

# Wildlife Services

Protecting People  
Protecting Agriculture  
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2015

# Arizona

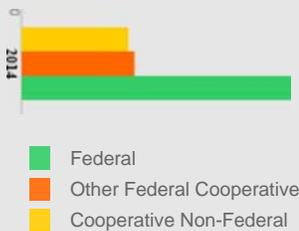


### Contact Information:

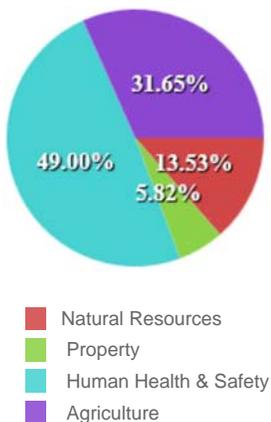
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### Total Funding (\$ Million)



### Resources Protected % of Total Funds



### USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Arizona

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

Specific projects conducted by WS-Arizona include protecting endangered black-footed ferrets from predation and wildlife disease; monitoring for plague, tularemia, and rabies; and managing damage caused by beaver, coyotes, mountain lions, pigeons, feral swine, and other wildlife.

### 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 2014, WS delivered technical advice and recommendations to more than 1.6 million people.

In most cases, landowners and resource managers use technical information from WS to reduce damage on their properties. WS also implements solutions on-site, through direct management assistance, when a 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.

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** — 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 many species. WS-Arizona is working with lettuce growers to manage disease caused by birds and mammals and to stop damage to irrigation canals by mammals.

**Protecting Livestock from Predation** — Despite producers' best efforts to protect their livestock, thousands of domesticated farm animals are killed by predators each year. According to National Agricultural Statistics reports based on data from 2009 (sheep, lambs, goats and kids) and 2010 (cattle and calves), ranchers and others in the United States lost 647 thousand head of livestock to predation each year, valued at 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.

Coyotes, black bears, and mountain lions cause significant losses to some producers by attacking sheep and cattle. Blackbirds spread diseases, and consume and contaminate feed. Unfortunately, these losses are felt most acutely by small farmers and ranchers. In Arizona it is estimated that more than 75 percent of WS' cooperative agreements to manage damage are with small farmers and ranchers.

**Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports** — Wildlife strikes cause more than 590,000 hours of aircraft down time and cost the nation's civil aviation industry approximately \$937 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 839 airports in 2014, including advice, training, on-site evaluations and assessments of wildlife hazards, and direct operational management to reduce wildlife strikes.

**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 2014, WS safeguarded populations of 162 T&E species nationwide.

WS-Arizona has teamed with the Arizona Game and Fish Department on efforts to protect native wildlife



United States Department of Agriculture  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

from predation. Despite having abundant habitat, Arizona has sparse pronghorn populations despite abundant habitat. In and in some areas, their numbers are not increasing enough to sustain population levels. Where pronghorn herds are experiencing excessive fawn predation, WS-Arizona works with the State wildlife agency to increase pronghorn survival rates through selective coyote removal. In other areas, predation has severely limited opportunities to restore wildlife populations such as bighorn sheep. WS-Arizona has teamed with the Arizona Game and Fish Department on efforts to protect native wildlife from predation. Where pronghorn herds are experiencing excessive fawn predation, WS-Arizona works with the State wildlife agency to increase survival rates through selective coyote removal.

### **Monitoring and Controlling Wildlife Diseases, including Rabies**

— 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. Information obtained through disease surveillance in wildlife populations enables agencies to better prepare for and respond to outbreaks and emergencies.

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. WS-Arizona is participating in this national effort. Work conducted in Arizona has worldwide implications especially in rabies management in dogs and endangered species.

### **Protecting Arizona from Invasive Species including Feral Swine**

— Non-native 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.

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 five 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.

**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 including 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-Arizona is actively working with a number of Native American tribes to develop emergency response capabilities.

### **Looking to the Future**

WS continues to provide the citizens of Arizona 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 personnel and resource availability, as well as supportive legislative authorities.

WS-Arizona is receiving increasing calls for assistance with problems associated with coyotes in urban/suburban areas, Mexican wolves, wildlife diseases including rabies, feral swine, and

waterfowl. An important issue, related to public safety and economic loss, involves the increased need to monitor and manage disease threats related to bio-terrorism and border security. WS-Arizona works with a multi-agency partnership to increase awareness and improve response time to outbreaks.

Future wildlife damage challenges include managing the spread of rabies and predation from Mexican wolves, reestablished in 1998 and expanded into three-quarters of the state due to rule changes in 2015. Mexican wolves continue to reach record numbers increase every year, spreading outside the original reintroduction area and leading to livestock and wildlife predation concerns.

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 Arizona**

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 Arizona**

- Reducing duck and geese damage to property
- Protecting livestock from coyotes, black bears, mountain lions, Mexican gray wolves, and blackbirds
- Assessing and reducing wildlife hazards at civil and military airports
- Protecting public safety from coyotes and mountain lions
- Protecting the public, domestic pets, and livestock from zoonotic diseases, especially rabies and plague

### **Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Arizona**

- Developing tools/methods to reduce rodent damage, especially plague management
- Managing rabies
- Evaluating and reducing carnivore damage to livestock
- Developing tools/methods to control invasive species
- Evaluating and reducing wildlife threats to aviation

### **Major Cooperators:**

- Arizona County Governments
- Arizona Dairies
- Arizona Department of Agriculture
- Arizona Game & Fish Department
- Arizona Livestock Producers
- National Park Service
- Navajo Nation
- U.S. Air Force
- U.S. Army
- White Mountain Apache Tribe