

March 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 March, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **8.4** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$204.8** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$11.5** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **336** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$1,061** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$23,967** in damage to natural and agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During March, coyotes accounted for **\$9,789** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **383** 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 March, **36** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of March, 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 March 1st, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Randy Evans received a call concerning a problem with ravens attacking newborn calves and goats. WS Evans traveled to the location in southern Elko County and confirmed the loss of at least five calves and one newborn goat. The total value of the losses was placed at \$4,400. WS Evans observed approximately 200 ravens near the location of the predation. Using eggs treated with DRC-1339, WS Evans was able to bring the damage to an end. WS Evans also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.



On March 1st, WS Allen Eldridge received a call concerning a problem with ravens. The sheep producer reported that ravens were attacking his sheep and had killed one and injured another that were healing from sores on their head and shoulder area. On March 2nd, WS Eldridge drove to the location in northern White Pine County and confirmed the loss, valued at \$500. WS Eldridge observed about 30 ravens harassing the sheep. Using eggs treated with DRC-1339, WS Eldridge was able to remove the offending ravens. No further losses have been reported. WS Eldridge also provided non-lethal technical assistance to help prevent future losses.



On March 7th, the Elko Wildlife Services' Office received a call concerning two calves that had been killed by ravens. The damage occurred on a ranch in western Elko County. On March 9th, Crew Member (CM) Wayne Rowley traveled to the location and confirmed the losses, valued at \$1,600. Using eggs treated with DRC-1339, CM Rowley was able to remove the ravens causing the damage. CM Rowley also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On March 9th, the East District Office received a call from a cattle rancher in Eastern White Pine County concerning a newborn calf that was attacked by ravens. The rancher witnessed at least 20 to 30 ravens harassing his newborn calves and he reported that one calf had its eyes pecked out by ravens. On March 10th, WS Eldridge responded to the location and confirmed the damage. Using eggs treated with DRC-1339, WS Eldridge was able to bring the damage under control. No further losses have been reported. WS Eldridge also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help stop future losses.



On March 15th, a call came into the East District office concerning the loss of two calves valued at \$1,600. The damage occurred on a cattle ranch in central White Pine County. The rancher reported seeing several coyotes eating the newborn calves and hanging around the pastures that he was calving in. On March 17th, the Ely plane responded to the location. During the morning's flight, five coyotes were removed. No further losses have been reported. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations were provided in an attempt to help prevent future losses.

On March 16th, a call was received at the East District Office concerning the loss of a pair of calves.



The predation took place on a cattle ranch near Ely, Nevada. The cooperator reported seeing a pair of coyotes eating on two freshly killed calves. The rancher attempted shooting the offending coyotes but they moved into heavy brush. On March 17th, the Ely plane responded to the locations and was able to remove the offending pair of coyotes. No further losses have been reported.

On March 22nd, a cattle rancher in Eureka County called concerning the loss of two calves to coyotes. The rancher reported seeing several coyotes every day in his calving pastures. On March 23rd, the Ely plane responded to the location. During the morning's flight, the plane was able to remove eight coyotes bringing an end to the damage. The rancher was very pleased with the prompt response to his request.

On March 22nd, WS Mac Crome confirmed the loss of four ewes, valued at \$1,000, to coyote predation. The damage occurred on a band of sheep in eastern Elko County. WS Crome was able to remove one coyote by trapping and also requested the assistance of the Ely plane. The Ely plane, responding a few days later, was able to remove one additional coyote. No further losses have been reported. WS Crome provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.



March found WS Dayne Barnes hustling after feral swine. At the request of the AZ WS' program, WS Barnes was TDY'ed to Topoc, Arizona to help remove feral swine from a wildlife refuge along the Colorado River. WS Barnes did an excellent job removing several feral pigs while on assignment in Arizona. Back in Nevada, WS Barnes removed two feral swine on Sunday, March 20th, from Lincoln County. WS Barnes submitted disease samples from the feral swine to the National Wildlife Disease Program, as well as other agencies who are tracking parasites in feral swine.

During the month of March, three East District employees attended Wildlife Services' crew member training, in Cedar City, Utah. Employees that go thru the crew member training receive classroom and practical training in aerial operations both in fixed wing and helicopter aerial applications to ensure safe and effective livestock protection.

