

# Wildlife Services

Protecting People  
Protecting Agriculture  
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2012

# Maryland-D.C.



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## USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Maryland

Every day, the Wildlife Services (WS) program in Maryland helps citizens, organizations, industries, and Government agencies resolve conflicts with wildlife to protect agriculture, 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 Federal natural resource managers. 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.

## Major Cooperators

- Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Maryland Aviation Administration
- Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport
- Martin State Airport
- NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center
- National Park Service

WS-Maryland protects people, agriculture, natural resources, and property from damage caused by deer, migratory birds, and from wildlife-borne diseases. WS-Maryland partners with state agencies to assist in reducing damage caused by deer on Federal, State, and local government facilities.

## 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.

WS-Maryland teamed up with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to provide professional guidance to citizens who have concerns and problems with wildlife through a toll-free Nuisance Wildlife Information Line (1-877-463-6497). Through this toll-free hotline, WS-Maryland provides technical assistance to thousands of callers on a one-to-one basis. WS also implements solutions on-site, through direct management assistance. This occurs when WS is asked to resolve damage for people.

WS applies and recommends an integrated wildlife damage management approach that incorporates biological, economic, public, environmental, and other information into decisions made. WS' National Wildlife Research Center conducts scientific research and assessments to refine methods and develop new science-based solutions to wildlife challenges.

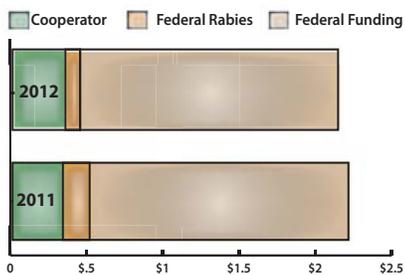
**Protecting Crops and Other Agricultural Resources**—WS assists farmers and ranchers with protecting crops and other agricultural resources from damage caused by waterfowl, deer, wild turkeys, gulls, and other animal species.

With nearly 400,000 Canada geese migrating through Maryland each year, and as many as 93,000 Canada geese that call Maryland home year-round, many of Maryland's farmers and waterfront property owners experience problems with these birds. Since 1997, WS has provided technical assistance for more than 600 goose-related problems and more than 200 requests for vulture-related assistance annually.

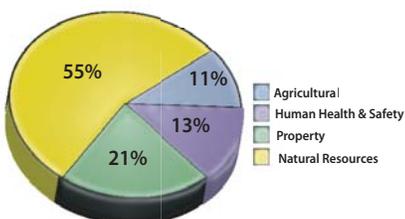
**Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports**—Wildlife strikes cause more than 760,000 hours of aircraft down time and cost the nation's civil aviation industry approximately \$700 million annually. American military aircraft sustain losses exceeding \$10 million annually. WS has assisted airports across the nation for decades and collaborates closely with the Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Defense, and other government agencies. WS provided assistance to 772 airports in the United States during 2012, including advice, training, on-site evaluations and assessments of wildlife hazards, and direct operational management to reduce wildlife strikes.

Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI), the nation's second fastest growing airport, reported 837 wildlife/aircraft strikes from 1990 to 2007. WS-

## Total Funding (Millions)



## Resources Protected % of Total Funds



United States Department of Agriculture  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Maryland has two wildlife biologist stationed at BWI assisting with projects and research aimed at minimizing wildlife hazards. The presence of WS-Maryland at BWI has helped to increase awareness of wildlife hazards and reduce the threat of wildlife collisions with commercial aircraft.

Since 1999, WS-Maryland has provided technical assistance to five Maryland airports and one airbase through consultations or by conducting wildlife hazard assessments. WS-Maryland also provides training to airport personnel to help lower the risk of wildlife/aircraft collisions. Currently, WS-Maryland is helping the Maryland Aviation Administration implement comprehensive wildlife hazard management plans for three airports.

**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 affect agriculture or human health. WS' Wildlife Disease Biologists act as 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. 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.

From 2001 through 2011, WS-Maryland joined the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Anne Arundel County Department of Health in their efforts to control the raccoon rabies variant in the county using oral vaccines. More than 80,000 ORV baits were dropped each September from helicopters, vehicles, and by hand throughout the county to vaccinate raccoons. With discontinuation of baiting support in 2012, WS will continue surveillance to assess the impact of baiting and the effects of discontinuance of support.

**Protecting Maryland 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.

Since 2002, WS has partnered with the FWS and DNR to protect wetlands along the Chesapeake Bay from damage caused by nutria, an invasive mammal that has proliferated along the bay, damaging both wetlands and agriculture. The abundance of this large rodent, coupled with rising sea levels, is resulting in the large-scale conversion of emergent marsh to open water. WS-Maryland is testing nutria removal strategies to determine if nutria can be eradicated from the bay.

**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' employees use their specialized skills to capture and safely handle almost any wildlife species found in the United States. 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 24-48 hours of a request.

### Looking to the Future

WS continues to provide the citizens of Maryland and the District of Columbia 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.

The growth in air travel along with increases in deer and bird populations has created a greater need for wildlife management at airports to reduce threats posed by wildlife. A public health issue facing Maryland is the growing need to protect people, pets, and livestock from wildlife-borne diseases. Rabies, West Nile virus, chronic wasting disease, and avian influenza are major health concerns on the East Coast.

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 Maryland

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 Assistance Activities in Maryland and the District of Columbia

- Providing technical assistance and wildlife education to the public, particularly in urban areas
- Reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Protecting natural resources and reducing nutria damage to the Chesapeake Bay
- Managing problems caused by Canada geese, white-tail deer, and vultures
- Assessing and reducing public health threats by monitoring for West Nile virus

### Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Maryland and the District of Columbia

- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Developing tools/methods to reduce vulture damage
- Evaluating waterfowl as disease, parasite, and noxious weed reservoirs
- Improving assessment, sampling, and economic methods for wildlife damage management
- Developing tools/methods to reduce goose damage