

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2012

California



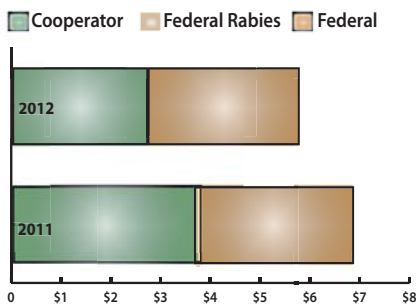
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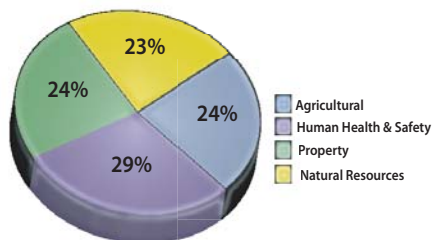
Major Cooperators

- County Departments of Agriculture
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- California Department of Water Resources
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Department of Defense (Navy, Marines, Air Force)
- California Department of Public Health
- Civil and Military Airports

Total Funding (Millions)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in California

Every day, the Wildlife Services (WS) program in California helps citizens, organizations, industries, and Government agencies resolve conflicts with wildlife to protect agriculture, other property, and natural resources, and to safeguard human health and safety. WS' professional wildlife biologists and specialists implement effective, selective, and responsible strategies that value wildlife, the environment, and the resources being protected. WS manages wildlife damage according to its public trust stewardship responsibilities as a Federal natural resource management program. WS supports the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, based on the principle that wildlife resources are owned collectively and held in trust by Government for the benefit of present and future generations.

WS works to protect property and reduce human health and safety risks at airports, homes, and along roadways. The program also protects people, pets, and livestock from wildlife-borne diseases, guards many natural resources, such as timber, from wildlife damage and educates the public about wildlife and wildlife damage management. Annually, WS protects over \$5.1 billion in resources in California. As California's population continues to grow and encroach on wildlife habitat, residents will have increasing interactions, both positive and negative, with wildlife.

Applying Science and Expertise to Help the Public

WS frequently provides information, advice, equipment, and materials that enable people to resolve wildlife conflicts on their own. During 2012, WS delivered technical advice and recommendations to more than 1.6 million people.

In most cases, landowners and resource managers use technical information to implement habitat management and other methods to reduce damage on their properties.

WS also implements solutions on-site, through direct management assistance, when the wildlife-related problem is complex and cannot be safely or effectively resolved by others. WS' National Wildlife Research Center conducts scientific research and assessments to refine methods and develop new science-based solutions to wildlife challenges.

WS applies and recommends an integrated wildlife damage management approach that incorporates biological, economic, public, environmental, and other information into decision making.

Protecting Resources in Urban Settings—Numerous species of wild animals inhabit cities and suburbs throughout California. Striped skunks, coyotes, opossums, and raccoons commonly forage in backyards and seek shelter under porches and buildings or in attics, causing substantial damage to the structures. In addition, these animals potentially carry diseases and may leave offensive odors that render the structure temporarily uninhabitable. WS-California wildlife specialists responded to over 14,000 requests to investigate and resolve wildlife damage to urban/suburban property in 2012.

Protecting Agricultural Resources—California is the number one State in the nation for agriculture production (estimated at \$43.5 billion). WS-California protects over \$600 million in livestock resources annually. The most recent reports by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) for cattle (2011) and sheep and goat (2010) indicate predation on nearly 647 thousand head of livestock annually, resulting in combined losses of nearly \$138 million. Approximately 75 percent of WS-California's cooperative agreements are with small farmers and ranchers. A NASS survey of California producers found a loss of 9,600 cattle valued at more than \$4.1 million (2010). A similar NASS study in 2012 found that producer losses in California were estimated at 13,800 sheep, valued at \$1.39 million.



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

In addition to the many factors that cause economic hardships for livestock producers, predators such as coyotes, bears, and mountain lions cause additional and sometimes significant losses by attacking sheep, cattle, and goats. These losses could be two to three times higher without effective livestock protection. WS' National Wildlife Research Center is continually working to develop improved methods to enhance selectivity.

Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports—Wildlife strikes cause more than 760,000 hours of aircraft down time and cost the nation's civil aviation industry approximately \$700 million annually. American military aircraft sustain losses exceeding \$10 million annually. WS has assisted the Nation's airports for decades and collaborates closely with the Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Defense, and other Government agencies.

