

October 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](http://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 October, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **4.7** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$140.9** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$4.5** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **242** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$8,050** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$40,926** in damage to natural and agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During October, coyotes accounted for **\$3,071** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **314** 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 October, **158** samples were processed.

*The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of October, 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 website: <http://agri.nv.gov/Wildlife>. Where wildlife biology and damage management methods are offered by species.

## East District



On October 6<sup>th</sup>, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett conducted a day long field inspection with, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Allen Eldridge. During the day, three different ranches and allotments were visited and three individual cooperators were contacted. Field inspections are a way to ensure all NDA and Wildlife Services (WS) policies and directives are being followed, employees have what they need to safely get the job done, as well as a way to meet with cooperators to hear their problems and concerns. All three cooperators were very pleased with the service being provided by Wildlife Services and WS Eldridge.

On October 14<sup>th</sup>, WS Dayne Barnes met with a large farmer in Lincoln County that was experiencing a problem with feral swine. The farmer reported that during the past several years a small group of feral pigs had caused moderate to heavy damage to his feed-corn crop every fall. The rancher reported that several pigs had been shot in and around his corn fields in the past couple of years. The rancher reported losing between 5 and 10% of his crop annually to the feral pigs. WS Barnes set several trail snares around the fence leading into the corn fields in an effort to remove the pigs in the area.



On October 19<sup>th</sup>, two new employees arrived for work in the East District. Crew Member (CM) Nathan Fowler (left) arrived for duty in Ely as the new crew member for the Ely plane and Pilot Josh Pavia arrived in Cedar City, Utah to begin training as the new Elko Pilot. CM Fowler has worked for Wildlife Services in California, Nevada and Virginia in the past. Pilot Josh Pavia has many hours flying fixed wing aircraft and has been fighting fires recently.

During the first part of October, WS Mac Crome continued to protect two bands of sheep in northern Elko County, near the Idaho Border. WS Crome removed several coyotes utilizing calling, traps and snares to protect the sheep. WS Crome will now move his field camp to eastern Elko County, near the Utah border to protect as many as twelve bands of sheep that spend the winter in that area.



On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, WS Scott MacDonald confirmed the loss of one



lamb, valued at \$200, to coyote predation. The damage occurred in northern White Pine County. WS MacDonald and CM Nathan Fowler traveled to the location and set several traps near the location of the kill. Over the next several days, WS MacDonald was able to remove five coyotes using traps, calling and shooting to bring an end to the damage. WS MacDonald also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent any future losses.



**West District**

On October 1<sup>st</sup>, DS Jack Spencer conducted field inspections with several employees in Humboldt County. DS Spencer also gave each employee their annual performance evaluations. DS Spencer is very pleased with his staff and all the hard work and dedication they provide.

On October 6<sup>th</sup>, Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several cattle and sheep producers in Pershing County. Livestock losses have been minimal; though recently coyotes have started to move in around fall calving areas and

around winter sheep bands. During the flight, 19 coyotes were removed. WS Doug Koepke provided valuable ground service by locating several of the coyotes and directing the plane to the coyote's location. Protection efforts will be ongoing.



On October 7<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around a calving area long known to have problems with coyotes. The local ranchers reported that at first the coyotes were just thinning the local mule deer population around their ranches, but then they moved into the calving area. WS John Peter showed up just prior to the plane's arrival and voice howled to locate coyotes for the plane. WS Peter had over a dozen

coyotes answer within a ½ mile of his location. The aerial crew flew around the calves and removed 26 coyotes. Protection efforts are ongoing, but for now this calving area is afforded some coyote relief.

On October 7<sup>th</sup>, DS Spencer conducted a field inspection with WS Koepke in Churchill County. During the inspection, WS Spencer met with several of WS Koepke's livestock producers and each meeting with producers brought more praise about the good protection efforts WS Koepke provides. WS Koepke used leghold traps to remove two coyotes from a calving area during the inspection.

On October 8<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight in Lyon County around several sheep bands. The aerial crew did not find any coyotes near the sheep and the livestock producers reported no coyote problems, so the mission was a success even though no coyotes were found. DS Spencer provided ground support until the new trapper, WS Carl Frey, reports for duty next month.

