

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2015

Delaware

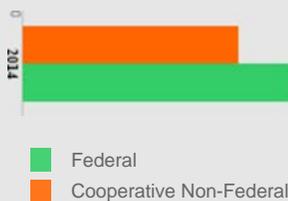


Contact Information:

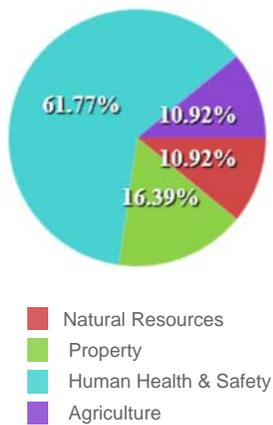
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Total Funding (\$ Million)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Delaware

Every day, the Wildlife Services (WS) program in Delaware helps citizens, organizations, industries, and Government agencies resolve conflicts with wildlife to protect agriculture, 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' biologists manage wildlife damage according to its public trust stewardship responsibilities as Federal natural resource managers. The program 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-Delaware has been called upon by the Division of Fish and Wildlife of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control to help businesses, farmers, and residents who are experiencing problems with migratory birds. WS-Delaware provides technical assistance to resolve conflicts with Canada geese, snow geese, and vultures. WS-Delaware also works to reduce human safety risks and damage to aircraft from wild animals by providing wildlife damage management services.

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 2014, WS delivered technical advice and recommendations to more than 1.6 million people across the country. In most cases landowners and resource managers use technical information to implement habitat management and other methods to reduce damage on their properties.

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. Direct management assistance occurs when WS' biologists and specialists are asked to resolve damage for people.

WS applies and recommends an integrated wildlife damage management approach that incorporates biological, economic, public, environmental, and other information into decision making. WS implements a wide range of damage management activities. WS' National Wildlife Research Center conducts scientific research and assessments to refine methods and develop new science-based solutions to wildlife challenges. The following highlight WS' role in protecting resources in Delaware.

Protecting Crops and Other Agricultural Resources — Agricultural landscapes provide abundant habitat for some wildlife species. 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, and other animal species.

The Chesapeake Bay and the Delaware Bay are attractive and popular stops for migratory waterfowl in the Atlantic Flyway. The Atlantic Flyway Council (AFC) reports that the number of migratory Canada geese and snow geese has steadily increased in the past five years. The AFC also reports that greater numbers of snow geese are damaging coastal salt marsh habitat, as well as the agricultural crops on which they feed during their over-winter stays. This has placed additional pressure on Delaware's small grain producers who already face crop damage from Canada geese. WS has provided technical assistance associated with geese to farmers, residents, and golf course managers. These individuals reported approximately \$75,000 in damage due to conflicts with geese in 2012.

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 \$970 million annually. American military aircraft sustain losses exceeding \$10 million annually. WS has assisted airports across the nation for decades and collaborates closely with the Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Defense, and other government agencies. WS provided assistance to 839 airports in the United States during 2014, including advice, training, on-site evaluations and assessments of wildlife hazards, and direct operational management to reduce wildlife strikes.

WS-Delaware works with the Delaware River and Bay Authority to identify and reduce wildlife hazards at the New Castle County Airport.

Protecting Threatened and Endangered Species and Other Natural Resources WS contributes to the



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

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 by reducing the effects of predation and competition from species that are more abundant, 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 affect agriculture or human health. WS' Wildlife Disease Biologists act as first responders through the National Wildlife Disease Program's Surveillance and Emergency Response System. Information obtained through disease surveillance in wildlife populations enables agencies to better prepare for and respond to outbreaks and emergencies.

WS-Delaware works closely with the State of Delaware to monitor for avian influenza, West Nile virus, and chronic wasting disease.

Protecting Delaware 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.

WS-Delaware conducts invasive species activities in partnership with Federal and State agencies and others to protect vital waterways, marshes, and natural resources from nutria, an invasive aquatic rodent.

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' 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 Delaware 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.

Nationwide, wildlife managers have placed a renewed focus on public safety, particularly at airports. An increase in air travel along with increased populations of deer and many bird species has created a greater need for wildlife management at airports to reduce wildlife threats. WS-Delaware must be able to meet the growing demand for this very specialized area of work.

Another public health and safety issue is the greater demand to protect people, pets, and livestock from diseases. WS works closely with State agencies to monitor for wildlife-borne diseases, including chronic wasting disease. With adequate resources, WS can provide greater assistance to Federal, State, and local public health officials with disease outbreaks statewide.

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 Delaware

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.)

Major Assistance Activities in Delaware

- Reducing migratory bird damage by providing technical assistance and equipment
- Assessing and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Reducing goose and deer damage to agriculture and property
- Protecting public health through monitoring for wildlife-borne disease

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Delaware

- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Developing methods to reduce vulture damage
- Evaluating waterfowl as disease, parasite, and noxious weed reservoirs
- Improving assessment, sampling, and economic methods for wildlife damage management
- Developing methods to reduce goose damage

Major Cooperators:

- Delaware Department of Agriculture
- Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
- Division of Fish and Wildlife
- Delaware River and Bay Authority