

September 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 September, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **2.8** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$93.7** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$4.5** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **2,665** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$6,882** in damage and WS Specialists verified **\$24,911** in damage to natural and agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During September, coyotes accounted for **\$11,170** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **299** 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 September, **62** samples were processed.

*The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of September, 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 September 4<sup>th</sup>, a goat producer in western Elko County contacted the Elko field office concerning the loss of six goats, valued at \$1,825, to coyote predation. The goat rancher said they were seeing and hearing several coyotes in the band of goats on a daily basis. On September 9<sup>th</sup>, the West District plane, crewed by Instructor Pilot (IP) Wes Gossard and East District Crew Member (CM) Wayne Rowley, responded to the location. During the morning's flight, six coyotes were removed near the goats, bringing an end to the damage. To date, no further losses have been reported. CM Rowley will continue to monitor the location for future losses.



On September 9<sup>th</sup>, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Billy Taylor confirmed the loss of three lambs valued at \$600. The damage took place in central Eureka County, north of the town of Eureka. WS Taylor placed several traps and snares near the location of the kills. During the next two weeks, WS Taylor was able to remove five coyotes, bringing an end to the damage. No further losses have been reported since WS Taylor removed the coyotes. WS Taylor also provided technical assistance in the form of nonlethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

On September 9<sup>th</sup>, WS Randy Evans responded to a farm in Elko County that was experiencing a problem with both coyotes and badgers. The badgers had caused more than \$1,100 damage to a hay field by burrowing and digging up the pasture. The farmer also witnessed several coyotes chasing and harassing his farm flock of sheep. One sheep was missing and presumed killed by the coyotes. WS Evans responded to the farm and set several traps and snares near the location of the damage. Over the next two weeks, WS Evans removed three badgers and three coyotes, bringing an end to the problem. WS Evans also provided technical assistance to help prevent future problems with the badgers and coyotes. The farmer was very pleased with the response he received from WS Evans and the Nevada Wildlife Services program.

On September 9<sup>th</sup>, WS Allen Eldridge confirmed the loss of one lamb, valued at \$200. The damage occurred on a remote band of sheep in northern White Pine County. WS Eldridge placed several pieces of equipment near the kill site. During the next several days, WS Eldridge was able to call, shoot and trap five coyotes, bringing an end to the damage. No further losses have been reported. WS Eldridge also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses. WS Eldridge will continue to monitor the many bands of sheep and other livestock in his assigned work area.



On June 16<sup>th</sup>, a cattle rancher in central White Pine County contacted Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler concerning the loss of one calf, valued at \$1,000. MLS Buhler traveled to the location and confirmed that a lion had killed the calf. Judging from the track size, MLS Buhler figured the lion was a young male. MLS Buhler searched for the offending lion for several days but was unable to locate it. On August 30<sup>th</sup>, the same lion returned again and killed another calf valued at



\$1,000. Again, MLS Buhler searched for the lion and on September 9<sup>th</sup> was able to track, tree and remove the 125 pound male lion. No further losses have been reported. MLS Buhler skinned and took blood samples from the lion and turned the head feet and hide into the Ely Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) office according to procedure. MLS Buhler also provided technical assistance to the cattle rancher in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses to predators.

During the month of September, WS Mac Crome confirmed the loss of sixteen lambs, valued at \$3,200, to coyote predation. The damage occurred on two bands of sheep near the Idaho border in north eastern Nevada. WS Crome able to removed four adult coyotes and seven juvenile coyotes near the kills. No lambs were lost after the coyotes were removed. The lambs were later removed and shipped the last part of September. WS Crome also provided technical assistance in the form of nonlethal recommendations to help prevent future losses.

During the month of September, most eastern Nevada sheep producers began shipping their lambs to market. Most WS employees continue to protect the adult sheep as they start to transition from the higher country to lower elevations for winter. This requires that field camps be moved and most



employees take well deserved vacations for hunting and other activities. Most employees also take time to clean up equipment including the camps, vehicles, traps and snares in preparation for winter.

During the early part of September, WS Scott Little confirmed the loss of two beef calves, valued at \$2,000, to coyote predation. Since these ranchers are located on the trail that several large sheep producers use to trail their sheep to the winter range, WS Little set field equipment all down the ranches. WS Little was able to remove twenty coyotes from the two ranches, bringing an end to the calf predations and most likely saving several sheep as they trailed south through the area during the next few weeks.

On September 29<sup>th</sup>, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett conducted an all-day field inspection with WS Scott Little; three large ranches and allotments were inspected. WS Little checked sixty nine traps during the day. Field inspections are very important to ensure all directives and policies are being followed. It's also an important way for the supervisor to meet and discuss the program needs with cooperators. WS Little is a very dedicated hard working employee as was expressed by his co-operators and his supervisor.

