

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2012

Utah



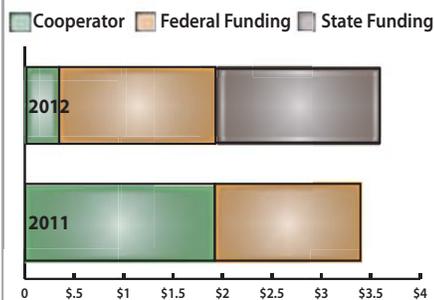
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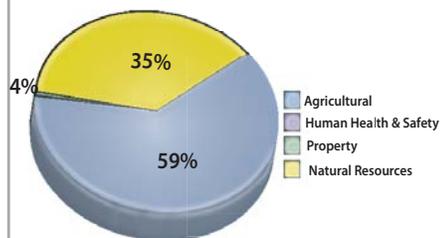
Major Cooperators

- Utah Department of Agriculture and Food
- Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
- U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- Livestock and Agricultural Commodity Producers
- U.S. Department of Defense
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Total Funding (Millions)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Utah

Every day, the Wildlife Services (WS) program in Utah 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. Many recommendations employ simple, cost effective, non-lethal techniques to solve conflicts, such as installing a chimney cap to prevent raccoons from entering a home. For common or more complex complaints, WS-Utah provides informational packets on subjects like "Effective goose dispersal techniques".

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-Utah is uniquely positioned within the State to assist livestock producers, industries, sportsmen's groups and our cooperating agency partners with wildlife damage issues. Direct assistance involves assessment of the problem, application of safe and humane control technology, and monitoring to assure the problem has been adequately addressed. WS implements a wide range of damage management activities. The following examples highlight WS' role in protecting resources in Utah.

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 wildlife. WS-Utah assists crop producers manage damage caused by migratory birds by demonstrating effective methods, loaning equipment and supplies to prevent losses, and applying new methods where and when practical. For example, WS-Utah was instrumental in getting Avipel listed as an approved chemical repellent to protect newly planted corn crops from sandhill cranes.

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 more than \$138 million. Producers often turn to WS for assistance in reducing and preventing further predation.

WS-Utah conducts predation management for livestock protection statewide. Coyotes, cougars, black bears, golden eagles, and common ravens are the major predators of domestic sheep and cattle. The successful restoration of gray wolves in the Northern Rockies has also led to livestock predation by wolves in Utah. All livestock protection is conducted by wildlife damage professionals using proven methods and is coordinated with partner agencies, including the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Forest Service.



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Protecting Fawns from Predation by Coyotes—In areas where mule deer and pronghorn populations are severely depressed and unlikely to recover without assistance, WS-Utah protects the fawns by conducting coyote removal. The relationship between predator and prey populations is managed to maintain healthy populations of both.

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 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-Utah staffs a fulltime wildlife biologist and raptor management specialist at Salt Lake City International Airport. This biologist directs a five-person airport crew in managing wildlife risks. In 2012, more than 460 raptors were removed from harm's way and relocated to safer habitats. Each bird was banded and will provide information concerning raptor survival and behavior. WS also employs a biologist and a part-time specialist at Hill Air Force Base where habitat modification projects, hazing, and direct control are the key elements. WS also conducts wildlife identification courses for airport staff and assists airport managers and urban planners to prevent creation of new wildlife attractants on or around 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.

WS-Utah conducts coyote removal to protect relocated black-footed ferrets from direct predation. Ferrets from captive breeding sources are naive to predation risks. Predator removal allows the released ferrets to survive and reproduce; the first wild borne ferrets are showing up in annual surveys. The coyotes removed are tested for disease, which allows assessment of risks to ferrets and their prey for diseases such as plague. WS-Utah also participates in multiple sage grouse working groups to help ensure healthy populations of Gunnison's sage grouse and the greater sage grouse. WS provides technical support and controls predatory red fox and ravens that affect nesting sage grouse.

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. WS-Utah routinely monitors for various zoonotic diseases such as sylvatic plague, tularemia, and raccoon roundworm.

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' National Wildlife Disease Program biologists have extensive training in the Incident Command System, and can be quickly mobilized.

WS-Utah personnel were among the first to respond to the Red Butte /Liberty Park Chevron oil spill. Their technical expertise, trapping equipment and knowledge, along with the UTDWR, enabled them to quickly and safely capture more than 200 oil-soaked waterfowl for decontamination and rehabilitation.

Looking to the Future

WS continues to provide the citizens of Utah 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 addition to livestock/wildlife protection calls, Utah WS is receiving increasing requests for assistance with problems associated with invasive European starlings, fish eating cormorants, urban waterfowl, rural sandhill cranes, and the increased need for protection of nesting sage grouse. Utah WS assistance is also being increasingly requested on university studies and cooperative research projects by State wildlife interests.

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 Utah

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.

Top 5 Major WS Assistance Activities in Utah

- Protecting livestock/wildlife from coyote, mountain lion, and bear predation
- Assessing and reducing wildlife hazards at airports
- Conserving threatened and endangered species, such as the black footed ferrets and sage grouse
- Assessing and reducing public health threats from wildlife borne diseases
- Protecting agricultural crops and commodities from damage caused by wildlife

Top 6 WS Research Projects of Interest to Utah

- Developing tools/methods to reduce raven damage to nesting sage grouse
- Quantifying and assessing the expanding eagle depredation caused to lambs
- Evaluating the effectiveness of wildlife damage management to reduce sandhill crane damage to corn
- Evaluating and monitoring raccoons for raccoon roundworm
- Investigating the biology/ecology/behavior of common ravens
- Conducting research in support of Government registration of Theobromine/caffeine