

March 2009

The Trapline

United States Department of
Agriculture

Animal & Plant Health
Inspection Service

Wildlife Services



Cooperating with:

Nevada

Department of Agriculture

Division of Resource Protection



www.agri.nv.gov

Mission Statement

The Nevada Wildlife Services Program is a collaborative program involving the Nevada Department of Agriculture's Division of Resource Protection (State) and the USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services Program (Federal), whose mission is to protect agricultural, 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 **12** million acres of land under agreement. Additionally, WS assisted **422** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$10,688** in damage and WS Specialists verified another **\$42,490** in damage to other agricultural resources. During March, coyotes accounted for **\$18,960** in verified losses mostly to livestock and **482** 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, **90** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of March, 2009.

Resource Protection

State Office

During March 2009, the State Office trap loaning program checked out **25** cage traps. The species distribution for the traps loaned out were: raccoons (**8**), skunks (**3**), squirrels (**12**) and marmots (**2**). Information regarding baits to use, trap placement tactics, handling of trapped animals and safety precautions to take when working with the wildlife species were provided for all equipment loaned.

East District



Help on the way.

On March 5th, the Ely plane, crewed by Instructor Pilot (IP) Tim Keogh and Crew Member (CM) Jerred Taylor, flew an area in Nye County in response to the predation of an adult ewe (valued at \$150) by coyotes. Several bands of sheep were flown during the four and a half hour operation, resulting in the removal of four coyotes with ground crew assistance provided by WS Scott Little. The coyotes were removed in close proximity to the depredated ewe.

On March 5th, the Elko plane, crewed by Pilot Ken Baer and CM Wayne Rowley, flew two cattle ranches in northern Lander County. Seven coyotes were removed in close proximity to newborn calves during the aerial operation with the assistance of WS Derril Fry as the ground crew.

On March 6th, WS Derril Fry removed one large badger from a hayfield in central Elko County. The badger was digging and burrowing in the field causing several hundred dollars of damage to the field. The badger holes also presented a hazard to farm machinery operators and livestock. WS Fry followed up with technical assistance to help minimize future problems. WS Fry will continue to monitor the situation.

On March 9th and 10th, IP Keogh and CM Taylor traveled to Cedar City, Utah to attend aviation safety training. IP Keogh successfully completed instrument training while CM Taylor completed helicopter training.



Sheep moving to summer range.

On March 10th, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett conducted a day long field inspection with WS Gilbert Temoke. WS Temoke is currently protecting nine bands of sheep along the Nevada/Utah border in Elko and White Pine Counties. A total of five allotments, and the associated nine bands of sheep, were visited during the inspection. Several cooperators were also contacted. All sheep producers contacted expressed their appreciation for the Wildlife Services Program as well as the work conducted by WS Temoke. WS Temoke will continue to manage conflict in the area until later this month when the sheep move back into the summer ranges in Utah.

On March 10th, the Elko plane, crewed by Pilot Ken Baer and CM Wayne Rowley, flew on several lambing grounds in southern Elko County that have had a history of high coyote predation. WS Derril Fry ground crewed for the flight. A total of 16 coyotes were removed during the operation, including several that were located by WS Fry, who was ground crewing. WS Fry will continue to work this area in anticipation of the fast approaching lambing season.

On March 11th, the Elko plane, crewed by Pilot Baer and CM Rowley, flew on the Jackpot Burn. The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) project is designed to remove predators in and around the most recent burns in northern Elko County to protect deer, antelope and other wildlife species. three coyotes were removed during the operation with WS Der-

ril Fry's ground crewing assistance.

On March 11th, the Ely plane, crewed by IP Keogh and CM Taylor, flew an area in Lincoln County that WS Matt Jager had reported the loss of seven adult ewes to coyote predation (loss valued at \$1,050). The plane was able to remove two coyotes near the location of the kills, while WS Jager removed an additional five coyotes during his ground crewing for the four and a half hour operation. WS Jager reported that the sheep producer was very pleased with WS' livestock protection effort provided during the winter.

On March 12th, the Elko plane, crewed by Pilot Baer and CM Rowley, flew three different cattle ranches in northern Elko County that had lost two calves (loss valued at \$1,000) to coyote predation. WS Derril Fry was the ground crew during the five hour operation. A total of 27 coyotes were removed, during the aerial operation, including two groups of nine coyotes that were removed among the cows and newborn calves with the assistance of WS Derril Fry's ground crewing assistance. All three ranchers were very pleased with the service provided by Wildlife Services.