During the month of September, a rancher in central Elko County with a small farm flock of sheep





lost five lambs to coyote predation. CM Wayne Rowley confirmed the losses, valued at \$1,000. CM Rowley and WS Crome were able to remove two coyotes using traps and shooting but the damage continued. On September 24<sup>th</sup>, the West District plane crewed by IP Gossard and CM Rowley responded to the location. During the morning's flight, three more coyotes were removed, bringing an end to the damage. No further losses have been reported and the rancher was very pleased with the assistance provided by Wildlife Services.

During the month of September, WS Dayne Barnes continued his efforts to locate and remove non-native feral swine in the Lincoln area. WS Barnes confirmed damage to at least one large corn farmer in the area. Several snares have been placed around the fields experiencing the damage. The farmer reported the loss of between 5-10% of his crop the past few years to feral swine damage.

### **West District**

On September 10<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several cattle and sheep producers in Humboldt County. Livestock losses have been minimal;



however, coyotes have started to move in around fall calving areas and winter sheep bands. During the flight, 10 coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided valuable ground service by locating several of the coyotes and directing the plane to the coyote's location. Protection efforts are ongoing.

On September 11<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around a sheep producer in Lander County. The sheep producer had several dead sheep killed by coyotes in the past week. During the flight, the aerial crew removed three coyotes, including one coyote that had just killed a lamb and was feeding on the carcass. To date, no further livestock has been lost and the sheep producer was pleased with the protection efforts.

WS George Hansen provided ground support during aerial operations.

During the week of September 8<sup>th</sup> through September 11<sup>th</sup>, WS Hansen was busy checking equipment around cattle and sheep producers in Lander County. During the week, WS Hansen removed 14 coyotes utilizing trail snares, leghold traps and calling. WS Hansen reports minimal livestock losses in his large work area, a true testament to his livestock protection efforts. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock in his work area.

On September 14<sup>th</sup>, WS Doug Koepke was busy protecting a goat herd in Pershing County. The goat farmers had previously lost several kids to bothersome coyotes, but since WS Koepke showed up, the coyotes haven't killed. During his inspection WS Koepke removed two coyotes by method of trail snares and removed another pair by method of calling and shooting. WS Koepke will continue to offer protection for the goat producer. The West District recently had two very large goat producers



move into the country.

On September 15<sup>th</sup>, WS John Peter inspected M-44s around several sheep bands, resulting in the removal of five coyotes. WS Peter continues to use M-44s year around in concert with other methods to get the job done while minimizing non-target take. WS Peter will continue to protect these sheep bands.

On September 17<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around a calving area in Pershing County. During the flight, 16 coyotes were removed. WS Koepke provided ground support during aerial operations.

On September 21<sup>st</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around a sheep producer in Lander County, resulting in the removal of a pair of coyotes very close to the sheep band. WS Hansen provided ground support during aerial operations.

On September 22<sup>nd</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight on a sheep producer in northern Washoe County near the California border. The sheep producer reported that six sheep were killed by coyotes and three black bears were seen killing sheep just inside the California border. Because of the proximity of the ranch, Both WS Koepke and CA WS George Affonso provided ground support for the air crew. During the flight, six coyotes were removed. The ground crew located several of the coyotes for the aerial crew. The coyote losses ceased and eventually the black bear damage stopped. The rancher was pleased to have both programs working together especially when his ranch is half in Nevada and half in California. Protection efforts will be ongoing.



On September 28<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several cattle and sheep producers in Humboldt County. During the flight, five coyotes were removed. WS Peter provided valuable ground support during aerial operations.

On September 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, DS Jack Spencer conducted several field inspections and rode with his employees. While meeting with employees, DS Spencer also performed annual employee evaluations. DS Spencer is extremely pleased with the employees he has the pleasure of working with. DS Spencer will continue to meet with employees and livestock producers in the field when time permits.

On September 29<sup>th</sup>, IP Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning flight around several cattle and sheep producers in Humboldt County. During the flight, a total of 13 coyotes were removed. With the fall calving period coming up more and more requests for the aerial crew is in de-

mand. WS Peter provided valuable ground support during aerial operations.

During the month of September, 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. Wildlife numbers on and around the airfield are down from previous months and are the lowest September numbers recorded since WB Bowers began work at NAS Fallon. The only bird species showing a noticeable increase was Ring-billed gulls, which may have been part of a migration.

Four of the strikes that occurred during the month of August have been identified down to the species level by the Smithsonian Institute. Identification on these strikes was confirmed as involving a common nighthawk, a mourning dove, a house finch and a yellow-headed blackbird. The strike involving the yellow-headed blackbird caused damage to an engine. No remains were recovered from the fifth strike in August. Despite the low number of birds on and around the airfield in September, two strikes were reported. The remains have been sent in to the Smithsonian and hopefully an update will be available for next month's report. WB Bowers will continue to use a variety of methods in order to reduce wildlife activity on the airfield.

The quarterly Bird/Animal Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH) meeting was held during the month of September. General wildlife trends and behaviors in the area were discussed. This year has proven that wildlife numbers can vary considerably from year to year and even from season to season. Discussions included topics such as future habitat modifications, updated software for data management and presentation, and possibly conducting hawk research at the airfield. Thanks to all who attended and participated.