California, with nine percent of the Nation's busiest airports, transports more than 180 million passengers annually. California's airports are located within the busiest migratory bird corridor in North America. WS-California provided assistance to 43 airports in 2012, including technical assistance, training, and direct operational management.

Protecting Threatened and Endangered Species—California has 309 Federally listed threatened and endangered (T&E) species. WS-California protects T&E resources valued at over \$600 million dollars annually. Feral cats, red fox, raccoons, coyotes, skunks, and raptors can negatively affect these listed species. WS-California biologists and specialists worked on 45 projects to protect T&E species in FY2012. These species included the western snowy plover, California least tern, clapper rails, and desert tortoise. WS-California worked in cooperation with Department of Defense, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to protect these species.

Monitoring and Controlling Wildlife Diseases—WS-California has taken a lead role in monitoring for wildlife diseases that pose threats to humans, other wildlife, domestic pets, and livestock. WS-California employed in 39 of the State's 58 counties, collected over 6,200 wildlife disease samples in 2012. Disease surveillance activities include African swine fever, avian influenza, classical swine fever, chronic wasting disease, *E. coli*, foot and mouth disease, hepatitis, infectious bursal disease, plague, rabies, salmonella, swine influenza, swine brucellosis, toxoplasmosis, and tularemia. Cooperating agencies included California Departments of Food and Agriculture, Public Health, and Fish and Game, as well as USDA/APHIS Veterinary Services, Centers for Disease Control, and the Food and Drug Administration.

Responding to Emergencies—WS has a long history of responding to emergency requests for assistance from farmers, ranchers, and others. Increasingly, WS is asked to assist in responding to natural and manmade disasters such as hurricanes, floods, and oil spills. On emergency response teams, WS expertise has been instrumental in recovering wild and domestic animals, hazing wildlife away from contaminated areas, and conducting wildlife disease surveillance and emergency control. WS' National Wildlife Disease Program biologists have extensive training in the Incident Command System, and can be mobilized within 24 to 48 hours of a request.

Looking to the Future

WS continues to provide the citizens of California with safe, effective, and responsible management assistance for a variety of wildlife damage problems. The potential for human-wildlife conflicts likely will increase and WS' ability to respond will depend on

the availability of personnel and resources, as well as legislative authorities to support these activities.

WS-California is receiving increasing numbers of requests for assistance with problems associated with wildlife at airports, coyotes in urban/suburban areas, wildlife diseases, beaver, and waterfowl.

Protecting public and food safety is a major concern for State wildlife managers, producers, and public health officials. Food safety is a critical aspect of WS work in California. Annually, WS protects field crops, fruits and nuts, livestock, and rangeland from damage caused by wildlife. WS-California will continue to answer public safety calls and remain involved in protecting people from large predators such as coyotes, black bears, and mountain lions. Annually, WS-California personnel respond to over 6,500 requests for assistance (non-airport) where public health and safety was being threatened by wildlife.

Increased travel through California's airports, coupled with a growth in the population of many bird species, has created a greater need for airport managers to manage threats posed by wildlife. In addition, WS will continue to work with universities, and other Federal and State agencies throughout California.

WS strives to meet the demands for assistance within the constraints of its existing resources and capabilities so that all citizens have access to program services. Collaborative, partner-based approaches will be increasingly important among natural resource, agriculture, and health agencies to meet public needs.

Wildlife Services Funding in California

In addition to receiving Federally allocated funds, WS also receives funding from program beneficiaries such as agricultural producers, airports, individual citizens, businesses, organizations, and other Federal, State, and local Government agencies. See charts for sources of funding and resources protected.

Top 5 Major WS Assistance Activities in California

- Protecting sheep, cattle, goats, and poultry from predation
- Protecting public safety against attacks and threats by mountain lions, black bears, coyotes, and other wildlife
- Protecting passengers and aircraft from collisions with wildlife
- Protecting Federal and State listed threatened and endangered species
- Protecting food safety and public health through monitoring for wildlife diseases

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to California

- Managing predators through new methods to protect livestock and wildlife
- Identifying and optimizing prevention and control strategies against the spread of viral pathogens within feral swine populations
- Estimating the costs and benefits of WS feral swine damage management
- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Wildlife disease monitoring (swine brucellosis, pseudorabies, avian influenza, plague, West Nile virus, rabies)