

June 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 June, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **5.1** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$94.5** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$7.1** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **1,715** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$28,947** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$91,601** 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 **\$10,451** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **273** 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, **2** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of June, 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 June 2nd, the Elko plane flew an area near the Idaho border to help antelope fawn survival by removing coyotes just before, during and just after the antelope fawning season (NDOW project 38). During the flight, 11 coyotes were removed. Both the Ely and Elko planes have done an excellent job this spring, flying to protect livestock and natural resources for NDOW projects to protect sage-grouse nests and eggs, mule deer and antelope fawns. For most of the spring, both the East District planes flew six days a week in an effort to get all the work done. "Great job" to the aircrews for all their hard work, flying six days a week and every day that the weather allowed.



On June 5th, and June 9th, the Elko plane flew for a sheep producer in southern Elko County. The sheep producer had lost several lambs and reported that several other lambs had been injured by coyote attacks. During both morning flight, six coyotes were removed. No further losses have been reported. Wildlife Specialist (WS) Randy Evans also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent any future damage. WS Evans will continue to monitor all the livestock in his assigned work area, including this band of sheep.

During the week of June 5th, a contract helicopter was used to work on both NDOW projects 40 and 38. NDOW project 40 is a project in hunt unit 144 designed to remove coyotes and other predators to help protect both sage-grouse nests and eggs in addition to mule deer and their fawns. NDOW project 38 is described above. During the week long project, 99 coyotes and one den were removed. Work on these projects will be ongoing for a few more weeks this year.

On June 7th and June 8th, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett conducted a two day field inspection with WS Mac Crome. During the two day inspection, two different bands of sheep were checked and several traps checked. WS Crome also assisted the contract helicopter as the ground crew while the helicopter was in his area protecting antelope. Field inspections are very important to ensure that employees have what they need to get the job done, all policies and directives are being followed and also affords an excellent opportunity for the District Supervisor to see all the work being conducted by the Wildlife Specialists.

On June 14th and 15th, DS Bennett conducted a two day field inspection with Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) Field Assistant (FA) Allen Eldridge. During the two day inspection, FA Eldridge checked and set several traps as well as checked in with more than a dozen sheep herders in his assigned work area.

On June 12th, both WS Billy Taylor and WS Mike Eldridge finished work on NDOW project 21. NDOW project 21 is designed to protect sage-grouse nests from predation. Ravens are the primary species targeted on this project since the majority of sage-grouse nest predation is caused by ravens. Hard boiled chicken eggs are treated with DRC-1339 and placed near leks and nesting areas during the spring when sage-grouse nests are most vul-



nerable. Both employees did an excellent job this season and their help as seasonal employees is greatly appreciated. Without their hard work this project could not have been accomplished.

On June 20th, the East District Office received a call from a sheep producer in southern White Pine County concerning the loss of at least six lambs, valued at \$1,200, to coyote predation. The sheep rancher said the coyote had been spotted by the herder several times near the band of sheep. On the morning of June 21st, the Ely plane responded to the damage site. During the morning's flight, one large adult coyote was removed near the sheep. 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 June 29th, DS Bennett conducted a day long field inspection with Crew Member (CM) Wayne Rowley. When not flying, CM Rowley protects livestock in Elko County. One band of sheep requires the use of a horse to access the remote band high in the Humboldt Mountains of Elko County.

During the month of June, WS Dayne Barnes was busy monitoring feral swine activity in Lincoln County. WS Barnes is using trail cameras, corral traps and snares to remove the few remaining pigs in his work area. Work will continue for two more months.

During the month of June, WS Mac Crome confirmed the loss of 17 lambs to coyote predation. The damage occurred in northern Elko County near the Idaho border. The value of the lambs was placed at \$3,400. WS Crome used traps, calling, shooting and his well-trained decoy dogs to remove eight coyotes and one den near the location of the kills. No further losses have been reported and WS Crome continues to monitor the livestock in his work area. WS Crome also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.



Also during the month of June, CM Nathan Fowler confirmed the loss of four lambs, valued at \$800, to coyote predation. The damage occurred on a band of sheep in central White Pine County. CM Fowler used calling and traps to remove four coyotes near the sheep. Work will be ongoing until the lambs are shipped in late September. CM Fowler also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

West District

The West District fixed wing program continued protection efforts during the month of June. The aerial crew flew the month of June and with days over 100°F, aerial operations were often cut short for safety concerns. Fixed wing operations are usually minimal during the next summer months because sheep move into high mountainous areas and most calves are large enough to fend off coyotes. DS Jack Spencer received a call from two large sheep producers, thanking the plane and trappers for all of their help this spring.

