

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2012

New York



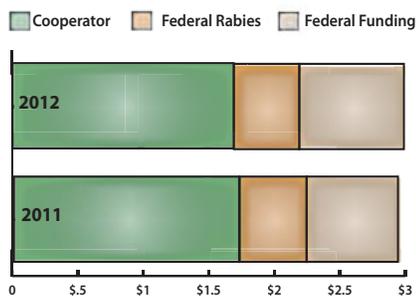
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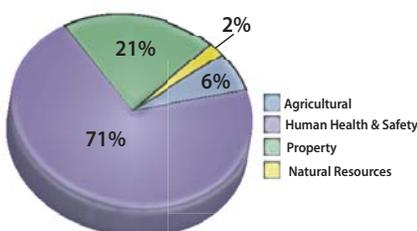
Major Cooperators

- Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
- New York City Departments of Environmental Protection, Health, Sanitation, and Parks and Recreation
- New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation, Health, and Agriculture and Markets
- Westchester County Airport
- Albany Airport
- Dairy farmers
- Cornell University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory and Cooperative Extension

Total Funding (Millions)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in New York

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

New York contains a mix of urban, suburban and rural settings. Although largely rural with agricultural and forested land, it is home to more than 19 million people. WS-New York reduces public safety risks and property damage by managing wildlife populations at and near airports; protects domestic animals from rabies; protects natural resources from invasive feral swine; and protects threatened and endangered species.

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.

WS-New York responded to nearly 500 requests for information, educational programs, site visits, and demonstration related to 43 wildlife species. Nonlethal recommendations were provided to many groups because landowners and managers are best positioned to implement habitat alteration, conduct harassment, and change animal husbandry and human behavior.

WS also implements solutions on-site, through direct management, 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.

Protecting Crops and Other Agricultural Resources—New York ranks third nationally in milk production. When overabundant starling flocks at dairies consume livestock feed, they can decrease production, increase costs, and threaten the herd's health by spreading diseases such as salmonella. To address this problem, during the winter months WS-New York's certified pesticide applicators use approved methods to reduce starling numbers in partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension and the State agriculture department.

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.

Since the 2009 emergency landing of U.S. Airways Flight 1549 in the Hudson River, WS-New York expanded management of resident Canada geese near all New York major airports in cooperation with local agencies. At LaGuardia Airport, the number of geese struck by aircraft has declined 75% since 2004 and the number of geese observed on or near the airport declined 80% since 2009.



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

In 2012 WS completed an updated Environmental Impact Statement regarding wildlife hazard management. The process allowed for removal of resident Canada geese near JFK International Airport reducing goose strikes at that airport by 50% compared to 2011.

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. WS-New York works with FWS to protect threatened breeding piping plovers and least terns on Long Island by removing predatory wildlife prior to the nesting season.

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.

WS-New York coordinated with State agencies to manage resident Canada geese to improve water quality in Great Lakes watersheds. WS evaluated 26 sites for goose damage and excessive fecal coliform bacteria levels. Geese were removed from 14 sites; this prevented 92.3 tons of fecal material from entering the Lake Ontario and Erie watersheds.

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. This management program is one of the largest coordinated efforts to control a disease in wildlife populations ever undertaken in North America.

During the past 14 years, WS work contained the spread of raccoon rabies in western New York, pushed raccoon rabies out of the Champlain Valley and St. Lawrence River Plain, and kept it from entering New York from Vermont and Quebec. WS is now working with multiple partners to conduct field trials of a new raccoon rabies vaccine.

Protecting New York 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.

WS-New York partners with Federal and State agencies to protect the Great Lakes from invasive species, especially mute swans, which compete with native swans for food and nest sites. WS-New York has saved an estimated 104 acres of wetland habitat from excessive mute swan use in the last 2 years.

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. Currently, the total aggregate cost of damage associated with feral swine is estimated to be \$1.5 billion annually, with at least \$800 million related to direct costs to agriculture.

Feral swine damage New York's natural resources, agriculture, and properties, while threatening human health and safety. WS assisted New York State agencies develop and implement a

management plan for feral swine, which involved activities on more than 35 properties, as well as education and outreach.

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. Beaver presence increases wetland habitats, but in some areas that is problematic.

In 2012, WS-New York worked with two county highway departments, along three railroad lines, and at Fort Drum to reduce flooding to roads and rails. New techniques were implemented to remove beaver dams inside road culverts and water levelers were used to resolve flooding due to beaver.

Looking to the Future

WS continues to provide the citizens of New York with safe, effective, and responsible management assistance for a variety of wildlife damage problems.

In New York, WS is receiving increasing numbers of requests for assistance with problems associated with wildlife at airports and invasive species, especially feral swine. WS will help airports and nearby properties reduce bird attractants. Requests continue for assistance regarding cormorant predation to native sport fisheries. Cooperator funding may enable projects on some lakes in 2013. WS anticipates responding to increased beaver damage to roads and railways. With a statewide resident Canada goose population three times greater than the State's social carrying capacity, public requests for damage relief will continue.

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 York

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 York

- Reducing Canada goose damage to property
- Protecting livestock from damage caused by starlings
- Assessing and reducing wildlife hazards at airports
- Reducing impacts of invasive feral swine and mute swans
- Protecting the public, domestic pets, and livestock from rabies

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to New York

- Developing tools/methods to reduce crow damage in urban and suburban areas
- Developing tools/methods to reduce Atlantic brant damage to aviation and property
- Quantifying and assessing the damage caused by invasive species to wetlands
- Evaluating the effectiveness of wildlife damage management to reduce cormorant damage to aviation
- Evaluating and monitoring feral swine for diseases that may impact livestock