

June 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

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 June, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **3.6** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$67.5** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$4.5** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **236** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$50,414** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$160,789** in damage to natural and agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During June, coyotes accounted for **\$8,015** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **122** 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 June, **4** samples were processed.

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

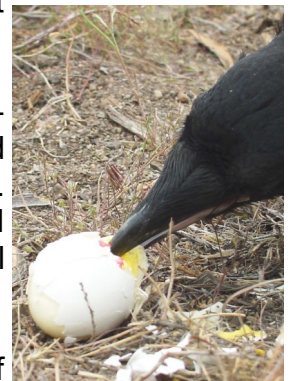
On May 29th, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Scott MacDonald confirmed the loss of five lambs, valued at \$750, to coyote predation. WS MacDonald set several traps near the kills, but due to the rain and muddy conditions, the traps had no success. On June 1st, the Ely plane responded to the location. With the assistance of WS MacDonald, the plane was able to remove two adult coyotes near the kill sites. During the next two weeks, WS MacDonald was able to remove two additional coyotes, bringing an end to the damage. The rancher was very happy with all the help he received from WS MacDonald and the Ely plane. WS MacDonald also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.



On June 1st, Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler received a call concerning a problem with a mountain lion near the Eureka/White Pine County line. On June 2nd, MLS Buhler traveled to the remote location and confirmed the loss of four lambs, valued at \$600, to mountain lion predation. MLS Buhler used his mule and six of his well trained dogs to trail and remove a 120 pound male lion. A necropsy confirmed the lion had lamb in its stomach. No further losses have been reported. The sheep producer was very pleased with MLS Buhler's quick response to his problem. He commented that if not for MLS Buhler, his losses could have been much higher considering the high historical losses by lions on this allotment.

Between June 2nd and June 9th, WS Billy Taylor confirmed the loss of ten lambs, valued at \$2,000, to coyote predation. The damage occurred in the northern part of White Pine County. During the next two weeks, WS Taylor used ground equipment to remove nine coyotes from the area. The Ely plane also responded to the location on several occasions and was able to remove several other coyotes near the kill sites including at least two different pairs amongst the sheep, no doubt in the process of killing additional lambs. No further losses have been reported. We are very thankful that WS Taylor came out of retirement to help the East District when two positions were vacant. WS Taylor has done an awesome job for the Nevada Wildlife Services program and the East District during a time of need.

On June 4th, WS Scott MacDonald confirmed the loss of two lambs to raven predation. The value of the lamb was placed at \$125. On June 8th, WS MacDonald used hard boiled chicken eggs treated with DRC-1339 to remove the ravens. The rancher was very happy with the assistance provided by WS MacDonald and the Wildlife Services program. WS MacDonald also provided non-lethal technical assistance to help prevent future losses.



On June 4th and 5th, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett confirmed the loss of seven lambs valued at more than \$900 to coyote predation. On June 5th, the Ely plane responded to the location and removed one adult coyote near the kills. On June 6th with the help of WS Randy Evans as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove one additional adult

coyote, bringing an end to the damage. Non-lethal technical assistance was also provided to help prevent future losses. Both the crew of the Ely plane and WS Evans are too be complimented for their willingness to work weekends in an effort to help prevent losses.



Between June 4th and 16th, WS Evans confirmed the loss of four lambs, valued at \$800, to coyote predation. WS Evans was able to locate and remove two dens and call and shoot three coyotes, bringing an end to the damage. WS Evans also provided technical assistance on several occasions in an effort to help prevent future losses. WS Evans continues to monitor the livestock in his assigned work area.

On June 15th, WS Scott Little confirmed the loss of one lamb, valued at \$200. The damage occurred on a remote ranch in western White Pine County. This was the first lamb confirmed lost to coyote predation this spring in WS Little's assigned work area and is a testament to WS Little's hard work and skill. WS Little was able to remove the offending coyote with the use of calling and his well-trained coyote decoy dogs. No further losses have been reported and WS Little continues to monitor the livestock in his assigned work area.



On June 18th, Crew Member (CM) Wayne Rowley responded to a ranch in Eureka County that was experiencing a problem with ravens. The rancher reported the loss of at least one calf, valued at \$1,000, to raven predation. CM Rowley used hard boiled chicken eggs treated with DRC-1339 to remove the offending ravens near the kill. CM Rowley also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future raven losses.

During the week of June 22nd, the West District plane crewed by Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and CM Brandon Vandermay traveled to Elko County and assisted the East district with aerial operations for the week. The week went very well with a number of ranches being flown and several problems solved. The East District appreciates the help provided.

