

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2012

Maine



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Major Cooperators

- Cities of Lewiston and Auburn
- Maine Department of Transportation
- Timber management companies

USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Maine

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

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 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-Maine provides technical assistance for a variety of wildlife species including gulls, Canada geese, crows, wild turkeys, white-tailed deer, and beaver.

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.

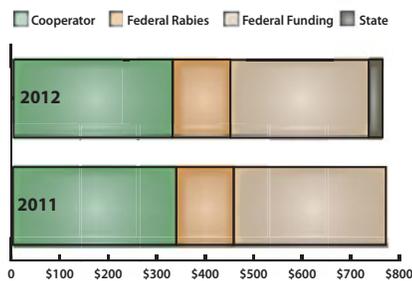
WS applies and recommends an integrated wildlife damage management approach that incorporates biological, economic, public, environmental and other information into decision making. WS implements a wide range of damage management activities. The following highlight WS' role in protecting resources in Maine.

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. WS-Maine personnel typically cooperate with agricultural producers to reduce bird damage to crops, livestock feed, and infrastructure.

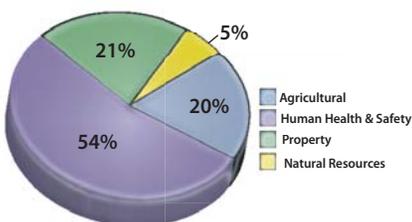
Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports—Globally, wildlife strikes with aircraft have killed more than 231 people and destroyed more than 220 aircraft since 1988. Wildlife strikes cause more than 760,000 hours of aircraft down time and cost the nation's civil aviation industry approximately \$700 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.

WS-Maine provides wildlife hazard management training to airport staff to enhance airport safety. When requested, WS-Maine provides technical and operational assistance to airports, including Wildlife Hazard Assessments, Wildlife Hazard Management Plans, and direct management of wildlife which pose a strike threat to aircraft.

Total Funding (Thousands)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

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 2012, WS safeguarded populations of 168 T&E species nationwide by reducing the impacts of predation and competition from more abundant species, consulting with the FWS to ensure that WS programs do not jeopardize listed species, and developing and sharing information that contributed to conservation of listed species.

WS-Maine cooperates with Federal, State, and local Governments and interested organizations to protect piping plovers and least terns from avian and mammalian predators. Prior to WS-Maine involvement, recruitment was below recovery goals and predation appeared to be a primary driver for the decline. WS-Maine manages predation during the nesting season when these birds are most vulnerable resulting in increased productivity that exceeds recovery goals in most cases.

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 People and Animals from Rabies—Rabies poses a serious threat to public and animal health. Although human deaths from rabies are rare, the estimated public health costs associated with rabies detection, prevention, and control nationally exceed \$300 million annually. WS coordinates cooperative oral rabies vaccination (ORV) programs in the United States with the goal of controlling and eventually eliminating certain rabies variants to protect human and animal health and reduce associated costs. This management program is one of the largest coordinated efforts to control a disease in wildlife populations ever undertaken in North America. Since 1992, ORV operations have distributed more than 138 million vaccine baits by air and ground across 19 States preventing the further spread of rabies variants.

WS-Maine's rabies management program is intended to not only reduce the incidence of rabies locally, but prevent the disease from entering the Canadian provinces of Quebec and New Brunswick. WS-Maine works with State, Federal, and international partners to conduct surveillance and distribute oral rabies vaccines to manage the raccoon variant of rabies within Maine and beyond.

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. Beavers cut down trees that are valued for timber production and landscaping.

The Maine Cooperative Beaver Management Program provides assistance for landowners who want to manage beaver damage such as flooding timber, roads, bridges and property. Under this program, WS-Maine provides direct assistance at more than 1,000 sites each year, while providing a benefit to cost savings of nearly 9.5 to one.

Looking to the Future

WS continues to provide the citizens of Maine 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-Maine is receiving increasing numbers of requests for assistance with problems associated with gulls, crows, wild turkeys, beaver, and European starlings. Crows have increasingly begun to roost in urban and suburban settings creating a significant nuisance to local residents from accumulation of fecal material. Additionally, European starlings are invading farms and consuming or contaminating cattle feed. Wild turkeys are often seen around farms as well and cause damage to silage, blueberries, and crops.

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 Maine

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 Maine

- Protecting bridges, roads, timber, crops, and natural resources from beaver damage
- Assessing and reducing wildlife hazards at airports
- Conserving threatened and endangered species
- Protecting public safety from wildlife
- Protecting the public, domestic pets, and livestock from rabies

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Maine

- Developing tools/methods to reduce gull use of drinking water sources
- Quantifying and assessing the damage caused by wild turkeys to silage, blueberries, and other resources
- Evaluating the effectiveness of wildlife damage management methods to reduce beaver damage to infrastructure
- Evaluating and monitoring wildlife for diseases
- Investigating the biology, ecology, and behavior of predators around nesting shore birds