

January 2015

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 January, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **7.7** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$126.1** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$8.3** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **73** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$2,789** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$1,012,008** in damage to natural and agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During January, coyotes accounted for **\$7,317** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **438** 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 January, **381** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of January, 2015.

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 link: <http://agri.nv.gov/Wildlife>. Where wildlife biology and damage management methods are offered by species.

East District

During the first week of January, a goat producer in Elko County contacted the Elko Office concerning the loss of five goats valued at \$625. The producer said he was seeing and hearing many coyotes in and around his tribe of goats. On two different occasions, the Elko plane responded to the location. The first visit, five coyotes were removed and on the second visit three more were removed taking the pressure off the goats. The goat producer was very pleased with the assistance he received from the Elko aerial crew.

On January 2nd, a rancher in Nye County contacted the East District office concerning the loss of one calf to raven predation. The rancher observed at least fifteen ravens attacking the newborn calf that later died from the injuries. On January 7th, the Ely Crew member responded to the location and confirmed the loss, valued at \$900. Several hard boiled eggs treated with DRC-1339 were placed in strategic locations a short distance from the kill site. A post raven treatment count showed that twenty ravens had been removed, bringing an end to the damage. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was recommended in an attempt to prevent future losses, many of which were being utilized, but were met with poor results. Information was provided to the rancher to possibly obtain his own permit to remove the offending ravens.



On January 5th, a rancher in northern White Pine County contacted the East District office concerning the loss of seven turkeys and twelve laying hens to coyote predation. The total value of the loss was more than \$300, excluding the loss of egg production. On January 6th, the Ely District crew member responded to the location and was able to call and shoot an adult male coyote near the ranch house. Later in the month, the Ely plane responded to the ranch and was able to remove three additional coyotes, bringing an end to the damage. The rancher was very pleased with the assistance provided by Wildlife Services. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was also provided in an

attempt to prevent future losses.

On January 5th, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Billy Taylor confirmed the loss of one ewe sheep, valued at \$250, to coyote predation. WS Taylor used calling and ground equipment to remove a pair of coyotes near the kill site. No further losses have been reported for this band of sheep. WS Taylor also provided non-lethal technical assistance to help prevent future losses.

On January 7th, WS Mac Crome confirmed the loss of one ewe sheep to coyote predation. The value of the ewe was placed at \$250. WS Crome used traps, calling and snares to remove three coyotes near the location of the predation. To date, no further losses have been reported. WS Crome continues to monitor twelve bands of wintering



sheep in his assigned work area.

On January 22nd, a Nye County cattle rancher contacted the East District Office after coyotes had killed three of his calves. The total loss for the three calves was valued at \$2,700. The rancher sent pictures of the kills to DS Bennett and after reviewing the photos, the Ely plane responded to the location. During the morning's flight, five coyotes were removed near the kills. No further losses have been reported.



On January 27th, a cattle rancher in northern White Pine County contacted the East District Office concerning a problem with ravens. The rancher reported that he had just recently had a few new calves near his ranch and about 50-60 ravens had attacked some of his calves, killing one and harassing several others. The loss was placed at \$900. On January 28th, the East District Crew Member traveled to the location, confirmed the damage and observed the ravens in and around the newborn calves. Eggs treated with DRC-1339 were used to remove thirty ravens. A

post treatment inspection revealed that thirty ravens had been removed. No further losses have been reported and the rancher was very happy with the quick response and help he received from Wildlife Services. Non-lethal technical assistance in the form of recommendations was also provided to help prevent future losses.

During the month of January, a Wildlife Services pilot from Montana spent two weeks flying in the East District removing coyotes. Several large sheep, goat and cattle ranches were flown during the two week project.

West District

On January 5th, WS John Peter inspected his snare line on a ranch in Humboldt County. During the equipment inspection, WS Peter removed one feral pig. WS Peter has only seen a few feral pig tracks left in the area, but then again it only takes a few pigs to turn into many pigs. WS Peter will continue to remove problem animals in this area including the occasional feral pig.

On January 5th, a cattle producer from Humboldt County reported that three calves (valued at \$2,400) had been killed by coyotes. The area was already scheduled to be flown, so the aerial crew flew over the calving area and removed 12 coyotes within a half a mile in a short amount of time. WS Peter followed up with protection efforts, placing M44s right in the middle of the calving area to keep any remaining offending coyotes at bay. Protection efforts are ongoing.

On January 6th, DS Jack Spencer conducted an annual mid-winter waterfowl survey with Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) Biologists in the Truckee Meadows area. During the waterfowl survey, over 13,000 waterfowl were observed and nearly 9,000 were large Canada geese. WS keeps a close eye on the Canada goose population because there is a large airport in Reno and reducing the threat of bird strikes, especially with 8-10 pound geese flying around an airport is everyone's concern. WS and NDOW occasionally work on joint wildlife survey projects in the state.

On January 6th, a manager for a large airport in Reno reported that a coyote was seen wandering

within the airfield very close to an active runway. DS Spencer immediately responded to the early morning call, worked with local law enforcement and euthanized the coyote with a suppressed rifle. To date no further coyotes have been spotted on or near the airport runways.

On January 14th, Pilot Wes Gossard and Crew Member (CM) VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around five winter sheep bands in Pershing County removing five coyotes that were among the sheep and feeding on carcasses. Fortunately, livestock losses by coyotes were sporadic in the area during the past three weeks as foul weather hampered previous flights. The sheep producers were pleased with the results and for the time being no additional livestock losses have been reported. WS Koepke provided ground support during the aerial operation.

