

March 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 March, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **6.4** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$178.2** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$8.2** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **1,605** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$10,213** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$30,695** 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 **\$22,545** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **537** 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, **31** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of March, 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 March 1st, the Ely plane responded to a sheep and cattle ranch in northern White Pine County. Nevada Department of Agriculture Field Assistant (NDA FA) Allen Eldridge had previously confirmed the loss of three ewes valued at \$750 and two calves valued at \$1,000. During the morning's flight with FA Eldridge as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove ten coyotes, bringing an end to the damage. FA Eldridge was also able to remove one by ground shooting. FA Eldridge also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.



On March 1st, the Elko plane responded to a cattle ranch in western Elko County that had lost four calves, valued at \$2,000. During the mornings' flight, the plane was able to remove eight coyotes. Work will be ongoing in the area.

On March 2nd, the Ely plane responded to a sheep ranch in eastern White Pine County. A few days earlier, FA Eldridge had confirmed the loss of four ewes valued at \$1,000. During the morning's flight, the plane was able to remove nine coyotes. No further losses have been reported. FA Eldridge also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations.

On March 2nd, the Elko plane responded to several sheep allotments in eastern Elko County. During the past two weeks, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Mac Crome has confirmed the loss of at least five ewes to coyote predation. The total value of the losses was placed at \$1,250. During the morning's flight, the plane was able to remove two coyotes near the location of the kills. Work will be ongoing until the sheep move in in about two months. WS Crome will continue to monitor the area for losses.

On March 3rd, the Ely plane responded to a cattle ranch in western White Pine County. WS Scott Little had confirmed the loss of at least three calves valued at \$1,500, to coyote predation. During the mornings' flight, three coyotes were removed near the location of the kills. WS Little also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On March 3rd, the Elko plane responded to an Indian Reservation in northern Elko County. The reservation reported that at least two calves, valued at \$1,000, had been killed by coyotes. During the mornings' flight, 18 coyotes were removed. Work will be ongoing in the area.

On March 4th, the Elko plane responded to call from a cattle rancher near the Idaho Border in northern Elko County. The rancher reported he had already lost two calves valued at \$1,000 to coyote

predation and he had just begun to calve out. During the mornings' flight, 31 coyotes were removed from the calving pastures. The rancher was very happy with the help he received from the Elko plane and Wildlife Services. He commented that without the help he would have no doubt lost countless more calves to the large number of coyotes, during the next month.

On March 8th, the Elko plane responded to a call from a cattle rancher in central Elko County. The rancher reported that they had lost at least four calves, valued at \$2,000. With WS Randy Evans as the ground crew, the plane was able to remove nine coyotes in the pasture that had experienced the damage. Work will be ongoing.

On March 8th, the Ely plane responded to call from a cattle rancher in eastern Lander County. The rancher had lost one calf, valued at \$500. He also reported that another calf had died of natural causes and a pack of coyotes ate the entire carcass in one night. During the morning's, flight the plane was able to remove eight coyotes in the pasture that experienced the loss. The rancher was very pleased with the help he received from the Ely plane and Wildlife Services.

On March 9th, Crew Member (CM) Wayne Rowley confirmed the loss of two calves, valued at \$1,000, to raven predation. Ravens had attacked and killed two newborn calves in northern Eureka County. CM Rowley used hard boiled chicken eggs treated with DRC-1339 to remove 20 ravens near the kill sites. No further losses have been reported and CM Rowley continues to monitor the area. CM Rowley also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On March 11th and 12th, (Saturday and Sunday), the Ely plane flew several Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) Projects to protect antelope. The projects are designed to protect antelope fawns from coyote predation so recruitment will increase. 10 coyotes were removed from three different antelope fawning areas. This work will continue as the antelope begin to have their young.



On March 11th, the Elko plane flew on NDOW project 40 to remove coyotes for the protection of sage-grouse and mule deer. During the mornings' flight, six coyotes were removed near sage-grouse leks and mule deer fawning grounds.

On March 13th, the Elko plane flew on NDOW project 38. NDOW project 38 is designed to remove coyotes from antelope fawning grounds. NDOW identified several locations with poor antelope fawn to doe ratios. During the aerial operation, 12 coyotes were removed from the antelope fawning grounds.