On March 12th and 13th, work began in Lincoln County on NDOW project 21a. NDOW project 21a is in its second full season and is designed to remove ravens for the protection of sage grouse. Raven predation has been determined to have a very negative impact on ground nesting birds such as sage grouse. Ravens densities are first observed around sage grouse leks. After the initial counts, eggs treated with DRC-1339 are then strategically placed around the leks. Raven counts are then taken after the treatment. Further treatments are then applied as needed to assist the sensitive grouse species.



DS Bennett placing out eggs.

On March 12th, the Ely plane, crewed by IP Keogh and CM Taylor, flew an area in southeastern Elko and northeastern White Pine County that had lost several ewes to coyote predation, WS Temoke assisted as the ground crew during the five hour aerial operation. No coyotes were observed or taken by the plane during the operation, which is quite unusual. Although generally this time of year is the most difficult time to remove coyotes. Adult coyote numbers are at the lowest point at this time, and coyotes during spring tend not to move as much. WS Temoke did remove one adult coyote from the area utilizing a trail snare. WS Temoke will continue to work the area utilizing ground equipment.

On March 13th, the Elko plane, crewed by Pilot Baer and CM Rowley, flew on several cattle ranches in western Elko County that had previously lost several calves to coyote predation. A total of 19 coyotes were removed in and around the cattle, including one group of 12 coyotes, with ground crew assistance provided by WS Temoke. No further problems have been reported in the area.



On March 13th, the Ely plane, crewed by IP Keogh and CM Taylor, flew an area in Eureka County because several cattle ranchers had contacted WS Gary Garaventa, expressing concerns about the safety of their new born calves as they were seeing considerable coyote activity. A total of six coyotes were removed during the five hour flight, with WS Garaventa acting as ground crew. WS Garaventa will continue to work the cattle ranches in an effort to minimize losses to predation.

During the last part of March, WS Jager and WS Fullerton began to move their camps and equip-



Moving camp.

ment north towards the lambing areas. Both Specialists will be setting up for control operations around the Spring lambing areas in White Pine County.

On March 18th, WS Derril Fry responded to a call regarding the loss of five calves (loss valued at \$2,500) to ravens. As the newborn calves were born the ravens pecked their eyes out. WS Fry performed a site visit and observed a large number of ravens near the site of the depredation event. WS Fry placed DRC-1339 treated eggs in the general vicinity of the kill sites for the ravens. No further losses have been reported and the cattle rancher was very pleased with the assistance he received from WS Fry.



On March 24th, WS Jager responded to a call from a cattle rancher in southeastern White Pine County. The rancher had reported that ravens had attacked several newborn calves. Two of the calves were so badly injured that they did not survive the attacks. The value of the two calves was placed at \$1,000. On March 25th, WS Jager placed out DRC-1339 treated eggs near the site of the predation incident. Several ravens were removed bringing the damage to an end. The rancher was very pleased with the service provided by Wildlife Services. WS Jager will continue to monitor the area for more problems, managing them as they come.

On March 24th, WS Derril Fry received a call concerning the loss of 14 calves valued at \$7,000 to coyote predation. The rancher reported seeing numerous coyotes in the same pastures that his cows were calving in. On March 25th, the Elko plane, crewed by Pilot Baer and CM Rowley, responded to the depredation incident located in southern Elko County. A total of 14 coyotes were removed, with WS Fry's ground crewing/locating assistance, including several in the same pastures where the predation events had occurred. The cattle rancher was very pleased with the service provided by Wildlife Services. WS Fry followed up with technical assistance to help prevent future problems.



On March 25th, the Ely plane, crewed by IP Keogh and CM Taylor, flew near two bands of sheep in southeastern White Pine County. The sheep were just starting to lamb and had experienced severe coyote predation in the past. During the three and a half hour flight, five coyotes were removed near the sheep with WS Jager's assistance as ground crew. Two of the coyotes were very old, with one sporting an old injury to its front leg. The sheep producer was very pleased with the results.

West District

During the month of March, WS Ben Miller was busy placing coyote and lion trail snares out for the protection of mule deer. WS Miller utilizes his wealth of judgment, knowledge and experience in the strategic placement of a considerable amount of field equipment around the fawning areas. WS Miller has also found where a large lion has been entering the pro-