On June 2nd, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and Crew Member (CM) Brandon VanderMay conducted a flight around a lambing area in Lander County. During the flight, eight coyotes were removed and one den located. Several of the coyotes were located in close proximity of the lamb bands. WS George Hansen provided valuable ground support during the flight. Protection efforts will be ongoing from both the air and ground.

During June 1st through the 6th, WS John Peter rode his mule and horse through a large lambing area in Humboldt County. WS Peter rode from canyon to canyon, removing seven coyotes from around the sheep with the help of his decoy dogs. WS Peter will continue to protect livestock in his assigned work area.



On June 7th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a flight around a large kidding area in Lander County. This particular goat rancher had reported the loss of two kids, valued at \$575, to coyotes. During the flight, seven coyotes were removed. Several of the coyotes removed were located within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of the goats. WS Hansen provided valuable ground support during the flight and visually located several of the coyotes and directed the plane to the coyote's location. Protection efforts will be ongoing from both the air and ground.



On June 14th-15th, DS Spencer provided trapping and ground crew training for new employee NDA FA Mark Bentz in Lyon County. On June 15th, the aerial crew flew around several sheep bands and DS Spencer and WS Bentz located two groups of coyotes for the aircraft. DS Spencer will be working with WS Bentz in the near future on training for other field equipment.

On June 16th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a flight around several large lambing areas in Washoe County. During the flight, four coyotes were removed. WS Doug Koepke provided valuable ground support during aerial operations. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On June 20th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several large lambing areas in Lander County. During the flight, two coyotes were removed and one den located. Several of the coyotes were located in close proximity of the lamb bands. WS Hansen provided valuable ground support during the flight. Protection efforts will be ongoing from both the air and ground.

On June 27th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several large lambing areas in Washoe County. During the flight, five coyotes were removed. WS Koepke and WS-CA WS George Affonso provided valuable ground support during aerial operations while working the Nevada/California state border. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On June 28th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a flight around a large goat kidding area in Humboldt County. This particular goat rancher had reported that coyotes had moved in around several hundred of his kidding goats. During the flight, six coyotes were removed. WS Koepke provided valuable ground support during the flight. To date, no coyotes have been seen around the goats and the livestock producer was pleased with the protection efforts.

On June 22nd, a sheep producer in Lyon County reported that three lambs, valued at \$600, had been killed by a lion several miles away from roads up on a mountain. WS Bentz inspected the dead lambs and confirmed that a lion had killed the lambs, which was later scavenged on by a black bear. WS Bentz sat on the carcasses and observed yet another bear feeding on the lamb carcasses, but no lion. WS Bentz instructed the herder to move the sheep and call him immediately if there was

another kill. On June 24th, a lion killed two more lambs, valued at \$400, and by that afternoon three bears had already moved in, feeding on the lion's kill. The sheep were moved once more and on June 27th, the lion killed another two lambs, valued at \$400. WS Bentz placed several large foothold traps around the dead lambs right before dark, as no bears had moved in. On June 28th, WS Bentz inspected his traps and found that he had caught the male lion. As WS Bentz was pulling his equipment, the herder let him know a sow and a cub were heading towards his location, likely smelling the dead lambs the lion had previously killed. Although lions tend to kill more in the hot summer months as the meat spoils faster, the bears made matters worse for the livestock producer as they would scavenge off the unspoiled meat, leaving the lion with an empty stomach and plenty of lambs nearby. The sheep producer was pleased with WS Bentz protection efforts and called DS Spencer to express his gratitude. To date, no further livestock losses have been reported.



On June 27th, WS Ben Miller inspected trail snares he set along lion travel corridors that lead to translocated California bighorn sheep in Washoe County (hunt unit 013). During the inspection, WS Miller removed an adult female lion with the use of a call box-trail snare set. WS Miller will continue to protect California bighorn sheep.



On June 29th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a flight around a large lambing and calving area in Lander County. During the flight, 10 coyotes were removed. Several of the coyotes were located in close proximity of the lamb bands. WS Hansen provided valuable ground support during the flight. Protection efforts will be ongoing from both the air and ground.