On March 14th, the Ely plane responded to a call for assistance from a sheep producer in eastern White Pine County. The sheep rancher had lost at least five ewes valued at \$1,250. The damage had been confirmed by FA Eldridge. During the mornings' flight, six coyotes were removed near the kills. No further losses have been reported. FA Eldridge helped ground crew and provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On March 15th, the Elko plane responded to several cow-calf operations in central Elko County. All the ranchers had reported seeing and hearing large number of coyotes in their calving pastures. The ranchers had just recently started calving and had experienced high losses in the past. During the mornings' flight, 25 coyotes were removed. Work will be ongoing as the calving season continues.

On March 15th, the Ely plane responded to a call in central Nye County from a cattle rancher who had lost at least two calves to coyote predation. The rancher also reported that several other calves were missing and he felt coyotes were most likely responsible but no carcasses could be found. The value placed on the calves was \$1,000. During the mornings' flight, three coyotes were removed from the area of the losses. Work will continue in the area. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was also provided in an attempt to help prevent future losses.

On March 16th, the Elko plane responded to a cattle ranch in northern Elko County that had lost one calf, valued at \$500, to coyote predation. The rancher also reported that they were seeing several coyotes in the calving pasture. During the flight, 10 coyotes were removed. No further losses have been reported. The rancher was very pleased with the Elko plane and the service he received from Wildlife Services and the Nevada Department of Agriculture.

On March 16th, the Ely plane responded to a call from two cattle ranchers and a sheep rancher that own ranches adjacent to each other. The sheep producer just recently bought 325 ewes and is about to lamb out and has been seeing several coyotes in his lambing pastures. His neighbor's had lost three calves to coyote predation. The value of the calves was placed at \$1,500. During the mornings' flight, the plane was able to remove four coyotes on the three ranches. Work will be ongoing. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations was also provided in an attempt to help reduce future losses.

Again on March 17th, the Ely plane flew on NDOW project 40 in the Diamond Mountain range in Eureka and White Pine Counties. Three coyotes were removed on the mule deer fawning grounds. Work will continue.

On March 20th, FA Hunter Bodenchuk confirmed the loss of one calf valued at \$500, to raven predation. The cattle rancher in Lander County witnessed about 20 ravens attacking the newborn calf. FA Bodenchuk placed out eggs treated with DRC-1339 to remove the offending ravens. No further losses have been reported. Technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations were also provided to help reduce future losses.



On March 21st, the Elko plane responded to several cattle ranches and one sheep ranch in southern Elko County. The ranchers were all starting their calving season and the sheep producer was about to start lambing. During the mornings' flight, six coyotes were removed. Removing coyotes just prior to calving and lambing is a proven way to help reduce losses. All ranches have had a history of very high losses. Work will be ongoing.

During the month of March, WS Dayne Barnes removed one adult boar feral pig in Lincoln County. WS Barnes continues to work his project designed to monitor and remove feral swine in Nevada.

Samples were taken from the boar in an attempt to monitor diseases that are carried and transmitted by feral swine. Work will continue on this project.

During March, work began on NDOW project 21. The project is designed to remove ravens, coyotes and badgers that have a negative impact on nesting sage-grouse. Several sage-grouse leks have been identified by NDOW for protection. Coyotes and badgers will be shot near the leks and ravens will be first counted and then removed using eggs treated with DRC-1339. In the East District, leks have been identified in Eureka, White Pine, Elko and Lincoln Counties. Work will continue through the sage-grouse nesting season.



WS David (Billy) Taylor completed work on NDOW project 43 at a NDOW wildlife management area in Clark County. The project was designed to remove skunks, coyotes and raccoons to protect turkeys and turkey nests from predation at the management area. Waterfowl and shore birds also benefited from removing the predators that destroy nests. The project was funded using the \$3 predator management fee that every turkey applicant is required to pay.

West District

On March 1st, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several winter sheep bands and a calving area in Washoe County that had been experiencing losses. The West District had an employee down with health issues and since the area was along the California border, WS-CA WS George Affonso conducted ground crew activities. During the flight, 14 coyotes were removed. Protection work will continue.

On March 2nd, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning aerial operation around several calving areas in Humboldt County. The aerial crew basically flew from calving area to calving area. During flight, 16 coyotes were removed. Protection efforts will be ongoing as calves are still being born. WS John Peter provided ground support.

On March 2nd, WS Ben Miller inspected several snare/call box sets near translocated California bighorn sheep populations in Washoe County (hunt unit 013). WS Miller had seen where an adult male lion had recently moved in and killed one mule deer. WS Miller inspected equipment and removed the lion with his snare/call box set. WS Miller has noticed a significant decrease in lion activity around these bighorn sheep in the past year. WS Miller will shift protection efforts from protecting bighorn sheep to sage-grouse nests for a few months this spring.



