

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2015

Idaho

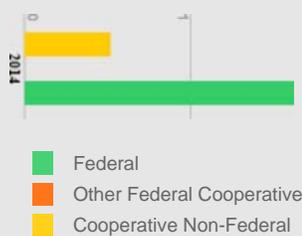


Contact Information:

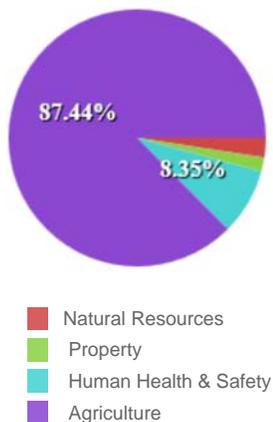
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Total Funding (\$ Million)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Idaho

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

WS-Idaho provides assistance in dealing with a diverse array of conflicts between wildlife and people. WS protects livestock from predation by coyotes, wolves, black bears, mountain lions, grizzly bears and other predators. Additionally, WS' professionals assist farmers, ranchers and other property owners/managers with the management of damage caused by rodents, such as marmots and beaver, and birds including starlings, pigeons, magpies, crows, and ravens.

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-Idaho provides expertise on dealing with nuisance predators, Canada geese, Northern flickers, raptors, and burrowing rodents. In most cases, the problem can be solved by altering the area where damage is occurring influencing the problem animal(s) to go elsewhere.

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 (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-Idaho has a primary responsibility to protecting livestock from predation. WS also protects feedlots and dairies from damage caused by European starlings and blackbirds, structures and properties from damage caused by migratory birds, and property from beaver, skunk and raccoon damage. WS implements a wide range of damage management activities. The following highlight WS' role in protecting resources in Idaho.

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) for cattle (2011) and sheep and goat (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 implemented by WS includes recommendations that are applied by the producers and, in many cases, operational wildlife management implemented by WS.

Predation represents the single largest cause of sheep mortality in Idaho, typically accounting for about one-third of the total annual loss suffered by Idaho sheep producers. Coyotes and gray wolves kill hundreds of domestic livestock annually in Idaho. Mountain lions and black and grizzly bears also kill livestock but in much smaller numbers than their canine counterparts. Prompt responses by WS-Idaho personnel reduce and minimize the impacts of predation on livestock producers.

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, 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



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

management to reduce wildlife strikes.

WS-Idaho personnel provide support to a number of civilian airports and military installations in the State. Additionally, four wildlife biologists from the WS- Idaho program have volunteered to provide support to military bases in Afghanistan, each deploying for four months at a time.

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-Idaho, through a cooperative effort, conducts surveillance for deer hair-loss syndrome in mule deer, Echinococcus in coyotes and Aleutian's disease in mink.

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.

Fortunately, Idaho does not have any known populations of feral swine, but WS is monitoring for signs of emergent populations.

Looking to the Future

WS continues to provide the citizens of Idaho 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-Idaho is receiving increasing numbers of requests for assistance with problems associated with wildlife at airports, wolves, wildlife diseases, blackbirds and starlings, ravens, and waterfowl.

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 Idaho

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 Idaho

- Reducing European starling and blackbird damage to cattle and dairy producers
- Protecting livestock from predation
- Assessing and reducing wildlife hazards at airports
- Conserving threatened and endangered species
- Protecting agricultural animals and pets from wildlife-borne diseases

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Idaho

- Developing tools/methods to reduce predation on sage grouse
- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Using larger breeds of livestock guarding dogs to protect sheep from predation by wolves
- Evaluating the effectiveness of wildlife damage management to reduce wolf damage to sheep and cattle
- Evaluating and monitoring coyotes for Echinococcus

Major Cooperators:

- Idaho Department of Fish and Game
- Idaho State Department of Agriculture
- Idaho Wolf Depredation Control Board
- Agricultural Associations
- U.S. Forest Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- Civilian and military airports
- 44 Idaho County Governments
- Private companies