During the month of August, WB Hunter Moyles initiated protection work at 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 avian/mammalian species from crossing the airfield, WB Moyles utilized several methods of harassment. WB Moyles dispersed 726 birds and mammals from the airfield. Wildlife dispersed from the airfield included 11 species of birds and mammals. Many of these birds were congregated around a drainage ditch which holds water on a year around basis. Despite receiving decent levels of precipitation this spring, the area has been in drought conditions for the past several years now and wildlife is concentrated around water sources. Persistent harassment is necessary as birds and other wildlife are reluctant to leave the water source located on airport property. WB Moyles will start to monitor the airfield and surrounding area using formal surveys and general observations.

On September 3<sup>rd</sup>, WB Moyles noted on his daily route around the airport perimeter that there



seemed to be a larger number of hawks and American kestrels in the area. Posing a major aviation safety risk, WB Moyles used modified Swedish goshawk traps and Bal Chatri traps to remove and translocate five kestrels which brings the translocation totals to: 11 kestrels relocated in 2 months, and one Red-tailed hawk. Efforts



will continue as raptors and other birds move through the airport general zone during the fall migration.

On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, WB Moyles was contacted by an airport official stating that they have been observing a feral dog on the surrounding property of the airport. WB Moyles responded to the concern and located the feral dog. When the dog would be approached by a vehicle the feral dog would tuck tail and run. WB Moyles employed the use of pre-baiting and will set a big cage trap in a week or so. Efforts will continue to make sure the feral dog does not reach the runways.



Along with several non-lethal harassment techniques, WB Moyles also had to deploy some lethal means of control to eliminate aircraft strike potential at a large airport in Reno. During the month WB Moyles removed several offending species for public safety including: two coyotes, one Mallard, one Red-tailed hawk, four pigeons, three raccoons, one skunk and three ground squirrels by utilizing trapping, shooting and toxicants. Although habitat manipulation and harassment are the most commonly utilized tools to reduce the chance that wildlife encounter aircraft, lethal reinforcement of the nonlethal tools is necessary. The wildlife hazard management plan will continue to be implemented to reduce potential hazards to the flying public.

### **New and Developing Methods**

Nothing to Report

### **Valuing and Investing in Employees**

Nothing to Report





## **Audit Finds APHIS Wildlife Services is a Necessary and Important Part of Wildlife Damage Management**

USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service sent this bulletin at 09/17/2015 01:30 PM EDT  
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### **Audit Finds APHIS Wildlife Services is a Necessary and Important Part of Wildlife Damage Management**

September 17, 2015 – Following a routine audit of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Services (WS) predator damage management program, the U.S. Office of Inspector General (OIG) found WS was in compliance with all applicable Federal and State laws. OIG also determined that WS was a necessary and important wildlife management program that protects the health and safety of people, animals and property, as well as wildlife itself.

“WS consistently strives to run a professional, transparent program” said APHIS Administrator Kevin Shea. “This audit confirms that we are successfully carrying out our mission of resolving conflicts between humans and wildlife, and helping to create a balance that allows coexistence while reducing damage.”

In the audit, OIG sought to determine if WS’ operations were justified and effective, assess the controls over cooperative agreements, examine WS’ information system reliability and integrity, and follow up on prior audit recommendations.

WS complied with all of OIG’s requests for information and assistance throughout the audit process. Auditors visited five states and 12 district sites and accompanied 40 specialists in the field . They witnessed aerial control operations and field work, and spoke with more than 100 program leaders and researchers, State fish and wildlife officials, and property owners. The process did not reveal any systemic problems in the conduct of the control program.

Auditors did make recommendations to help WS improve its record keeping, and WS has issued directives to implement procedures to help alleviate future concerns.

Wildlife is a publicly-owned natural resource that serves an important public good, but it can also create substantial damages and recurring nuisances. Annually, predators account for the loss of more than 500,000 head of livestock valued at \$138 million; birds cost catfish, rice and sunflower farmers up to \$50 million a year. Most often those needing help are small producers, least able to absorb losses. To mitigate these serious economic impacts, WS works closely with, and at the request of State wildlife agencies, State agriculture departments, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. National Park Service, and many other local, State, and National partners to manage wildlife damage.

OIG Auditors reported that, WS experts use a science-based Integrated Wildlife Damage Management (IWDM) decision-making model and make decisions in compliance with applicable State and Federal laws, including the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. WS conducts activities to minimize negative impacts to overall native wildlife populations.

The full version of the audit can be viewed at: <http://www.usda.gov/oig/webdocs/33601-0002-41.pdf>



**Emerging Trends/Issues**

Nothing to Report

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

Nothing to Report

**Future Meetings and Events**

November 12-14 Nevada Cattlemen's and Woolgrowers meeting in Winnemucca. WS to attend.



USDA APHIS

# Wildlife Services

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