On June 23rd, WS Mac Crome confirmed the loss of two lambs, valued at \$400, to coyote predation. On June 24th, the West District plane responded to the remote allotment along the Idaho border in northern Elko County. On two separate flights, the West District plane was able to remove nine coyotes. WS Crome was able to call and shoot two more coyotes, bringing an end to the damage. To date, no further losses have been reported. WS Crome also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations in an effort to help prevent future losses.



During the month of June, WS Dayne Barnes was busy checking trail cameras and running equipment in an effort to remove feral swine in eastern Nevada. WS Barnes has placed out many trail cameras and checks roads and trails for pig sign every day. With all the rain

during May, there is ample feed and water and the few pigs in the area have dispersed. Hopefully as summer comes the remaining pigs will become more concentrated around water and can be removed.

West District

During the first week of June, DS Jack Spencer coordinated the 30th, annual Canada goose round up. This is a multi-agency project with up to 30 volunteers, all working together to reduce the chance that the geese will collide with aircraft. Large Canada geese pose a serious aviation risk when they compete for airspace. As the geese molt during the first few weeks in June, they are herded into “drive” traps. This year, 256 Canada geese were captured, leg banded and turned over to the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) where they are kept until they can be safely translocated to wildlife management areas in eastern Nevada. A majority of the problem geese actually start migrating again



with a small percentage returning to western Nevada. DS Spencer also conducted several interviews for local TV stations about the importance of the round ups. <https://www.dropbox.com/s/mhcbuo5yp76ph79/Goose%20Roundup.mov?dl=0>



On June 8th, a Reno resident was out walking dogs near town when their pet dogs jumped a raccoon near a path and ran the raccoon up a power pole crowned with insulators and hot lines. Luckily DS Spencer arrived from WS state office and talked the raccoon down the power pole before it caused any power outages or fires.

On June 2nd, IP Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several lambing bands in Humboldt County. During the flight, two coyotes were removed from nearby lamb bands. Protection efforts are ongoing and WS John Peter provided ground support by locating the coyotes for the aerial crew.

A large army depot manager in Mineral County reported that several hundred ravens moved onto the sensitive military property and were about to cause a catastrophic event if not managed. The manager reported that at this facility personnel disable volatile sensitive equipment and there are components that must not be touched and ravens were starting to enter these areas of work. The military facility had applied for a depredation permit to remove the problem ravens a few months prior, but had not received a permit. DS Spencer help facilitate the situation between the military and the permitting office and the following day a permit was issued to remove offending ravens. No further raven problems have been reported in the past month.

On June 9th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several lambing bands in Humboldt County. During the flight, three coyotes were removed from nearby lamb bands. The aerial crew also located a coyote den. Protection efforts are ongoing and WS Peter provided

ground support by locating the coyotes for the aerial crew.

WS Nick Smith was recently selected as the new aerial crew member/Trapper in eastern Wyoming. WS Smith has done an excellent job in the past few years protecting livestock for his many cooperators in Lyon and Douglas counties. WS Smith was a State trapper in Nevada and is now switching to federal employment. These trapping positions have been really tough over the past few years for trappers because of low pay, furlough days, high health insurance costs, and no pay raises. We wish WS Smith the best of luck in his new position in Wyoming.

During the week of June 8th through June 12th, WS Ben Miller was busy placing and checking trail snares in northern Washoe County (hunt units 011-013). WS Miller has been working closely with a California bighorn sheep biologist to concentrate protection efforts around sheep herds and their water holes based on data observed from sheep tracking collars. WS Miller located a spring where a female lion and a recently translocated bighorn sheep population were watering together. Since it is well documented that lions readily kill bighorn sheep in this area, WS Miller placed trail snares nearby and immediately removed one offending female lion with the use of a trail snare. WS Miller will continue to check springs and place equipment around the bighorn sheep populations that are being limited by predation so he can remove the lions before they start killing the bighorn sheep.

On June 16th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several lamb bands in Lander County. During the flight, three coyotes were removed and two dens located. A few days prior it was reported that four lambs (valued at \$800) had been killed by coyotes. Protection efforts are ongoing and WS George Hansen provided ground support.

On June 17th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several lamb bands in Pershing County. The sheep herder reported a coyote leaving the lamb bands and heading over the top of a 9,000 foot peak. In response, the aircrew flew over the peak and removed it. Protection efforts are ongoing and WS Doug Koepke provided ground support.