On January 16th, NDOW and local law enforcement contacted WS about a coyote seen on several occasions in a school yard in Sparks. In the past 10 years DS Spencer has removed several coyotes near this particular school. DS Spencer inspected the situation and found coyote tracks and areas where the coyote was going under the school yard fence. On Saturday, January 17th, DS Spencer returned to the school yard, harassed the coyote to a nearby field and promptly removed it with the use of a firearm. To date no other coyotes have been seen around the school yard.



On January 17th, a resident in a suburban area in Lyon County reported that a lion was seen in her back yard and had left the pigs, goats and calves alone, preferring to kill a dozen chickens. Of greater concern, she had small children. The lion was also seen on the back porch. WS relayed the info to the NDOW, who deemed it a human health situation. At NDOW's request, WS Smith responded with hounds and traps just before dark. WS Smith removed the female lion hours later. The homeowner was extremely pleased with WS Smith's prompt response and results.

On January 20th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around a calving area in Lander County. The cattle producer reported that coyotes had killed a cow while in the birthing process a few days prior. Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay located the dead cow in the pasture with a group of 19 coyotes feeding on it. In a mere few minutes time, the aerial crew removed the lot. WS Hansen provided ground support during aerial operations. No other coyotes were seen around the calving areas and to date no further coyote problems have been reported.

During the month of January, WS Peter was busy maintaining equipment on several calving areas in Humboldt County. WS Peter removed 50 coyotes, mostly with M-44s, to protect the vulnerable calves from building coyote numbers. WS Peter has noticed that beef prices are going up substantially and cooperators are requesting more and more assistance with ground equipment. A benefit of the M-44 device and the country that WS Peter is working is that M-44s are by and large left alone by the cows. WS Peter will continue to protect livestock in his work area.



On January 21st, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning aerial operation around several sheep bands in Pershing County. Because of the dry weather, the sheep were way up on the mountain which entailed tough flying in nasty country. The aerial crew took advantage of

the calm morning and removed eight coyotes around the sheep bands that had some losses to coyotes. WS Koepke provided ground support during aerial operations and protections efforts are ongoing.

On January 22, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an aerial operation around several



winter sheep bands and calving areas in Lyon County which resulted in the removal of nine coyotes. WS Smith located several of the coyotes from the ground and directed the plane to their location which is why ground crew efforts are essential for an effective aerial program. WS Smith will continue to protect livestock in Lyon County.

On January 22nd, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay received requests for assistance from four cattle producers about coyotes starting to move in around their calving areas. Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay arrived at the calving areas and quickly flew the producers removing 10. WS Peter provided ground support.

During the month of January, WS Koepke was busy maintaining equipment around winter sheep bands and calving areas in Churchill, Pershing and Washoe Counties. During the month WS Koepke removed 27 coyotes with the use of snares and foothold traps. WS Koepke will continue to place ground equipment out to better offer protection to livestock operators.

On January 26th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial activities around several calving areas in Humboldt County. The aerial crew visited several calving areas that morning which resulted in the removal of 21 coyotes. WS Peter provided ground support and protection efforts are ongoing.

During the month of January, WS Ben Miller was busy placing trail snares and keeping call boxes going while trying to protect trans-located California bighorn sheep in northern Washoe County (hunt unit 011). The previous month there had been some bighorn sheep killed by lions and WS Miller did find evidence of lions in the area. One group of four lions traveled to the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge which does not allow any predator removal of any kind and another lion traveled north into Oregon which does not allow lion hunting with hounds. WS Miller had previously seen lions traveling west towards California, so those too are afforded protection of the species. It is challenging to protect bighorn sheep when three sides of the hunt unit are bounded by areas that can't be worked. WS Miller will continue to target lions around the bighorn sheep. Fortunately, NDOW recently reported new bighorn sheep collars should help capture bighorn sheep mortalities much faster, so WS Miller can arrive on the dead bighorn sheep carcasses within a day. Usually lions stay on a sheep kill for several days, while other times they only eat on a sheep kill for a single day especially in warm weather or if coyotes harass them off the sheep kills. WS Miller will protect the bighorn sheep for another month before he transitions onto the Virginia Mountain sage-grouse project.

On January 28th, DS Spencer assisted a feedlot operator in Lyon County that was having problems with nonnative starlings consuming livestock feed and defecating on cattle feed and water. DS Spencer had the cooperators pre bait the area with untreated feed the week prior to ensure bait ac-

ceptance. DS Spencer estimated the number of birds prior to treatment and on January 28th, placed the DRC-1339 treated bait out. The following morning DS Spencer recounted the birds and estimated that 6,132 birds were removed (98.6% success). Several neighbors called and reported large numbers of dead starlings, but DS Spencer visited or talked with each person and after explaining why the project was conducted all was fine. One citizen reported finding dead starlings eight miles away from the treatment site.



During the month of January 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. WB Bowers harassed two species of birds from on and around the airfield including red-tailed hawks, and horned larks. WB Bowers continues to monitor the airfield and surrounding area using formal surveys and general observations.

New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report

Valuing and Investing in Employees

Nothing to Report

Information and Communication

On January 8th-11th, State Director (SD) Mark Jensen attended the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) meeting in Las Vegas, NV.

On January 20th, SD Jensen, DS Spencer and Pilot Gossard attended the N-2 grazing board meeting in Winnemucca.

Emerging Trends/Issues

During the reporting period, NV WS completed sampling for the new H5N8 avian influenza strain in hunter harvested waterfowl. Over 350 waterfowl were sampled in the south eastern portion of Nevada, of which one sample tested positive for H5N8. The sampling efforts were completed with assistance from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and Nevada Department of Wildlife personnel that manage the State wildlife management areas.

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report

Future Meetings and Events

Nothing to Report

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