On March 8th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a flight around five calving areas in Humboldt County. During the flight, 11 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided valuable ground support during the flight.

On March 9th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a flight around lambing and calving areas

in Lyon County. This area is currently without a State Trapper. The position is being announced again with the hopes of quickly filling it. During the aerial flight, seven coyotes were removed. DS Jack Spencer monitored the aircraft during the flight. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On Saturday March 11th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a flight around a translocated population of antelope in Lyon County (hunt unit 297). During the flight, five coyotes were removed. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On Sunday March 12th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a flight around a large population of antelope in Elko County (hunt unit 066). During the flight, seven coyotes were removed. The goal of this and the above coyote removal is to help increase antelope fawn survival. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On March 14th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay flew several calving areas in Humboldt County with ongoing calf losses. During the aerial operation, the new ATOC Aerial safety manager accompanied DS Spencer and WS Peter to conduct a safety review as part of the NWSP program review. IP Gossard and CM VanderMay removed 31 coyotes, all in close to the young vulnerable calves. The aerial crew also located two dead calves, valued at \$1,000, with coyotes actively feeding on the carcasses while flying. Protection efforts are ongoing.

On March 16th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a flight around lambing and calving areas in Pershing County. During the flight, 11 coyotes were removed. NDA FA Doug Koepke provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On March 24th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a flight around lambing and calving areas in Lander County. During the flight, 12 coyotes were removed. WS George Hansen provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

During the month of March, WS George Hansen began moving in equipment around several lambing areas in Lander County. In the next month there will be many bands of sheep lambing out. The aerial crew will also fly around the lamb bands to assist WS Hansen.

During the week of March 20th through March 24th WS Rick Laffins maintained equipment on an NDOW wild turkey protection project in Lyon County. DS Spencer also shared some trapping knowledge with WS Laffins for several days. During the week, WS Laffins removed three coyotes with foothold traps. WS Laffins will continue to protect wild turkeys on the NDOW management area.



During the month of March, WS Peter had to remove 58 coyotes to protect dozens of calving areas in Humboldt County from further coyote predation. WS Peter is currently moving livestock protection efforts towards lambing areas.

On March 26th, DS Spencer received a call from a long time sheep producer in Lyon County that a lion had killed 30 lambs and one ewe (valued at \$3,294) the day prior. On March 27th, DS Spencer inspected the dead livestock and confirmed the damage was caused by a very large male lion. It

was tuff to see 31 dead sheep in a pile and not a single bite was consumed by the offending lion. The lion appeared to be leaving the valley and heading west to another mountain range for the nearest good habitat several miles away. DS Spencer placed a large cage trap baited with sheep at the depredation site in case the lion returns.



During the month of February, WS Hansen was busy running his trap line in Lander County around calving areas and spring lambing bands. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock.

On March, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around cows and sheep to protect the newborn livestock. During the flight, 10 coyotes were removed. WS Hansen provided ground support during aerial operations.

On March 28th, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around a large lambing area in Lyon County. The sheep producer reported one lamb (valued at \$106) had been killed by a coyote. The rancher also reported seeing a pair of coyotes in close to the sheep in recent days. The aerial crew flew around the lambs and removed four coyotes. As lambs hit the ground, coyotes from near and far move in and kill vulnerable lambs. This particular sheep producer utilizes propane cannons, herders, guard dogs and even night penning (where possible) and coyotes still manage to kill some of his sheep. The non-lethal tools do help and combined with a trapper and aerial crew it help keeps sheep producers in business today.

On March 29th, IP Gosard and CM VanderMay conducted a morning flight around several lambing areas in Washoe County. During the flight, five coyotes were removed. NDA FA Doug Koepke provided ground support. In the next few weeks, several sheep producers will have thousands of lambs spread across miles of lambing grounds. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

During the week of March 27th through March 31st, WS Miller placed DRC-1339 treated egg baits around several areas identified by NDOW for raven removal to protect sage-grouse nests and eggs. WS Miller will continue to protect sage grouse eggs, until the end of May when most of the sage-grouse chicks have hatched out.

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. 347 birds from 27 species were dispersed from the airfield. One species of mammal and one species of bird were lethally removed. The increase in water abundance throughout the area has already shown to have brought not only higher numbers of birds, but an increase in species diversity as well. As a matter of comparison, during March of 2016, WB Bowers dispersed eight species of birds from the airfield as compared to 27 this March. With more water on the way, WB Bowers expects to be dealing with these conditions for the foreseeable future.