During the month of June, Wildlife Biologist (WB) 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. 874 birds from 25 species were dispersed from the airfield. One species of mammal and one species of bird were lethally removed. The increase in water throughout the area continues to result in an increase in species diversity. As a matter of comparison, during June of 2016, WB Bowers dispersed 21 species of birds from the airfield as compared to 25 this June. With current water levels, the valley is like a very large wildlife refuge. WB Bowers expects to be dealing with these conditions for the foreseeable future.

During the month of June, the remains of one white-faced ibis was found on the airfield. Three strikes were also reported. A sample collected from one of the strikes was identified by the Smithsonian as a white-faced ibis, and may be associated with the remains found on the runway. Two of the strikes are still pending identification. One of the strikes did cause damage to a pod tip, which is



basically a cover. The damage is not expected to reach a level of being classified as a mishap.

During the month of June, WB Dean Pyzik reported five bird strikes at a military installation in southern Nevada. For Fiscal Year (FY 17) there have been 24 bird strikes with no reportable damage.

Also during the reporting period, WB Pyzik remove 49 black-tailed jack rabbits from the installation while dispersing 1812 birds. Of those 1812 birds dispersed, mourning doves accounted for 58% of the birds dispersed while patrolling and conducting perimeter checks at the installation. Removal of the rabbits directly and indirectly reduces the potential for wildlife strikes to aviation as a removed rabbit will not be struck by an aircraft, nor will it draw in avian/mammalian predators into arriving/ departing aircraft.

During the month, WS Rick Laffins transitioned from the NDOW Mason Valley project to assisting with day to day operations at a joint use aviation facility in Washoe County. WS Laffins hit the ground running, taking all required safety training and badging with the help of WS Cameron Green. WS Laffins was successful in capturing a towering hatch year red-tail hawk out of the movement area south end of the facility with a Bal chatri trap (an unlikely occurrence indeed). WS Laffins’ terrestrial trapping background has complimented the current damage management program, catching several skunks, raccoons and California ground squirrels.



The three Wildlife Services’ airport staff working out of the State Office have been working together on the joint use facility to implement the wildlife hazard management plan. Throughout the month 400 birds were harassed. Prey base reduction, in the form of 54 California ground squirrels, was also conducted to reduce predator frequency and abundance at the facility. Two adult coyotes were also removed from the airfield when non-lethal methods failed to deter. Early in the month, California gull movement patterns continued to pose a threat to aircraft despite non-lethal attempts, resulting in the removal of 40 gulls across several days to give the remaining gulls a reason to respect the non-lethal approaches.

WB Carl Frey is continuing the Wildlife Hazard Surveys at: a DoD facility in California shared with NV DoD; and in Sweetwater, NV. Day and night surveys were conducted at both locations. A total of 2,664 birds and mammals were surveyed throughout the month.



New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report

Valuing and Investing in Employees

WS Green attended Initial Airport training in Cleveland, Ohio. He gained several new techniques and concepts from colleagues around the nation within the Wildlife Services' Airport program. He returned ready to implement his new knowledge to better improve local aviation safety.

Information and Communication

On June 2nd, State Director (SD) Mark Jensen and NDA MLS Jim Buhler attended the N-4 grazing board meeting in Ely.

On June 7th, WB Frey and WS Green conducted a short wildlife course for local airport operations staff. Emphasis was on control devices and techniques as well as local bird identification.

On June 13th, SD Jensen and DS Spencer attended the N-3 Grazing Board meeting in Fallon.

On June 29th, DS Bennett and CM Rowley attended the N-1 Grazing Board meeting in Elko. DS Bennett gave an annual update concerning work performed in the N-1 Grazing Board's area.

During the month of June, the 32nd annual Canada goose roundup took place around the Truckee Meadows. This is a collaborative effort between NDOW, WS, Reno Tahoe Airport Authority, Air National Guard, Washoe County Parks and several other local private cooperators. DS Spencer, WB Frey, WS Green, WS Miller, and WS Laffins all participated. There were also several volunteers from the area that helped in these efforts. There were a total of 386 geese captured and once ready, will be translocated to State wildlife management areas. This effort greatly reduced the local geese in the area that pose eminent threats to aircraft with their daily movements.



Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report

Future Meeting and Events

Nothing to Report

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