

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2015

Guam

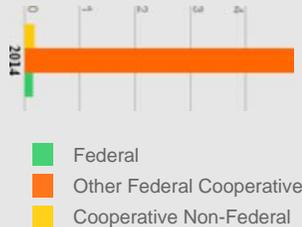


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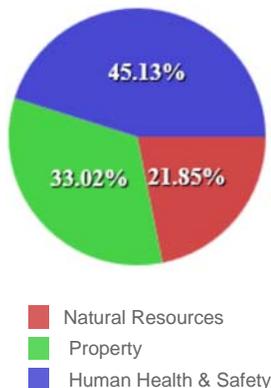
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Total Funding (\$ Million)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Guam

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

The brown treesnake (BTS), a non-native, invasive species on the island of Guam, has caused severe economic and environmental problems, and public health concerns for the island's residents and industries. The BTS has decimated most of Guam's native forest birds and lizards, a dramatic wide-scale destruction of native species unprecedented in modern ecological history. Snakes contacting electric power transmission lines have caused frequent power outages, resulting in millions of dollars in damage and lost revenue. Livestock producers have suffered losses from snakes preying on poultry and other small animals. Children and people sensitive to the snake's mild venom are threatened by the large number of snakes inhabiting urbanized areas on the island.

More significantly, BTS' originating from Guam have been found throughout the Pacific region, associated with outbound commercial and military air and sea cargo. The abundance of snakes on Guam, coupled with the tendency of the BTS to hide in cargo, creates a significant threat to the biodiversity and economic security of the tropical Pacific.

At the inception of WS' BTS project in 1993, little was known about the dynamics of BTS biology or its impact on Guam. Through 22 years of cooperative research and WS direct assistance, much has been learned. This experience has led to the development of effective management protocols and techniques that reduce BTS impacts on Guam and have significantly slowed the dispersal of the snake off island.

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. In most cases, landowners and resource managers use technical information to implement habitat management and other methods to reduce damage on their properties. WS-Guam provides technical assistance to members of the public in managing the impacts of the BTS on agriculture, property, and human health and safety. Additionally, WS provides regular assistance on a variety of other damage caused by vertebrates, including feral swine, sambar deer, introduced birds, and a number of invasive reptiles and amphibians.

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. WS implements a wide range of damage management activities. The following highlight WS' role in protecting resources in Guam.

Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports Globally, wildlife strikes with aircraft have killed more than 250 people and destroyed more than 245 aircraft since 1988. 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 has assisted the Nation's airports for decades and collaborates closely with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), 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.

WS-Guam provides direct and technical assistance to a number of civilian and military airports, and works closely with the FAA to improve wildlife hazard management programs at Micronesian region international



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

airports (former U.S. Trust Territories), and other Western Pacific 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 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.

On Guam, WS works collaboratively with the Department of Defense, FWS, and Guam Department of Agriculture to protect endangered island swiftlets, Guam rails, and Micronesian starlings from BTS predation. WS also provides direct assistance in developing and implementing large scale BTS control that will ultimately facilitate the reintroduction of formerly extant native birds, including the Guam Micronesian kingfisher.

Protecting Guam 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. Executive Order 13112 establishes Federal leadership responsibilities regarding invasive species: to prevent the introduction of invasive species and to provide for their eradication or control to minimize the economic, ecological, and human health impacts. In Guam, WS works collaboratively with a number of local and Federal agencies to reduce the impacts of BTS damages on human health and safety, as well as the island's power infrastructure.

Looking to the Future

WS continues to provide the residents of Guam 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-Guam is receiving increasing numbers of requests for assistance with problems associated with brown treesnakes, feral swine, wildlife at airports, and rodents. 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 Guam

WS 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 Guam

- Interdiction activities to prevent the inadvertent spread of the BTS to other Pacific Islands, Hawaii, and the U.S. Mainland
- Protecting endangered species and facilitating species restoration through large-scale BTS control
- Protection of Guam's power infrastructure, including control at 18 individual transmission and distribution substations located throughout the island
- Wildlife hazard management activities to prevent birds from striking aircraft
- Protecting human health and safety, and improving residents' quality of life from BTS impacts

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Guam

- Further development of aerial delivery of oral toxicants for controlling brown treesnakes
- Development of artificial attractants and baits for controlling brown treesnakes
- Improving the integration and application of brown treesnake control tools to facilitate large scale control
- Improving available tools and strategies for controlling feral ungulates
- Developing effective management strategies for deterring bird strikes at tropical island airports

Major Cooperators:

- U.S. Department of Defense (U.S. Navy, Joint Region Marianas)
- U.S. Navy, Naval Base Guam
- U.S. Air Force, Andersen Air Force Base)
- U.S. Department of Interior - Office of Insular Affairs
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Government of Guam, Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources
- Guam Power Authority
- Port Authority of Guam
- Guam International Airport Authority
- Thirty-five, privately-owned freight forwarding companies