With numerous species of predatory and scavenging wildlife present in the area, WB Bowers is always vigilant of roadkill to be picked up. WB Bowers picked up 48 carcasses within the airfield vicin-

ity during the month of March. This is an increase from the previous March, in which 31 carcasses were removed from the airfield vicinity. With turkey vultures already back from their winter scavenging grounds, WB Bowers will continue his vigilance in carcass removal.

In desert environments, water is usually a limiting factor. When water is introduced into these desert environments, it usually results in more vegetation. The resulting vegetation is quite lush compared to the drought stricken vegetation which is normally present. An increase in higher quality vegetation and plentiful water, more often than not leads to better and healthier overall habitat conditions for wildlife. Small mammal populations will be on the rise, which will result in an increase in predatory wildlife as well. Shorebirds and waterfowl will be stopping in the valley to rest on their migratory paths, and many may nest and raise broods here as a result of the increase in habitat. Of course more water and better habitat for wildlife is great for birders, wildlife watchers, ranchers and farmers. On the other hand, for a Wildlife Biologist trying to protect aviators from wildlife strikes it isn't so great.

During the month of March, WB Dean Pyzik removed a banded Canada goose which continued to threaten aviation safety in southern Nevada. The goose was initially captured in the Southwest portion of the Truckee Meadows in 2011 as a juvenile, banded and released at Overton Wildlife Management Area that year.

WB Pyzik set a trail camera to detect wildlife presence and abundance while he was working in other areas of the airbase. This approach is also very cost effective in monitoring wildlife at night. Of the species detected, an American kestrel proved to be the most photogenic.



During the month, WB Pyzik reported the above mentioned facilities' fourth and fifth bird strikes for federal fiscal year 2017 (FY 17). The Smithsonian Institute identified the species causing the fourth strike as a White throated swift, while the fifth has yet to be determined. For FY17 the wildlife strike rate at the installation is down 55% compared to this time last year.

WB Pyzik removed black-tailed jack rabbits from the installation while dispersing 1185 birds. By removing the rabbits, WB Pyzik was removing the reason for predators to occupy the airfield. Of those 1185 birds dispersed, house finches accounted for 45% of the birds dispersed while patrolling and conducting perimeter checks at the installation.

During the month of March, WB Carl Frey conducted three wildlife surveys at a joint use facility in California collecting information for their Bird/wildlife Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH) plan. Also two surveys were conducted at an ANG airfield in western NV establishing a baseline data set for the implementation and planning for the wildlife hazard assessment. WB Frey conducted one night survey while night operations were being performed at the California joint use facility. In sum, 368 birds and animals were surveyed. WB Frey has observed several new species starting to use the survey areas, specifically, several nesting pairs of various waterfowl and shore birds with the abundance of water in the area.

WB Frey and WS Cameron Green trapped and translocated six red-tailed hawks during the month. There was one interesting recapture (Band # NV009) that was translocated in September 2016 almost 200 miles away. This bird was translocated again almost 100 miles away, then returned within 24 hours to the exact spot it was captured earlier in the week. The banding program in NV provides

WS airport staff with good information on age and translocation distances necessary to reduce the chance that the birds will return to the airport.

WB Frey and WS Green were accompanied by former NV Assistant State Director and Current MA, CT and RI State Director Monte Chandler and Assistant Western Regional Director, Mike Yeary, during the WS-NV's program review. They toured the airport and were able to assist in the trapping of a red-tailed hawk.



In the month of March, WB Frey and WS Green removed 229 wildlife threats to aviation, of which 34% were Canada geese. To reduce the abundance of predators at the facility, 55 yellow-bellied marmots and 23 California ground squirrels were removed. There were also 583 other birds and mammals hazed from airport property.

WS Green observed an unkindness of common ravens on the south end of the airfield totaling in excess of 40 birds. During the month an increasing number of ravens have been observed in the AOA causing concern for aviation safety.

WB Frey and WS Green also brought a captured red-tailed hawk into the airport operations center to share with staff before it was translocated to a more suitable habitat. This was a great opportunity for them to get an up close look at wildlife they assist Wildlife Services with daily while protecting the airfield.



New and Developing Methods

Nothing to Report

Valuing and Investing in Employees

Nothing to Report

Information and Communication

Nothing to Report

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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