

# Wildlife Services

Protecting People  
Protecting Agriculture  
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2015

# Arkansas

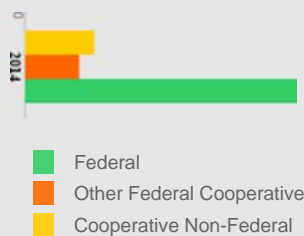


## Contact Information:

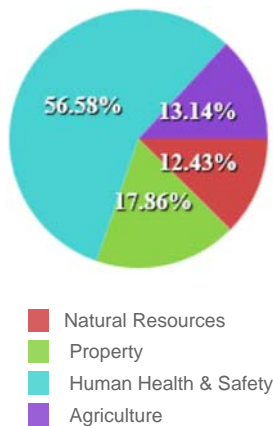
Thurman Booth, Arkansas  
Wildlife Services State Director  
1020 Lantrip Road  
Sherwood, AR 72120

Phone: (501) 835-2318  
FAX: (501) 835-2350  
Toll-Free Number: 1-866-4USDAWS  
[www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife-damage/](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife-damage/)

## Total Funding (\$ Million)



## Resources Protected % of Total Funds



## USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Arkansas

Every day, the Wildlife Services (WS) program in Arkansas helps citizens, organizations, industries, and government agencies resolve conflicts with wildlife to protect agriculture, other property, 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.

WS-Arkansas provides technical assistance in addressing concerns, conflicts and problems caused by migratory birds, feral swine and other wildlife. WS strives to find and recommend solutions that meet the needs of both humans and wildlife. Each year, WS helps the agriculture industry in Arkansas avoid millions of dollars in crop losses due to migratory bird and feral swine damage.

## 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 Arkansas, WS commonly provides information on nonlethal control options to resource owners with migratory bird problems. In most cases, these resource owners are then able to continue the nonlethal control without WS assistance.

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' National Wildlife Research Center conducts scientific research and assessments to refine methods and develop new science-based solutions to wildlife challenges. 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** — 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 waterfowl, deer, wild turkeys, gulls, black bears, and other species.

**Protecting Aquaculture and Natural Resources from Fish-eating Birds** — The U.S. aquaculture industry is valued at more than \$613 million per year in processed product sales. Wildlife depredation, especially by fish-eating birds, can significantly impact production. A National Agricultural Statistics Service survey has indicated that 70% of the catfish producers from 13 catfish-producing States reported measurable losses to wildlife. WS provides recommendations and direct management assistance to aquaculture producers to reduce losses to fish-eating birds, while supporting migratory bird conservation objectives.

Arkansas aquaculture producers lose an estimated \$2.5 million to fish eating birds annually. WS assists fish farmers in developing bird management programs and applying for depredation permits to minimize these losses. WS' National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) conducts research from its Starkville, Mississippi, field station to develop methods for reducing damage caused by fish eating birds.

**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. 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-Arkansas provides direct assistance in controlling wildlife hazards to aircraft at Little Rock Air Force Base.



United States Department of Agriculture  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

**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 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.

Because of illegal translocation of feral swine, Arkansas feral swine populations have increased throughout the State, resulting in serious ecological damage. WS-Arkansas and the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission are cooperatively implementing and evaluating various feral swine population reduction strategies.

**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' Wildlife Disease Biologists act as first responders through WS 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.

#### **Looking to the Future**

WS continues to provide the citizens of Arkansas with safe, effective, and responsible management assistance for a variety of wildlife damage problems. The potential for human-wildlife conflicts can be expected to increase and WS' ability to respond will depend on the availability of resources and personnel as well as legislative authorities to support these activities.

WS-Arkansas is receiving increasing numbers of requests for assistance with problems associated with fish-eating birds, feral swine, wildlife at airports, blackbirds and starlings, waterfowl, and wildlife diseases. 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 Arkansas**

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 Arkansas**

- Protecting agricultural crops from damage caused by migratory birds
- Reducing fish-eating bird damage to aquaculture and natural resources
- Reducing impacts of feral swine to natural resources and agriculture
- Assessing and reducing wildlife hazards at airports
- Protecting the public from health hazards and nuisances caused by Canada geese

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

- Managing bird predation to aquaculture in the Southeastern United States
- Researching and refining solutions to feral swine problems
- Defining interactions of fish eating birds with sportfish
- Monitoring double-crested cormorants nesting in the South
- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation

#### **Major Cooperators:**

- Arkansas Game & Fish Commission
- Arkansas Department of Health
- Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service
- Arkansas Farm Bureau
- Catfish Farmers of Arkansas
- Arkansas Bait & Ornamental Fish Growers Association
- Arkansas Department of Agriculture
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts