th, DS Jack Spencer inspected equipment while covering for an employee in Pershing County. DS Spencer walked around several goat bands looking for any signs of predation while checking traps. Adjacent to the goat bands, DS Spencer observed a large coyote which he removed with his firearm. DS Spencer will continue to help in the field occasionally when employees are unable to work.



During the first two weeks of February, CM Brandon VanderMay assisted livestock producers in Humboldt County. One particular livestock producer reported the loss of one calf (valued at \$500) killed by coyotes.

CM VanderMay inspected the calving area and observed sign where coyotes were walking in to the calving fields. CM VanderMay made two calling stands that resulted in the removal of three coyotes with his firearm. CM VanderMay will continue to assist livestock producers when he is not performing his normal crewmember duties.



After being grounded for safety inspections, WS aircraft are back in the air and starting to address the many livestock complaints. The fixed wing component is an integral part of the Wildlife Services program.

On February 23rd and 24th, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and CM VanderMay flew calving areas in Humboldt County. During the two days of hard flying, the aerial crew removal 51 coyotes. WS John Peter provided ground support.

During the month of February, WS George Hansen ran his trap line in Lander County on calving areas and winter sheep bands. On February 22-24, WS Hansen removed five coyotes with the use of snares and foothold traps. The weather has been hard on keeping equipment working in much of the west district, regardless, WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock.

WS Peter was placing M-44s around several calving areas in Humboldt County during the month of February. WS Peter reports that severe flooding and muddy conditions have restricted where he can and can't go to place equipment. In some valleys there is still snow and WS Peter has been placing M-44s in the middle of cow pies as coyotes are often attracted to cow pies. WS Peter will continue to work where he can to protect livestock.

On February 28th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay flew cow-calf and sheep operations to provide relief from predation. During the flight, 10 coyotes were removed. WS Hansen provided ground support during aerial operations.

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. To that end, 457 birds from 15 species were hazed and dispersed from the airfield. Two species of mammals were lethally removed to reinforce non-lethal approaches. Mallards, mountain bluebirds and European starlings were on and near the airfield in relatively high numbers.



During the month of February, WB Dean Pyzik continued wildlife hazard management at a military installation in southern Nevada. While out patrolling the perimeter for wildlife activity he came across an American kestrel, so he pitched a Bal-Chatrri trap in hopes of catching it. WB Pyzik ended up catching two American kestrels for the month and translocating them to reduce the chance of the birds being sucked into a jet intake. On February 16th, WB Pyzik attended the Nevada Joint Military Affairs Committee (NJMAC) meeting, which was held in Las Vegas, NV.

WB Pyzik also removed thirty one black-tailed jack rabbits from the installation while dispersing 878 birds. Of those 878 birds, house finches accounted for 68% of the birds dispersed while patrolling and conducting perimeter checks at the installation. Also, there were no bird strikes making it the second month in a row with no strikes.

During the month of February, WB Carl Frey was spending a majority of his time solo at a joint use facility in Reno, with WS Cameron Green out on medical leave. During this time, WB Frey continued the use of nonlethal hazing methods to disperse several hundred geese daily, along with several flocks of mallards. Although the geese and mallards were the majority of the wildlife hazed from the airfield, their numbers are greatly diminishing with the warmer weather. In sum, 2,377 Canada geese, 18 Snow geese and 369 mallards were hazed.

With the unusual weather during the month (rain, snow, t-shirt weather, coat weather etc.) the joint-use facility also had a flock of Greater White-fronted geese show up and were unresponsive to the several attempts with pyrotechnics and other non-lethal deterrents. So an emergency take was issued to remove one from the flock of 22 which resulted in the remaining birds dispersing from the air operations area (AOA). This is the first conflict reported with this species in Reno.

During the week of the 13th, WS Rick Laffins was assisting WB Frey at the above mentioned facility. With the warmer weather there was an influx of marmots and California ground squirrels coming out of hibernation. In total, 35 fossorial mammals were removed. WB Frey and WS Laffins were called out on two human health and safety calls on airport property regarding a feral cat interfering with airport operations and a skunk under the training center. Both of the offending wildlife were captured. The cat was transferred to the custody of animal control.

WB Frey conducted two wildlife surveys at a military installation south of Reno to establish baseline data for the wildlife hazard assessment (WHA). WB Frey also conducted wildlife surveys at a military installation in Lassen County California also for collecting information for their Bird Animal Strike Hazard (BASH) plan. In sum, 265 birds and animals were surveyed. Some notable observations: several large birds of prey were using the areas on and adjacent to the active airfields; along with 15 feral horses and 18 Pronghorn antelope utilizing the survey areas.

WS Green returned towards the end of the month and hit the ground running, capturing an American kestrel and translocating it safely away from air traffic. WS Green also lethally removed 39 birds/rodents from the prior mentioned joint-use facility that wouldn't respond properly to non-lethal methods. The lethal work reinforced harassment methods that resulted in dispersing 331 birds from the airfield. The Airport is pleased with the service he provides on a daily basis and glad to have him back. Protection efforts are ongoing.



New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report

Valuing and Investing in Employees

During the reporting period, WB Pyzik was a recipient of the WS' Safety and Health Incentive Awards Program.

Information and Communication

During February 14th thru 16th, SD Jensen and the NV Pilots attended the Aviation Safety meeting in Utah.

On February 15th, DS Bennett attended the PARC Meeting in Elko.

Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report

Future Meeting and Events

March 13th thru 16th, scheduled program review by regional team. Participation and location is open.

March 15th, PARC meeting in Elko. SD Jensen to attend via video in Reno.



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Wildlife Services



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