On October 14<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several calving areas in Humboldt County. Ranchers reported large groups of coyotes showing up. During the flight, 32 coyotes were removed, including one group of nine



coyotes. WS Peter provided ground support during aerial operations. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On October 16<sup>th</sup>, DS Spencer and Wildlife Biologist (WB) Hunter Moyles responded to a request by the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) to remove several urban coyotes that were killing pets in Carson City. The damage was reported by local government officials. Apparently three dogs (valued at \$1,500) were killed in the park by coyotes. Several neighbors had also come forward and reported that “dozens” of other pets had been killed in the previous months surrounding the park. NDOW requested assistance from WS as this situation was deemed a public safety concern because several of the coyotes were coming in close contact with people even after non-lethal approaches such as rocks in cans and air horns proved fruitless. DS Spencer and WB Moyles arrived near the problem area before daylight and made several calling stands resulting in the removal of three coyotes. Suppressed firearms were employed and proved to be highly effective. WS always promotes non-lethal measures, unfortunately, with the increase in no shooting or trapping areas in suburban areas the coyote problems will continue to rise in Nevada. Urban coyotes learn that people are more likely to be a resource as opposed to a threat and eventually lethal removal is required to resolve coyote problems before someone gets hurt. To date, no further coyote problems have been reported in the immediate area. WS and NDOW will continue to work together when dealing with public safety coyote complaints.



During the month of October, WS Ben Miller was continually checking, pulling and placing new trail snares in areas of the bighorn sheep protection in northern Washoe County (Hunt Units 011-013). On October 16<sup>th</sup>, WS Miller inspected a call box/corral snare set placed near a bighorn sheep herd which had caught an adult female lion. WS Miller will continue to protect translocated bighorn sheep in this area.



On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, DS Spencer was filling in for WB Moyles at a large airport in Reno and observed a coyote on airport property. DS Spencer went around the area where the coyote was last seen and made a short calling stand from the truck and dispatched the offending coyote. The coyote was only a few hundred yards away from the runway where large passenger jets are continually departing. DS Spencer also found the remains of two pets that the coyote was feeding on. No further coyote problems have been reported.



On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around a calving area and winter sheep area long known to have problems with coyotes in Lander County. During the flight, 11 coyotes were removed. WS George Hansen located five coyotes by howling and directed the plane accordingly. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On October 23<sup>rd</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around a goat and cattle producer in Pershing County. The goat rancher reported coyotes killing several goats. During the morning flight, 23 coyotes were removed. WS Koepke provided ground support. The West District has had three new large goat producers start operations in the last year. One producer has over a thousand goats.

On October 23<sup>rd</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several cattle producers in Pershing County. During the morning flight, 25 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided ground support.

During the week of October 26<sup>th</sup> through October 30<sup>th</sup>, DS Spencer met with a livestock producer in Washoe County who has livestock and a coyote issue in a semi-urban area. To resolve the problem, DS Spencer removed four coyotes with the use of leghold traps. No further livestock losses have been reported and the livestock producer was pleased with the livestock protection efforts.

During the week of October 19<sup>th</sup> through October 23<sup>rd</sup>, WS Koepke was busy protecting several sheep and cattle ranches in Pershing County. During the week, WS Koepke removed eight coyotes utilizing calling, leghold traps and trail snares. Protection efforts will continue to keep livestock losses low.

On October 28<sup>th</sup>, NDOW requested assistance regarding a lion that had killed two collared bighorn sheep rams (valued at \$14,335) in Esmeralda County. It takes some time for NDOW to receive a mortality signal but it was decided to try and capture the offending lion even though five days had passed. DS Spencer and a NDOW biologist hiked in and set leghold traps near the bighorn sheep kills, unfortunately the lion never returned. NDOW will monitor the situation and likely request assistance from WS if there is another bighorn sheep kill.



On October 21<sup>st</sup>, WS Peter inspected a calving area where coyotes were starting to show up around the cows. WS Peter made a few calling stands and in no time removed five coyotes from around the cows. The rancher was pleased with the coyote removal and WS Peter mentioned if any more coyotes show up during the vulnerable calving season to let him know.

On October 30<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several calving areas in Humboldt County. Lately with the onset of fall calving, cattle ranchers across western Nevada have been requesting aerial hunting services. The aerial crew flew from ranch to ranch, removing 14 coyotes that were close to the cows.

During the month of October, the WS' state office received dozens of calls about coyotes harassing, maiming and killing pets in Reno/Sparks and the Carson City area. WS staff provided non-lethal technical assistance to homeowners, unfortunately, pets will continue to be injured and killed by coy-

otes as they continue to learn that little consequence comes from their actions.

