

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2012

Kentucky



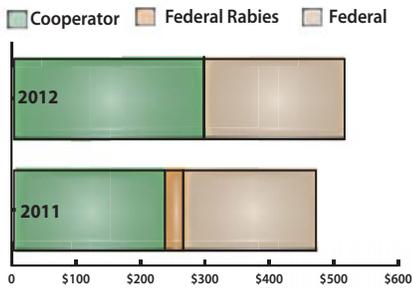
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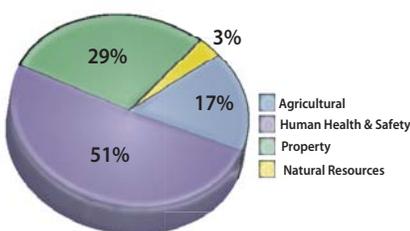
Major Cooperators

- Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources
- Louisville Regional Airport Authority
- Kenton County Airport Authority
- Toyota
- Tennessee Valley Authority
- Louisville Gas & Electric

Total Funding (Thousands)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Kentucky

Every day, the Wildlife Services (WS) program in Kentucky 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.

Kentucky is home to a diverse mix of landscapes, industries, and wildlife. As such, WS-Kentucky provides assistance in managing a diversity of wildlife related problems to many demographics across the State. As Kentucky's human population grows, conflicts with wildlife have also increased. WS-Kentucky partners with many other public agencies and institutions in order to provide wildlife damage management services that protect the agricultural and natural resources, property, and health of all Kentuckians. WS-Kentucky biologists manage numerous migratory bird issues, primarily Canada geese, black and turkey vultures, and blackbirds to protect property and human health and safety throughout Kentucky. Additionally, WS-Kentucky personnel address wildlife threats to aviation safety, provide assistance to livestock producers and landowners with migratory bird issues, and manage beaver damage to protect Kentucky's agricultural and timber resources.

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. WS implements a wide range of damage management activities. The following highlight WS' role in protecting resources in Kentucky.

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.

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. WS provided assistance to 772 airports in 2012, 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

More than 3,100 wildlife strikes occurred at Kentucky airports since 1990 according to the Federal Aviation Administration National Strike Database maintained by WS to monitor trends and wildlife species threatening aviation safety. WS-Kentucky biologists work with Kentucky's airports throughout the State to manage wildlife hazards to aircraft and human safety. Airport assistance ranges from technical assistance to WS staff stationed at the airport providing direct management assistance. WS biologists monitor the airfield for wildlife activity, mitigate threats, train airport personnel, and make recommendations to airports to reduce threats to aviation safety.

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. Information obtained through disease surveillance in wildlife populations enables agencies to better prepare for and respond to outbreaks and emergencies.

Protecting Kentucky 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: to prevent the introduction of invasive species and to provide for their eradication or control to minimize the economic, ecological, and human health impacts.

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 five 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.

WS-Kentucky partners with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources and several other cooperating agencies to proactively manage feral swine through a combination of techniques including outreach and cost share efforts. WS-Kentucky activities lead to better information regarding swine densities, numbers, ranges, and population reduction. These projects utilize integrated methods that focus on technical assistance and operational management.

Protecting Multiple Resources from Beaver Damage—Beaver historically have been a valuable economic and natural resource. During the past 20 years their populations have increased throughout the United States due to lower demand for beaver products and subsequent decreases in recreational trapping. This growth has positive effects, such as increased wetland habitat, as well as negative impacts from dam building and tree cutting. Beaver dams back up water that floods and kills valuable timber and destroys or damages cropland, roadways, sewer and septic systems, and water treatment and electric utilities. Dams may also negatively impact fish populations by changing the movement and temperature of stream water. Beaver cut down trees that are valued for timber production and landscaping.

Looking to the Future

WS continues to provide the citizens of Kentucky 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-Kentucky is receiving increasing numbers of requests for assistance with problems associated with feral swine, wildlife at airports, coyotes in urban/suburban areas, wildlife diseases, blackbirds and starlings, black and turkey vultures, beaver, waterfowl, and invasive species. Increased populations of wildlife combined with greater urbanization and expansion into formerly rural areas has led to the increase in wildlife conflicts with people.

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 Kentucky

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 Kentucky

- Reducing Canada goose, blackbird, pigeon and waterfowl damage to property, utilities and industrial structures
- Protecting bridges, roads, timber, crops, property, and natural resources from beaver damage
- Assessing and reducing wildlife hazards at airports
- Protecting public safety from Canada geese, waterfowl, European starlings, and vultures
- Assessing and reducing public health threats

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Kentucky

- Developing tools/methods to reduce feral swine damage to agricultural and natural resources
- Quantifying and assessing the damage caused by beaver, vultures, Canada geese, blackbirds, and feral pigeons to utility structures, property, aviation and human safety
- Evaluating the effectiveness of wildlife damage management to reduce multiple species damage to aviation safety
- Evaluating and monitoring raccoons, coyotes, skunks, and foxes for rabies and distemper
- Investigating the biology/ecology/behavior of Canada geese, vultures, and blackbirds