

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2012

New Mexico



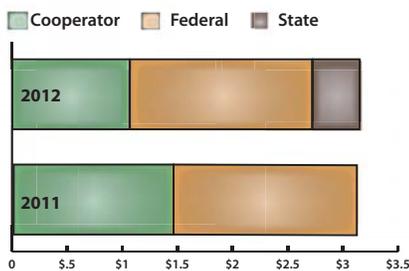
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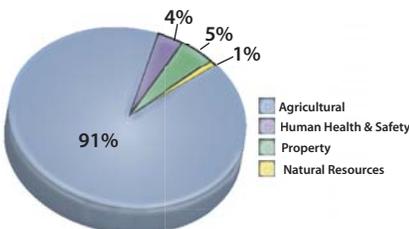
Major Cooperators

- New Mexico Department of Agriculture
- New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
- New Mexico State Land Office
- Bureau of Land Management
- New Mexico Department of Transportation
- Mescalero Apache Indian Reservation
- New Mexico Department of Health
- Taos Soil and Water Conservation District
- 28 County Governments
- Bureau of Reclamation
- New Mexico Cattle Growers Association
- New Mexico Wool Growers Association

Total Funding (Millions)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in New Mexico

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

In 2011, New Mexico agriculture generated more than \$4.1 billion in annual sales from farm and ranch commodities. Livestock production – primarily cattle, sheep, hogs, dairy, and poultry– accounted for about 80% of total farm commodity cash receipts. Livestock, a primary agricultural industry sector, reported \$3.3 billion in total cash value from all livestock products sales in 2011. Cattle and sheep production leads the State's agriculture industry production. In 2011, New Mexico livestock inventories included 1,390,000 cattle and calves, 110,000 sheep and lambs, and 11,500 goats.

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. In New Mexico, WS employees provide information regarding urban and suburban coyotes, sanitation and health issues caused by birds and bats, and a wide variety of nuisance wildlife to people who call. Many of these situations are resolved with nonlethal methods implemented by resource owners.

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 applies and recommends an integrated wildlife damage management approach that incorporates biological, economic, public, environmental, and other information into decision making.

Protecting Crops and Other Agricultural Resources—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 employees working in the middle Rio Grande Valley protect crops such as alfalfa, chili, and wheat from damage caused by sandhill cranes and snow geese. By implementing an integrated wildlife damage management approach that includes the use of lure crops at a wildlife refuge, harassment of birds in farm fields, and selective placement of hunters to reinforce dispersal activities, WS reduced the damage caused by approximately 30,000 sandhill cranes and 50,000 snow geese that overwinter here. Landowners became more tolerant of these valuable wildlife species through this highly successful cooperative effort among Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and WS that dramatically reduced crop damage.



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

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. In FY 2012, WS helped protect more than 382,000 head of livestock in New Mexico valued at over \$309 million. Research suggests that without predator damage management, livestock losses to predation might range from 3% for calves to 17% for lambs, suggesting WS-New Mexico prevented over \$3.9 million in predation losses in FY 2012.

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. 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. WS-New Mexico provides operational and technical assistance at the Albuquerque Sunport, Las Cruces International Airport, and others to help safeguard the flying public.

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.

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. During 2012, WS-New Mexico took more than 350 samples for disease surveillance among feral swine. Tests indicated evidence of exposure to leptospira and pseudorabies in two eastern counties and evidence of exposure to hepatitis E virus in another. Positives occurred in 8 of 11 feral swine tested for exposure to *Leptospira*. Past WS testing in feral swine revealed evidence of *Brucella suis* bacterium, *Neospora* blood parasite, and swine influenza viruses.

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.

In New Mexico, feral swine populations have spread from 2 counties 8 years ago to 17 counties today. WS-New Mexico helps landowners and public lands' managers reduce damage caused by feral swine through trapping and removal programs. During 2012, State and Federal agencies, tribes, and livestock industry representatives formed a team to identify resources and develop a plan to systematically eliminate feral swine from the State. In January 2013, USDA APHIS initiated a demonstration project that is focused on methods and efficacy of feral swine elimination in states like New Mexico, where low density feral swine populations are widely scattered.

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, 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 quickly mobilized.

Looking to the Future

WS continues to provide the citizens of New Mexico 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 New Mexico, WS is receiving increasing numbers of requests for assistance with problems associated with feral swine and coyotes in urban/suburban areas.

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 New Mexico

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 New Mexico

- Protecting livestock from predation
- Protecting agricultural crops from damage caused by sandhill cranes, geese, prairie dogs, and gophers
- Reducing impacts of invasive feral swine
- Assessing and reducing public health threats from wildlife diseases
- Protecting agricultural animals and pets from wildlife-borne diseases

Top 2 WS Research Projects of Interest to New Mexico

- Developing methods to reduce carnivore damage to livestock
- Evaluating the effectiveness of wildlife damage management to reduce feral swine damage to property and natural resources