

# Wildlife Services

Protecting People  
Protecting Agriculture  
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2012

# Michigan



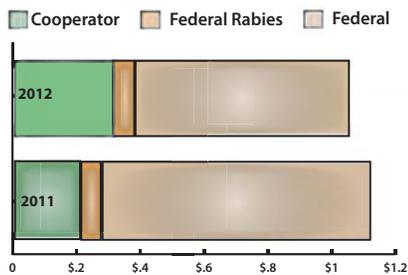
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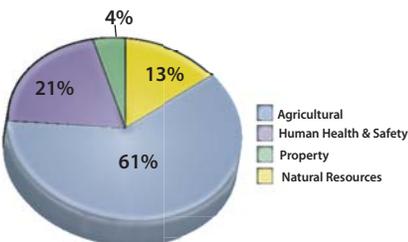
## Major Cooperators

- Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- Michigan Department of Community Health
- USDA-APHIS-Veterinary Services
- Detroit Metro Airport
- Other regional and international airports
- Private utility companies
- Major industrial firms

## Total Funding (Millions)



## Resources Protected % of Total Funds



## USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Michigan

Every day, the Wildlife Services (WS) program in Michigan helps citizens, organizations, industries, and Government agencies resolve conflicts with wildlife to protect agriculture, property and natural resources, and to safeguard the health and safety of people. 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 agency. WS supports the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, based on the principle that wildlife is owned collectively and held in trust by Government for the benefit of present and future generations.

WS-Michigan works to reduce wildlife hazards to aviation, reduce threats from invasive species, resolve starling damage at dairies, halt the spread of bovine tuberculosis (TB), and protect the health of people at industrial 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 across the country.

WS-Michigan also implements solutions on-site through direct management assistance. Direct management assistance occurs when WS is asked to resolve damage for people.

WS-Michigan 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, Livestock, and Other Agricultural Resources**—Agricultural landscapes provide abundant wildlife habitat for some species. WS assists farmers and ranchers throughout the United States to protect crops and other agricultural resources and facilities from damage caused by waterfowl, deer, birds, and other animal species.

Despite producers' best efforts to protect their livestock, thousands of domesticated farm animals are killed by predators each year. 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.

In the winter, starlings congregate at dairies and feedlots for food and shelter, sometimes in very large numbers. Damage occurs as the starlings consume and contaminate cattle feed, which in turn can reduce milk production. Starlings may also contribute to the spread of salmonella. WS-Michigan conducts a starling damage management program that is effective, selective, and environmentally safe. This successful program has expanded over the past 15 years as producers call on WS-Michigan for assistance.

In the past decade, wolf populations have expanded across the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The population is currently estimated at 700 wolves. As wolf numbers increase, conflicts between livestock producers and wolves will also likely increase. A cooperative program between WS and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources provides prompt and effective responses to incidents of wolf depredation on livestock, which is critical to the successful coexistence of people and wolves. WS-Michigan investigates suspected wolf predation incidents and determines whether wolves were involved. If a link is established, WS-Michigan takes appropriate action. WS-Michigan also traps wolves to be radio-



United States Department of Agriculture  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

collared and assists with establishing an accurate State wolf count. When appropriate and approved by State wolf program managers, WS-Michigan has removed wolves to reduce safety risks to people.

**Protecting the Safety of People 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 collaborated with the Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Defense, and other Government agencies in providing assistance to 772 airports in the United States during 2012, including on-site assessments of wildlife hazards and direct operational management to reduce wildlife strikes.

WS-Michigan provides assistance to approximately 40 civilian and military airports in Michigan primarily by providing technical assistance, information on management alternatives, and training. Since 2001, WS has conducted wildlife hazard assessments at 21 Michigan airports.

**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 and consulted with the FWS to ensure that WS' programs do not jeopardize listed species.

Double-crested cormorant populations have increased dramatically in the Great Lakes in the last 25 years, in some cases resulting in unacceptably high levels of damage to public resources, including sport fish. Since 2004, WS in Michigan has partnered with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and several Tribes to successfully manage cormorants at many sites.

**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 the health of people. Information obtained through disease surveillance in wildlife populations enables agencies to better prepare for and respond to outbreaks and emergencies.

Bovine TB is a disease that can be transmitted to cattle, bison, goats, and cervids, such as hooved deer and elk. Bovine TB has made a serious economic impact on the State's livestock industry. Michigan lost its bovine TB-free status after the disease was detected in the State's cattle and free-ranging deer. The projected impact of bovine TB on agricultural producers in Michigan has been estimated at \$121 million over 10 years.

WS-Michigan assists livestock producers as part of an interagency team that developed a plan to reduce the risks of wildlife transmission of diseases to livestock from wildlife. WS assists in epidemiological investigations on TB-positive farms and removes deer on request from farms in the TB zone to reduce potential transmission to cattle. WS' National Wildlife Research Center is investigating livestock-deer interaction. WS' scientists are also researching ways to detect bovine TB in wildlife and improve barriers between livestock and deer.

**Protecting Michigan from Invasive Species including Feral Swine**—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, adversely affect native species, transport disease, cause property damage, interfere with crop production, or cause illnesses in animals and people.

Invasive species, such as mute swans and feral swine, threaten agricultural and natural resources in Michigan. WS-Michigan is actively involved with many stakeholders to address those threats by gathering baseline data, providing technical advice, and conducting management actions.

**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. WS' expertise has been instrumental in recovering wild and domestic animals and hazing wildlife away from contaminated areas. Recently, WS-Michigan responded to a local oil spill in the State by recovering oiled wildlife.

### Looking to the Future

WS continues to provide the citizens of Michigan with safe, effective, and responsible management assistance for a variety of wildlife problems. The potential for wildlife conflicts with people will likely increase and WS' ability to respond will depend on personnel and resources availability, as well as supportive legislative authorities.

In Michigan, WS is receiving an increasing number of requests for assistance with problems associated with feral swine, wolves, wildlife diseases, blackbirds and starlings, cormorants, and mute swans. Bird damage to fruit crops is also increasing.

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.

### Michigan Wildlife Services Funding

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, Michigan, and local Government agencies. See charts for sources of funding and resources protected.

### Top 5 Major Assistance Activities in Michigan

- Reducing starling damage at dairies and feedlots
- Assessing and reducing wildlife hazards at airports
- Reducing cormorant damage to natural resources
- Managing conflicts between wolves, people, and livestock
- Assisting federal and State agencies in eradicating bovine TB

### Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Michigan

- Developing methods to reduce predator damage to livestock and wildlife
- Quantifying and assessing blackbird damage at feedlots
- Reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Investigating wildlife vectors of rabies and bovine TB
- Quantifying and developing methods to reduce bird damage to fruit crops