

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2015

Nevada

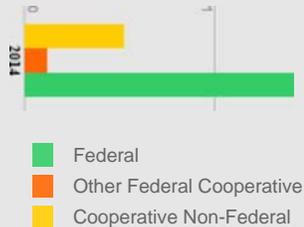


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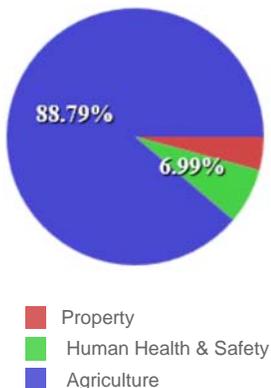
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Total Funding (\$ Million)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Nevada

Every day, the Wildlife Services (WS) program in Nevada 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. The program 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-Nevada works in cooperation with the Nevada Department of Agriculture's Division of Animal Industry and in close collaboration with the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW).

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. Often, this technical assistance can be provided in person, by telephone or through the mail or internet. During 2014, 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. In Nevada, WS provides information to assist the urban public use nonlethal methods to reduce negative interaction with coyotes, mountain lions, raccoons, skunks, and ground squirrels. The livestock and farming communities typically receive guidance to reduce loss to predation through methods such as temporary exclusion, guard dogs, herders, benching sheep, harassment, and shed-lambing.

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.

Protecting Crops and Other Agricultural Resources — Agricultural landscapes provide abundant wildlife habitat. WS assists farmers and ranchers throughout the United States to protect crops and other agricultural resources and facilities from damage caused by waterfowl, deer, wild turkeys, gulls, black bears, and other species.

Protecting Livestock from Predation — Despite producers' best efforts to protect their livestock, thousands of domesticated farm animals are killed by predators each year. The most recent reports by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) for cattle (2011) and sheep and goat (2010) indicate predation on more than 647 thousand head of livestock annually, resulting in combined losses of nearly \$138 million. Producers often turn to WS for assistance in reducing and preventing further predation. The integrated approach implemented by WS includes recommendations that are applied by the producers and, in many cases, operational wildlife management implemented by WS.

Nevada's sheep industry is ranked 24th nationally. Most Nevada sheep are grazed on the open range, without pens, sheds, and fences, increasing their vulnerability to predation. Predators are the leading cause of sheep industry losses, more than disease or weather. Research suggests that losses to predation would be two to three times higher without livestock protection.

By working with producers, land managers, and State agencies, WS-Nevada tries to stop or minimize livestock losses with minimal impact on the environment. When losses are confirmed and predicted to continue without action, WS removes mountain lions and coyotes, the most significant predator of sheep and calves.

WS' National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) conducts research and methods development to reduce and prevent wildlife predation on sheep and cattle. Studies are underway to develop more effective, less injurious coyote capture systems, and improved electronic frightening devices.

Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports Wildlife strikes cause more than 590,000 hours of aircraft down time and cost the nation's civil aviation industry approximately \$937 million annually. WS provided assistance to 839 airports in 2014, including advice, training, on-site evaluations and assessments of wildlife hazards, and direct operational management to reduce wildlife strikes.



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Due to Nevada's limited water and vegetation, waterfowl concentrate in urban areas. These Canada geese, mallards, and coots travel daily between food and water sources, frequently over airports or air travel corridors, increasing the threat of wildlife/aircraft collisions. In cooperation with the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and NDOW, WS-Nevada conducts an annual program to remove and translocate Canada geese and reduce hazards to aircraft.

Protecting Threatened and Endangered Species and Other Natural Resources — WS contributes to the conservation of species listed as threatened and endangered (T&E) through partnerships with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), State wildlife agencies, organizations, and landowners. During 2014, WS safeguarded populations of 162 T&E species nationwide.

Environmental changes, predation, or competition can disrupt normal predator-prey relationships. Nevada's sparse mule deer populations are not increasing rapidly enough to sustain population levels. Where herds are suffering excessive fawn predation, WS works with NDOW to increase survival through selective coyote removal. Predation has severely limited restoration of wildlife such as bighorn sheep. WS responded to requests from State and Federal wildlife agencies to protect sage-grouse, antelope, and bighorn sheep.

Monitoring and Controlling Wildlife Diseases — WS works with Federal and State wildlife, health, and agriculture agencies to monitor and conduct surveillance for diseases in wildlife that could impact agriculture or human health. The program's Wildlife Disease Biologists act as WS' first responders through the National Wildlife Disease Program's Surveillance and Emergency Response System (SERS). Information obtained through disease surveillance in wildlife populations enables agencies to better prepare for and respond to outbreaks and emergencies.

Sylvatic plague occurs in Nevada's wild rodent populations. Federal lands open to public use comprise 87% of Nevada's acreage, making plague in rodents of critical interest to State and county health departments. In cooperation with health departments and the State agriculture Animal Testing Laboratory, WS routinely samples blood from predators during routine wildlife damage management to test for plague. Test results are provided to medical facilities throughout the State. As requested, WS also monitors for tularemia and avian influenza.

Protecting Nevada from Invasive Species — Nonnative species that cause harm are collectively known as invasive species. Invasive species may prey upon, displace, or otherwise harm native species. Some also alter ecosystems, transport disease, interfere with crop production, or cause illnesses in animals and humans. Executive Order 13112 establishes Federal leadership responsibilities regarding invasive species. WS-Nevada manages invasive species in partnership with other agencies to protect crops and property from European starlings.

Reducing the Negative Impacts of Feral Swine — Feral swine, an invasive species, are prolific breeders and thrive in rural, suburban, and urban habitats. By 2012, their populations had expanded to at least 38 States, numbering approximately 5 million animals. This expanding population and distribution is associated with property damage and negative effects on public health, domestic animal health, crop production, and natural resources. Currently, the total aggregate cost of damage is estimated to be \$1.5 billion annually, with at least \$800 million related to direct costs to agriculture.

Nevada classifies feral swine as estray livestock, managed by the Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA). WS works with NDA to help resolve many feral swine damage problems. Nevada's open arid country limits feral swine to small populations associated with water corridors.

Looking to the Future

WS continues to provide the citizens of Nevada 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.

In Nevada, WS is receiving increasing requests for assistance with feral swine, wildlife at airports, coyotes in urban/suburban areas, blackbirds and starlings, and waterfowl. As the human population increases, negative wildlife interactions in urban/suburban areas are projected to increase, particularly with species accustomed to living and thriving around people, such as coyotes, raccoons, blackbirds, starlings, and waterfowl.

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 Nevada

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 Nevada

- Protecting livestock from predation
- Reducing excessive predator and nest raiding damage to natural resources
- Protecting public health & safety and property from wildlife in urban areas
- Protecting property, crops, and livestock from bird damage
- Assessing and reducing wildlife hazards at airports

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Nevada

- Developing new methods to protect livestock and wildlife from predation
- Quantifying and assessing the damage caused by badgers, coyotes, and ravens to sage-grouse
- Evaluating the effectiveness of wildlife damage management to reduce badger, coyote, and raven damage to sage-grouse
- Develop methods to reduce wildlife hazards to aviation
- Developing more accurate carnivore population estimation models

Major Cooperators:

- Nevada Department of Agriculture
- Nevada Department of Wildlife
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- U.S. Forest Service
- Nevada BLM Grazing Boards