tection area (hunt unit 014) from the unprotected area (hunt unit 015). The lion has entered the protection area only long enough to feed on a deer then immediately moves back across the road. WS Miller will continue to pursue this evasive lion when it moves into the protection area. NDOW recently posted 2008 deer hunter harvest success rates for Nevada. The Washoe County Mule Deer project (014), where coyote and lion removal efforts are concentrated, enjoyed a two season rifle deer harvest (45 tags) of **71% hunter success**. The unprotected area (39 feet away) in hunt unit (015) had only one hunter harvest a legal buck out of 20 deer tags available (**5% success and the lowest in the State**). In 2007, deer hunter success in 015 was recorded at just 18%. This hunter success rate is dismal compared to the area across the road with coyote and lion removal. This is a good comparison to show that wildlife damage management efforts can help put/keep more deer on the ground and provide more hunting opportunities for sportsmen who ultimately pay for wildlife management. In recent years, WS trappers and the district pilot have noticed a huge decrease in the number of resident mule deer that reside in hunt unit 015 (no coyote and lion removal for wildlife protection). In 1998 the first lion related livestock complaint was recorded in hunt unit 015, prior to this time it was rare to even see a lion track. In recent years lions have killed hundreds of livestock producer's domestic sheep in hunt unit 015 and lion tracks can be found on just about any given day. It is unknown if any or how many deer tags will be given in hunt unit 015 with only one deer harvested last season, but with increasing deer in the protection area (hunt unit 014) deer tags could easily be increased. WS Miller and Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Tom Kilby will continue to protect mule deer in hunt unit 014.



Protected Hunt Unit 014 experienced 71% hunter success this year!

WS Miller and Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Tom Kilby will continue to protect mule deer in hunt unit 014.

On March 4th, a livestock producer reported that one calf (valued at \$450) had been killed by coyotes. WS John Peter was working on several other livestock cooperators, so he used his resources and requested assistance from the aerial crew. On March 5th, Pilot Pat Amundsen and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted an early morning aerial operation around the calving grounds that resulted in the removal of 11 coyotes. WS John Peter provided ground support during the aerial activities.

On March 9th, a livestock producer from Washoe County reported that a lion had attacked two of his registered Clydesdale horses (veterinarian bills amounted to \$1,200). The attack happened some time prior in a somewhat suburban area, but the individual reported that the lion had been hanging around the residence. West District Supervisor (DS) Jack Spencer Jr. and Assistant District Supervisor (ADS) Jack Sengl inspected the damage and placed a large live trap in the vicinity of where the



DS Spencer setting lion trap.

attack took place. The lion did not return to the site and ultimately the trap was removed. It is common for lions to attack or kill livestock in suburban areas only to leave shortly thereafter. Several years ago MLS Kilby removed a female lion that had killed a large draft horse. It is hard to believe that a lion can single handedly/pawedly kill an animal 15 times its own weight.

During the week of March 1st thru March 7th, WS Doug Koepke was busy protecting several winter sheep bands in Pershing and Washoe Counties. WS Koepke had an exceptional week with the removal of 17 coyotes. WS Koepke utilized M-44's, trail snares and calling to remove the offending animals. Livestock losses have been very minimal where WS Koepke has been working. WS Koepke will continue to protect livestock in his work area and use all effective wildlife damage management tools available to resolve problem wildlife.

On March 12th thru March 13th, Pilot Amundsen and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations around several lamb bands in Lyon County. During the two day flight a total of five coyotes were removed. WS Frank Homan was busy running equipment in this area, so the coyote population is small around the sheep bands, but the aerial crew and the ground work both complement each other to keep losses down. WS Homan provided valuable ground support during the aerial operation.



WS Hansen at the ready.

On March 12th, DS Spencer and ADS Sengl boiled and treated DRC-1339 egg baits for WS Doug Koepke. WS Koepke was busy running equipment, so DS Spencer and ADS Sengl tried to lighten his load by saving a few hours work for WS Koepke. WS Koepke placed the eggs around several lambing areas where ravens were pecking orifices' near the bloody runs.

During the week of March 9th thru March 13th, WS George Hansen was running equipment on several lamb bands in Lander County. During the week WS Hansen removed a total of eight coyotes by method of trail snaring and leghold trapping. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock in Lander County.



On March 13th, Pilot Amundsen and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations around several sheep bands that were dropping lambs in Lyon County. During the flight a total of five coyotes were removed. WS Frank Homan provided ground support during the aerial operation.

During the week of March 9th thru March 13th, ADS Sengl spent the week protecting a large airport in Reno. The airport reported a domestic dog on the runway and an immediate threat to aviation safety. ADS Sengl captured the dog and turned it over to animal control. ADS Sengl spent the rest of the week trapping a problem coyote, removed dozens of pigeons and one muskrat that was not cleared to cross an active runway.

Human health and safety issues are WS' biggest concerns; therefore the airport property is constantly inspected to ensure the public's safety.

