

# Wildlife Services

Protecting People  
Protecting Agriculture  
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2015

# Connecticut

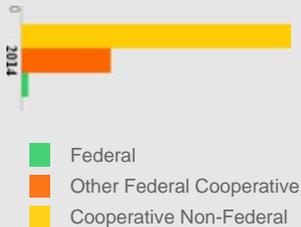


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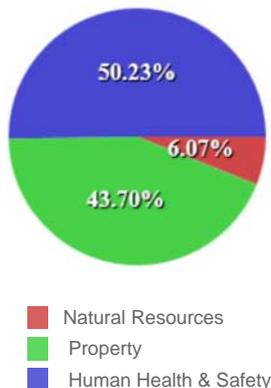
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### Total Funding (\$ Million)



### Resources Protected % of Total Funds



### USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Connecticut

Every day, the Wildlife Services (WS) program in Connecticut helps citizens, organizations, industries, and Government agencies resolve conflicts with wildlife to protect agriculture, other property, natural resources, and to safeguard aircraft activity and other human health and safety aspects. 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, mail, or internet. 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 to implement habitat management and other methods to reduce conflicts involving wildlife. WS-Connecticut 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' National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) 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 regarding strategies, methods, tools and other equipment. WS implements a wide range of damage management activities. The following highlight WS' role in protecting resources in Connecticut.

Resident Canada goose populations continue to increase in Connecticut, representing a major wildlife problem. Frequently the presence and activities of Canada geese, along with their excrement, negatively impact home owners, public parks, cemeteries, athletic fields, and industrial parks, especially during nesting, rearing of goslings, and molting. They also may seriously threaten safety at local airports. WS-Connecticut collaborates with Federal, State, and local governments, private homeowners and homeowner groups, and organizations to consider and use integrated wildlife damage management. WS may recommend or implement multiple methods, such as habitat management, exclusion, harassment, repellants, and control of nesting, to reduce damage or conflicts.

**Protecting Crops and Other Agricultural Resources** — Despite high human population densities, agriculture remains economically and socially important to Connecticut. Agricultural landscapes provide abundant wildlife habitat. WS assists farmers and ranchers to protect crops and other agricultural resources and facilities from damage caused by waterfowl, deer, wild turkeys, gulls, black bears, and other species.

WS provides wildlife damage management expertise to a diversified agricultural industry, including aquaculture and livestock production enterprises. These operations in urban, suburban, and rural settings produce both locally consumed and exported crops.

WS-Connecticut collaborates with dairy operators to manage European starling contamination of feed and water at dairy farms, which may cause bacterial salmonella. Subsequently, infected cows may abort calving, slow or stop feeding, lose weight, and reduce milk production.

Dairy and feed lot farmers who participate in WS' starling control projects report cost savings and quality improvements in their cattle and milk production.

**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) on cattle (2011) and sheep and goats (2010) indicate predation on nearly 450 thousand head of livestock annually, resulting in combined losses of more than \$119 million. Producers often turn to WS for assistance in reducing and preventing further predation. The integrated approach used by WS includes methods implemented by the producers and operational wildlife management by WS.

**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.



United States Department of Agriculture  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

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 (DOD), 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.

WS-Connecticut provides training, wildlife hazard assessments, and direct wildlife hazard management assistance at airports through partnerships with Federal and State agencies and airport management authorities. During FY 2014, WS conducted operational wildlife damage management and provided technical assistance to four Connecticut airports (including two shared civil/DOD) including workshops for airport personnel.

WS-Connecticut uses the information and technology developed from field research and the strike database maintained by NWRC to enhance development of wildlife hazard management strategies and methods for application at local 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, private organizations, and landowners. During 2014, WS safeguarded populations of 162 T&E species nationwide by reducing the impacts of predation and competition from more abundant species, consulting with the FWS to ensure that WS programs do not jeopardize listed species, and developing and sharing information that contributed to conservation of listed 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. Information obtained through disease surveillance in wildlife populations enables agencies to better prepare for and respond to outbreaks and emergencies.

**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' National Wildlife Disease Program biologists have the necessary clearances and extensive training in the Incident Command System, and can be mobilized within 24-28 hours of a request.

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

WS continues to provide the citizens of Connecticut 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.

WS-Connecticut is receiving increasing numbers of requests for assistance with problems associated with wildlife at airports, wildlife diseases, Canada geese, blackbirds, and starlings.

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 Connecticut**

In addition to receiving federally allocated funds, WS also receives funding from cooperative 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 Connecticut**

- Assessing and reducing wildlife hazards at airports
- Protecting property, and public health and safety from Canada geese and their associated excrement
- Protecting livestock from European starlings, pigeons, and blackbirds that cause losses or threaten livestock feed through consumption and disease contamination
- Reducing gull damage to property and building structures including heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, and threats to water resources and human health.
- Conserving threatened and endangered species

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

- Quantifying and assessing deer impacts to aircraft and airport operations with regard to fence barriers and vegetation types
- Developing and enhancing methods to alleviate mammalian and avian predation of protected threatened and endangered shorebirds
- Evaluating the effectiveness of methods to reduce Canada goose damage and hazards to human health and safety
- Continuing to monitor and enhance methods to manage avian flocking birds at or near landfill operations that cause damage to local businesses, and threaten regulated water resources
- Continuing to develop and enhance wildlife disease surveillance monitoring methods

#### **Major Cooperators:**

- Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Wildlife Division
- Connecticut Department of Transportation ??? Bureau of Airports
- Connecticut Department of Agriculture
- Corporate and Private Landfill Authorities
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Private Industrial Companies
- Private Dairies and Farms