Most East District employees are preparing for lambing season that typically starts the middle of April. By the end of March, most Nevada Woolgrowers have moved their sheep to their lambing grounds in preparation for this annual event. By removing predators just prior to lambing, in areas where historic predation occurs, countless lambs are saved.

West District

During the month of March, several residents in the Sparks, NV area called in and reported coyotes harassing their dogs. The residents were walking in a nearby park and almost daily the coyotes kept on getting more and more aggressive. On March 17th, a large coyote attacked a 40 pound dog. The dog was taken to a veterinarian, damage valued at \$1,100, and managed to survive the attack. The coyote complaint was turned over to NDOW as they recently hired several coyote specialists to deal with urban wildlife complaints.



On March 4th, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted an aerial flight on several cattle producers and a sheep producer in Humboldt County. During the operation, 15 coyotes were removed with WS John Peter providing ground support. Several of the coyotes removed around the calving area are also near the lambing area, so at times, removing coyotes to protect cattle, can also have a latter benefit to sheep and vice versa. WS Peter is finishing up most of his calving protection efforts and will start on his 31st year on the lambing range in Humboldt County. WS Peter reports there are fewer coyotes in his work

area than when he first started, however, coyotes regardless of their current population level, are always attracted to newborn lambs and calves. WS Peter will continue to protect livestock in his large work area.

During the month of March, WS Carl Frey worked on several calving areas and sheep bands in Douglas and Lyon Counties with no livestock losses reported lately. WS Frey has been utilizing call boxes aimed at attracting potential problem coyotes away from livestock resources and into ground equipment for removal. The weather in his work area has had frequent snow storms and WS Frey can see tracks where coyotes traveled long distances to the call boxes and were promptly captured in trail snare sets. WS Frey also has raven decoys around the call box as a visual effect that better helps when attracting coyotes to a specific trap location. WS Frey has had good success protecting livestock with the use of call boxes and decoys in his work area, specifically removing nine coyotes during the reporting period. WS Frey currently has eight sheep bands and several other private sheep ranches to protect vulnerable lambs on. WS Frey will continue to protect livestock in his large and diverse work area.



During the first week of March, WS Doug Koepke was busy checking equipment around calving areas and winter sheep bands in Pershing and Humboldt Counties. WS Koepke reported minimal losses and much of that can be attributed to the all the hard work WS Koepke performed placing M-44s, trail snares and foothold traps around vulnerable livestock areas. During the week, WS Koepke removed 11 coyotes with the use of snares, M-44s and foothold traps. WS Koepke will continue to protect livestock in his large work area.

On March 9th through March 11th, WS George Hansen checked equipment around four calving grounds and two sheep bands in Lander County. In less than three days, WS Hansen removed nine coyotes in close proximity to livestock with the use of trail snares and foothold traps. WS Hansen

will continue to protect livestock in Lander County.

On March 16th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around six lamb bands in Lyon County. The lambs were just starting to drop and though no kills were yet reported, the aerial crew located six coyotes right at the edge of the lambs. When lambs are first born they bleat, drawing in predators. The aerial crew also observed two black bears leaving the area of the lambs. The black bears fled the area and hopefully will not come back. WS Frey provided ground support during aerial operations.



On March 17th through March 18th, District Supervisor (DS) Jack Spencer conducted a routine field inspection with WS Peter, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay in Humboldt County. DS Spencer also met with a long time sheep producer in Humboldt County. On March 18th, DS Spencer and WS Peter provided ground support for the aerial crew in the mountains near a lambing area. During the flight, the aerial crew removed 12 coyotes with several taken in the rough hill country. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On March 23rd, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several lamb bands in Lyon County. The sheep producer reported that five lambs, valued at \$700, had been killed by a coyote. During the flight, the offending coyote was found near the sheep which was promptly removed. The aerial crew flagged the coyote, so WS Frey could perform a necropsy on it. The result of the necropsy was the coyote had a belly full of lamb remains. To date, there has not been any further livestock losses. The sheep producer was pleased with the services the aerial crew and WS Frey provided and called DS Spencer to further express his appreciation. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

WS Ben Miller was busy during the reporting period transitioning from protecting bighorn sheep in northern Washoe County (hunt units 011&013) to protecting sage-grouse nests and eggs from ravens in southern Washoe County. WS Miller has already placed DRC-1339 treated eggs around several known sage-grouse nesting locations to remove the ravens before they raid the sage-grouse nests. WS Miller will continue to protect sage-grouse nests and eggs through May when most grouse are done nesting.

On March 25th, DS Spencer conducted a field inspection with WS Hansen in Lander County. The aerial crew was on hand flying several lamb bands that resulted in the removal of nine coyotes from around the sheep. DS Spencer and WS Hansen also checked and reset foothold traps around sheep bands. WS Hansen captured one coyote with the use of a foothold trap very close to where lambs were just starting to drop. Protection efforts will be ongoing. WS Hansen is an expert at capturing coyotes and his good work ethic is well recognized by his supervisor and his many cooperators.



On March 24th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early flight around several lamb bands

in Washoe County. During the flight, eight coyotes were removed in close proximity to the sheep. WS Koepke provided ground support, locating several of the coyotes for the aerial crew. As lambing season is underway, all the Wildlife Specialists and aerial crew will be extremely busy for the next several months.

During the month of March, 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. Eight species of birds were dispersed from the airfield. Two species of mammals and one species of bird were lethally removed. Wildlife numbers on and around the airfield are about average compared to the previous four March's.

Unfortunately during the reporting period, one incident of feathers/remains found either on aircraft or runway occurred. An injured great horned owl was found on the airfield and transported to an animal hospital. Although the great horned owl survived the initial impact with the aircraft, it later had to be euthanized due to the extent of its injuries.

Also during the month of March, WB Bowers worked in cooperation with base contractors to remove seven red-tailed hawk nests prior to initiation of nesting activities. The nests were located in areas that frequently put the red-tailed hawks in conflicting airspace with aircraft. Using the base contractor's boom truck allowed WB Bowers and the contractors to safely and efficiently remove the nests. WB Bowers is very appreciative for the assistance provided by the contractors. This project has already resulted in reduced observations of red-tailed hawks flying in conflicting airspace with aircraft.



During the month of March, WB Moyles continued protection work at a joint use international airport/military airbase in Washoe County. 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 dispersed 205 birds and mammals from the airfield. Wildlife dispersed from the airfield included 12 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 March, WB Moyles has noticed a decrease in the abundance and frequency of Canada geese, and ducks on surrounding properties. Hazing has still been deployed to keep the large geese away from the airfield. During the month, WB Moyles hazed 82 Canada geese, and 76 ducks off airport property. Methods used to deter wildlife included the use of pyrotechnics, crackers shells and the vehicle. Decreased activity on the airport is due to the warm temperatures, spring green up and nesting activity.



On March 12th, WB Moyles was contacted by airport personnel reporting that there was a coyote on the airfield. WB Moyles responded to the call and set snares in the area, removing one coyote from the airfield. Efforts will continue to help prevent animals from accessing the aircraft operating area.

On March 18th, WB Moyles was contacted by airfield personnel stating that they had found a nest on the airfield. WB Moyles responded to the call and removed the Cana-

da goose nest. During the month, nesting activities have increased significantly. WB Moyles also removed an additional nest, during the month. WB Moyles will continue to monitor the activity on the airfield and surrounding properties to ensure birds are kept from nesting on the airfield.

In reinforcement of several non-lethal harassment techniques, WB Moyles utilized multiple lethal means of wildlife hazard management to reduce the threat of wildlife strike to aircraft at the above joint use facility. Specifically, WB Moyles removed: 11 yellow bellied marmots, two pigeons, and two invasive California ground squirrels utilizing trapping, and shooting. The wildlife hazard management plan will continue to be implemented to protect the flying military Service members and public. Protection efforts are ongoing.

New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report

Valuing and Investing in Employees

Nothing to Report

Information and Communication

On March 7th-10th, Staff Biologist (SB) Jack Sengl assisted a landfill in Nye County resolve a raven and European starling problem. The bird species were digging up trash, scattering debris and defecating on equipment despite non-lethal deterrents.

On March 21st, WS Samantha McGann began working in the East District as an intermittent employee working on Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) projects. Samantha has been a volunteer for the Texas Wildlife Services program for several years and recently moved to White Pine County in 2015. We would like to welcome WS McGann on as the newest East District Wildlife Services' employee.

On March 28th-April 1st, State Director (SD) Mark Jensen attended the WS' National Firearms Committee meeting in Mississippi.

On March 31st, DS Spencer attended the N-3 Grazing Board meeting in Fernley.

Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report

Future Meetings and Events

April 19th-22nd, Wild Pig Conference and WS' National Feral Swine meeting in South Carolina. SD Jensen to attend.



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