

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2015

Hawaii

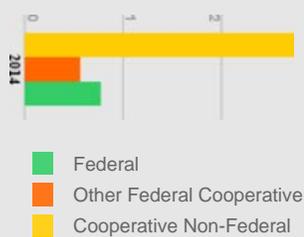


Contact Information:

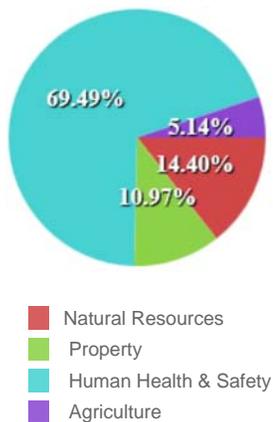
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Total Funding (\$ Million)



Resources Protected
% of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Hawaii

Every day, the Wildlife Services (WS) program in Hawaii 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 Hawaii WS include: managing wildlife hazards to aviation; protecting corn seed research crops; protecting endangered plants; protecting endangered and native seabirds; conducting surveillance for wildlife diseases; and controlling invasive species.

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

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, and other species. Hawaii is the world's leading producer of seed corn, which accounts for 96% of the State's \$176 million agricultural biotechnology industry. WS-Hawaii assists corn seed researchers in protecting seedlings and mature plants from depredation caused by birds, feral swine, and deer.

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 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.

Hawaii's airports ranked 15th in the United States for total reported wildlife strikes from 1990 to 2011. WS biologists work closely with airfield managers, the FAA and State and Federal wildlife agencies to reduce the threat birds pose at all 15 major State airports and four military airfields.

WS-Hawaii continues to assist the State in relocating a nesting population of endangered Hawaiian geese from their location between the two main runways at Lihue Airport. WS-Hawaii continues to relocate Laysan albatross from three military facilities to locations that can support nesting colonies without causing aviation hazards.

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 (USFWS), 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.

Many Pacific Island plants and animals are threatened with extinction. Hawaii has the highest number of



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

endangered species in the Nation. WS-Hawaii protects endangered water birds at State sanctuaries and wetland sites on military installations from invasive predators such as the small Asian mongoose.

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 the 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.

WS-Hawaii works with State and Federal agencies throughout the Pacific to conduct early detection surveillance for foreign animal diseases in wildlife such as highly pathogenic avian influenza and Japanese encephalitis virus in wild birds and classic swine fever in feral swine. WS-Hawaii assists State agencies to monitor leptospirosis, pseudorabies, swine brucellosis, and swine influenza. The Program is also collaborating with local and national partners to survey for scrapie in wild sheep and eliminate, or at least reduce, the incidence of bovine tuberculosis in feral swine located within a quarantine area on the island of Molokai (Maui County).

Protecting Hawaii 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.

Cattle egrets and common barn owls were introduced to Hawaii in 1959. These avian predators are considered key threats to native species and habitats. WS-Hawaii works cooperatively to reduce the populations of both species on and around airports and at roosting sites to prevent collisions with aircraft, and when requested, within wildlife sanctuaries to protect native water birds.

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 to public health, domestic animal health, crop production, and natural resources. Nationally, 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.

Feral swine cause hundreds of thousands of dollars of damage to commercial agriculture in Hawaii. Where public hunting cannot be used to control populations, WS-Hawaii provides assistance to farmers, land owners, and research companies to protect valuable crop commodities, research, and production cultivars on Maui, Molokai and Oahu.

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 Hawaii 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-Hawaii is receiving increasing numbers of requests for assistance with problems associated with feral swine, deer, wildlife at airports, and invasive species. 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 Hawaii

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 Hawaii

- Protecting civil and military aircraft from collisions with wildlife
- Managing damage on seed research crops caused by feral swine, deer, and introduced birds
- Protecting endangered plants and native ecosystems from damage caused by introduced rats, feral goats, sheep, swine, and cattle
- Reducing predation on endangered Hawaiian water bird populations and native seabird colonies
- Managing nuisance wildlife to protect property

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Hawaii

- Improving management methods for rats and mice to reduce damage to tropical fruits, seed crops, macadamia nuts
- Developing control methods to manage invasive species
- Developing and improving interdiction and control efforts for brown treesnakes
- Improving detection and capture methods for small Indian mongoose and feral cats
- Improving management methods to reduce bird-aircraft strike hazards

Major Cooperators:

- Hawaii Department of Agriculture
- Hawaii Department of Transportation, Airports Division
- Hawaii Department of Land & Natural Resources
- U.S. Department of Defense
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service