On March 17th, IP Keogh conducted a routine flight training exercise with Pilot Amundsen. The aerial crew practiced low level flight passes. IP Keogh jumped in the backseat and conducted some aerial gunning while Pilot Amundsen had the controls. During the aerial operations on a calving area, a total of eight coyotes were removed. IP Keogh is also a fine aerial gunner in addition to being a world class pilot. Our "Thanks" go out to IP Keogh for coming over to the West District and landing in a practiced hand. It is a wise practice to have an Instructor Pilot train with a new pilot every month for their first year of service.

On March 20th, Pilot Amundsen and CM VanderMay flew around a lambing range north of Austin (Lander County). During the flight a total of five coyotes were removed. Both WS Don Capelli and WS George Hansen provided ground support during aerial operations.

During the week of March 16th thru March 20th, WS George Hansen checked equipment around several sheep bands in Lander County. During the week, WS Hansen removed a total of six coyotes by method of trail snaring. WS Hansen will continue to protect sheep in this area.

During the week of March 16th thru March 20th, WS John Peter was busy addressing several complaints regarding Belding ground squirrels eating emergent alfalfa in Humboldt County. Alfalfa farmers reported damage in the thousands of dollars, so WS Peter conducted several treatments utilizing cabbage treated with zinc phosphide. Historically alfalfa farmers used strychnine to combat squirrel damage, unfortunately the use of strychnine caused secondary poisoning of non-target species. The zinc phosphide seemed to work excellent as WS Peter removed a considerable number of depre-dating squirrels in a short period of time.

On March 16th, a large airport in Reno reported that two more coyotes moved in around the runway creating a potential human health and safety issue. Coyotes that are located in urban areas can be much harder to catch than in the wild. Traps are often set at night, checked before day light, and cannot be placed in the good "coyote spots", but rather places out of site of the public. ADS Sengl and Wildlife Disease Biologist (WDB) Zack Bowers immediately responded to the complaint and placed out trail snares and leghold traps. On March 19th, upon an early morning trap inspection, they removed two coyotes by methods of trail snaring and leghold trapping. ADS Sengl and WDB Bowers will continue to protect the airport.

On March 25th, Pilot Amundsen and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted aerial operations on the Washoe County Mule Deer Project (hunt unit 014). The aerial crew flew around the protection area, but no coyotes were found. It's not very often that the plane gets skunked, but once in a great while it happens. The factor that may have also contributed to the lack of coyote presence during aerial operations is that WS Miller has hundreds of coyote snares out and it's tough to find a coyote around the protection area. The aerial crew is scheduled to fly the area again next week and WS Miller will continue to protect mule deer in this area.

On March 27th, Pilot Amundsen and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations around a sheep producer in Lyon County. The sheep producer reported that coyotes could be heard howling everywhere around the lamb bands. The aerial crew flew around the lamb bands and removed one coyote. No livestock losses have been reported and WS Frank Homan has been trapping all around the

lambing area. WS Homan has been protecting this lambing area for 30 years.

On March 31st, Pilot Amundsen and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning aerial operation around several lamb bands in Lander County. During the flight a total of five coyotes were removed. WS George Hansen provided ground support during the aerial operations.

Throughout the Month of March, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Luke Barto continued to monitor equipment set for the capture of depredating coyotes at two local resorts. The work was prompted by recent brazen coyote activity in close proximity to several densely populated areas, presenting a human health and safety issue. WS Barto's dedicated effort resulted in the removal of 6 large adult coyotes from the above mentioned resorts. Removing conflicting coyotes from urban areas is often very difficult and time intensive due to the urban dynamic (e.g. human/pet activity, construction, etc.). WS Barto also followed up with technical assistance to reduce the chance that these resorts, local residents, and other residential neighborhoods will unintentionally promote brazen coyote behavior.



Backyard coyote.

WS Barto also removed 52 desert cottontail rabbits from one of the above mentioned resorts. The removal of desert cottontail rabbits aids in the protection of the expensive bent grass and shrubs throughout the resort and golf course.

Developing Methods

Nothing to Report.

Valuing and Investing in People

Nothing to Report.

Information and Communication

On March 19th, DS Spencer and ADS Sengl presented an annual report to the N-3 grazing board in Yerington. Grazing boards in Nevada provide some funding for the aerial crews that fly in various grazing districts. Unfortunately the grazing boards have seen a decrease in the amounts of money they receive in the past year with less livestock grazing on public lands.

Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report.

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

By Presidential proclamation, we recognize March as being national Women’s History Month for their many accomplishments.

Future Meetings and Events

Nothing to Report.



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Wildlife Services



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