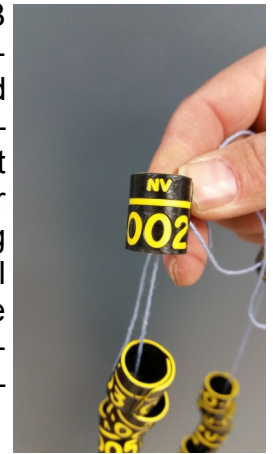
During the month of October, WB Zack Bowers continued to deter wildlife from using/crossing the airfield at a military installation in northern Nevada. In an effort to keep these species from crossing the airfield, WB Bowers has utilized harassment with several methods. Wildlife numbers on and around the airfield are down from previous months. The only birds showing an increase are gulls and blackbirds.

The two strikes that occurred in September were sent to the Smithsonian Institute for identification. Recently, the Smithsonian was able to identify one strike to the species level, and one strike to the family level. The strikes were identified as involving a Mexican free-tailed bat and a member of the family Columbidae, which means it was a dove or pigeon. Doves and pigeons are common in the area. Mexican free-tailed bats however, are not a species that WB Bowers has observed on or near the airfield. According to Wikipedia, the Mexican free-tailed bat is widely regarded as one of the most abundant mammals in North America. It is also the official State bat of both Oklahoma and Texas. No strikes were reported during the month of October.

During the month of October, WB Mike Smith from the Utah program volunteered his vast experi-



ence and knowledge of birds of prey in order to help WB Bowers trap and band hawks. Working through the weekend, WBs Smith and Bowers were able to trap a red-tailed hawk and a Cooper's hawk from the airfield. The red-tailed hawk is believed to be one of the individuals that circle over the departing end of the runways on a regular basis. The biologists fitted the hawk with a special leg band that should be easier to see than the typical metal leg band. The hawks were taken a considerable distance from the airfield and released in an area with suitable habitat. The hope is that the hawks will not return to the airfield.



During the month of October, (WB) Moyles initiated protection work on an international airport in Reno. During the month, WB Moyles continued to deter wildlife from using/crossing the airfield property. In an effort to deter these wildlife species from crossing the airfield, WB Moyles utilized several methods of harassment. WB Moyles dispersed 176 birds and mammals from the airfield. Wildlife dispersed from the airfield included ten species of birds and mammals. Many of these birds were congregated around a drainage ditch which holds water on a year around basis. WB Moyles will start to monitor the airfield and surrounding area using formal surveys and general observations.

On October 10<sup>th</sup>, WB Moyles was contacted by an airport official stating that there was a coyote on airport property. WB Moyles responded to the complaint and located the coyote. WB Moyles, along with assistance from airport operations personnel, was able to remove the coyote before it became a threat to aircraft.

Along with several non-lethal harassment techniques, WB Moyles also had to deploy some lethal means of control to reduce wildlife hazard threats to aircraft at the prior mentioned airport in Reno. During the month, WB Moyles removed several offending species for public safety including: one coyote, two Red-tail hawks, two pigeons and three raccoons by utilizing trapping and shooting. Aircraft protection methodology will continue to be employed at the airport to better minimize the potential for wildlife strikes to aircraft. Protection efforts are ongoing.

## **New and Developing Methods**

Nothing to Report

## **Valuing and Investing in Employees**

Nothing to Report

## **Information and Communication**

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) continues to be a threat to poultry operations in the US. As part of APHIS's mission to protect the health and value of America's agricultural and natural resources, APHIS has responded to numerous animal and plant health emergencies over the years. By far, the worst in U.S. history was the outbreak of HPAI earlier this year. It was absolutely devastating to the poultry and egg industries, especially in the Midwest.

This fall and winter WS and NDOW are working together to sample waterfowl for any indication of HPAI. During the reporting period, WS and NDOW began weekend sampling of hunter harvested dabbling ducks for HPAI. Although drought has greatly reduced the number of watersheds that can be sampled, the Central Lahontan and Lower Colorado-Lake Mead watersheds remain viable. As such, efforts will be focused in these watersheds. Many thanks in advance to the waterfowlers for their participation and patience.



## **Emerging Trends/Issues**

Nothing to Report

## **Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)**

Nothing to Report

## **Future Meetings and Events**

November 12-14<sup>th</sup>, Nevada Cattlemen's and Woolgrowers meeting in Winnemucca. State Director (SD) Mark Jensen, DS Bennett and Staff Biologist Jack Sengl to attend.

November 16<sup>th</sup>, N-6 grazing board meeting in Austin. SD Jensen and DS Bennett to attend.





USDA APHIS

# Wildlife Services



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