On June 24th, right at daylight a large airport in Reno reported two coyotes on the runway interfering with Boeing 737 aircraft landing and departing. DS Spencer responded to the request for assistance. The airport runways were closed for a while and with help from airport operations and airport security, one coyote was site shot and later in the afternoon an additional coyote was called in and removed. No further coyote problems were reported. DS Spencer is currently assisting the airport until the new Airport Biologist starts next month.

A new Airport Biologist has been selected for the Reno Airport. Hunter Moyles, who worked for Wildlife Services in several neighboring states including Idaho, will start work in mid-July. Hunter has previously been a trapper and a Wildlife Disease Biologist before accepting his new position as an Airport Biologist. Hunter Moyles actually worked on the Reno airport 10 years prior, before funding was secured for a full time person. We welcome Hunter aboard and hope he finds his new position both challenging and rewarding.



During the month of June, seven pet dogs were killed by coyotes in the Reno/Sparks area. The WS state office provided technical assistance to pet owners about coyotes. Each year WS receives urban coyote and other nuisance wildlife calls and it has become more and more time consuming for WS' staff. Fortunately, NDOW has received legislative funding for FY 16 to address all these urban wildlife calls.



On June 15th, WS Hansen removed three additional coyotes around a kidding area in Lander County, where coyotes had killed several kids previously. The weather has been near the century mark, so it can be a little tough trapping in extreme heat, however, WS Hansen typically does well. The kid losses from coyotes have seemed to stop for the time being. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock in his large work area.

On June 24th, WS Miller inspected trail snares placed near a herd of bighorn sheep in northern Washoe County (hunt unit 011-013). This particular bighorn sheep population had losses last December from one/several lion(s) as reported by the area NDOW biologist. This area is next to the Sheldon Antelope Refuge which absolutely does not allow any predator removal, as a result, lions can cycle through eating the sheep and returning back to the refuge. WS Miller had placed a call box with trail snares where the NDOW biologist told him sheep had been killed and within a short period of time, WS Miller removed two old male lions with the use of trail snares. The lions were captured only 30 feet apart. It was once thought that male lions do not overlap ranges and are exclusively intolerant of each other, however, real life WS situations have proven that when resources are abundant (such as with translocated sheep herds) several large male lions can live in the same canyon at the same time. WS Miller will continue to protect these populations of bighorn sheep.



During the month of June, 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 dispersed 229 birds and four mammals from on and near the airfield. Wildlife dispersed from the airfield included 15 species of birds and two species of mammals. The most common and abundant species dispersed include mallards, cinnamon teal, red-tailed hawks, black-crowned night herons and cliff swallows. Many of these birds are congregated around two drain ditches which hold water year round. Despite receiving decent levels of precipitation this spring, the area has been in drought conditions for several years now and wildlife is concentrated around water sources. Persistent harassment is necessary in this situation as birds and other wildlife are reluctant to leave this water source. WB Bowers continues to monitor the airfield and surrounding area using formal surveys and general observations.

In an effort to reduce the attractiveness of the airfield to predatory wildlife such as coyotes and red-tailed hawks, WB Bowers removed 21 black-tailed jackrabbits from the airfield. In addition two coyotes were also removed from the airfield. Along with predatory wildlife being a concern, scavengers have also been prevalent around the airfield as well. The primary scavenger of concern is turkey

vultures. They have been loafing and roosting in several locations near the airfield. In an effort to reduce the attractiveness of the area to turkey vultures, WB Bowers has been removing road kill on a daily basis. Road kill has been common lately and the situation has been further complicated by dead fish left behind as a result of diminished water supplies in the area. As a result carcass removal has been a priority and has kept WB Bowers busy running the roads and ditches around the airfield.

New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report

Valuing and Investing in Employees

Nothing to Report

Information and Communication

On June 1st thru 4th, Staff Biologist (SB) Jack Sengl attended APHIS Safety Training in Albuquerque, NM.

On June 2nd, State Director (SD) Mark Jensen attended the PARC meeting in Reno at NDA headquarters.

On June 5th, SD Jensen and DS Bennett attended the N-4 Grazing Board meeting in Ely, NV.

On June 16th and 17th, Staff Biologist (SB) Jack Sengl attended National Wildlife Disease training in Ft. Collins, CO.

On June 17th, SD Jensen and DS Bennett attended the N-1 Grazing Board meeting in Elko, NV.

Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report

Future Meetings and Events

East District meeting July 15th in Ely, NV. SD Jensen and SB Sengl to attend.

WAFWA Conference July 20th in Reno, NV. SD Jensen to attend.

West District meeting July 22nd in Reno, NV. Staff to attend

Nevada Trappers Association Rendezvous July 31st, SD Jensen and SB Sengl to attend.



USDA APHIS

Wildlife Services



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