

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2015

Illinois

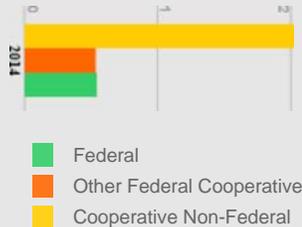


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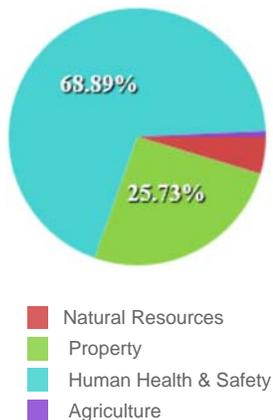
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Total Funding (\$ Million)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Illinois

Every day, the Wildlife Services (WS) program in Illinois helps citizens, organizations, industries, and government agencies resolve conflicts with wildlife to protect agriculture, 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.

The Illinois landscape varies from the Great Lakes Region in the northeast through the central plains to the rugged, forested topography of the south. Agriculture remains important to Illinois, which ranks in the top two states for soybean and field corn production. Other important agricultural sectors in Illinois include swine, cattle, dairy, and wheat production. Illinois boasts vibrant wildlife populations ranging from game animals, such as white-tailed deer, wild turkey, waterfowl, and upland game species to rare and interesting transient species, which pass through during migration.

WS-Illinois assistance to residents of the State in mitigating conflicts with wildlife include protecting human safety at airports and protecting sensitive natural areas and parks from overabundant white-tailed deer damage. WS-Illinois also protects property and human health and safety at industrial, food production, and power plants from damage caused by birds and other wildlife.

Applying Science and Expertise to Help the Public

WS-Illinois frequently provides information, advice, equipment, and materials that enable people to resolve wildlife conflicts on their own. In most cases, landowners and resource managers use technical information to implement habitat management and other methods to reduce damage on their properties.

Recommendations to resolve conflicts vary from how to discourage woodpeckers from damaging homes to training airport managers how to make airports less attractive to hazardous wildlife. Recommendations are provided at no cost to the requestor, and the methods recommended are generally nonlethal. WS-Illinois also provides informational workshops across the State.

WS also implements solutions on-site through direct management assistance. This occurs when WS' biologists and specialists are asked to resolve damage for people. WS applies and recommends an integrated approach that incorporates biological, economic, public, environmental, and other information into decision making. In addition, WS' National Wildlife Research Center conducts scientific research and assessments to refine methods and develop new science-based solutions to wildlife challenges.

Protecting Crops and Other Agricultural Resources — WS-Illinois assists agricultural producers in resolving conflicts caused by wildlife, such as bird damage to crops and livestock. Birds can destroy field crops, spread disease to livestock, decrease milk production in dairy cows, and contaminate feed supplies at stockyards, potentially causing illness and reducing weight gains. WS-Illinois works with the Illinois Department of Agriculture and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to identify and resolve wildlife damage to agricultural resources.

Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports — WS-Illinois provides advice, training, on-site evaluations and assessments of wildlife hazards, and direct operational management to reduce wildlife strikes at airports in the State. WS' biologists in Illinois are collaborating with researchers to determine how far red-tailed hawks must be relocated away from airports to ensure they do not return and are using satellite telemetry to determine what specific habitats are attractive to red-tailed hawks on and near airports. WS-Illinois is also evaluating how avian radar can be used to promote aviation safety and if livestock can be safely and effectively used to manage vegetation, which attracts hazardous wildlife to airfields. Information gained through these studies will assist in making sound management decisions concerning the threats wildlife pose to safe air travel.

WS Wildlife Biologists assist numerous airports in the State to minimize the threats wildlife pose to aircraft. They monitor airfields for wildlife activity, reduce potential threats, and provide recommendations to airport managers to minimize future risks. In 2014, WS-Illinois provided wildlife hazard management training to 128 airport staff working at 27 airports throughout the State.

Protecting Threatened and Endangered Species and Other Natural Resources WS contributes to the conservation of species listed as threatened and endangered through partnerships with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, State wildlife agencies, organizations, and landowners. WS-Illinois assisted land managers in the State with protecting 10 State-listed threatened and endangered plants from the effects of overabundant white-tailed deer populations and 7 Federal and State-listed threatened and endangered



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

plants from the effects of overabundant beaver populations. Managing overabundant deer and beaver populations allow these sensitive plants to recover from severe negative impacts. Land managers report these sensitive plants are beginning to recover because of WS' assistance.

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. Information obtained through disease surveillance in wildlife populations enables agencies to better prepare for and respond to outbreaks and emergencies.

In Illinois, WS conducts surveillance for significant diseases in wildlife by collecting biological samples from wildlife handled during damage management activities and in collaboration with other wildlife management agencies. WS-Illinois monitors for livestock diseases, such as classical swine fever, porcine reproductive and respiratory disease, swine brucellosis, pseudorabies, and Newcastle disease. In addition, WS-Illinois also monitors for diseases and disease organisms that may be transmitted to humans, including rabies, tularemia, swine influenza, raccoon roundworm, and leptospirosis, as well as for diseases that negatively affect wildlife, such as chronic wasting disease, canine distemper, and canine parvovirus.

Reducing the Negative Effects of Feral Swine — Feral swine, an invasive species, are prolific breeders and thrive in a variety of habitats. WS-Illinois is collaborating with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to assist landowners with protecting sensitive property and native wildlife from damage caused by feral swine. WS-Illinois helps identify locations where feral swine are present, provides the necessary capture tools, and assists landowners in removing feral swine from their property. The success of these collaborative efforts is evidenced by significantly decreased damage caused by feral swine in Illinois.

Disease monitoring in feral swine is crucial to understanding the risks posed to commercial swine producers. WS-Illinois works with State and Federal agencies and private landowners to conduct statewide comprehensive disease surveillance in feral swine.

Protecting Multiple Resources from Beaver Damage — Beaver can have beneficial effects, such as increasing wetland habitat, as well as negative effects, by building dams and cutting trees including those valued for timber production and landscaping. Beaver dams back up water that can flood and kill valuable timber and destroy or damage sensitive forest preserves, cropland, roadways, sewer and septic systems, and water treatment and electric utilities. Dams may also negatively affect fish populations by changing the movement and temperature of stream water.

WS-Illinois assists a diverse set of stakeholders in the State with beaver damage management, including transportation agencies, power companies, industrial companies, State and Federal natural resource management agencies, forest preserve managers, and private landowners.

Looking to the Future

WS continues to provide the citizens of Illinois 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.

In Illinois, WS is receiving an increasing number of requests for assistance associated with reducing wildlife threats to aviation safety at airports, mitigating conflicts with birds in urban and rural areas, and in managing damage caused by beaver and feral swine.

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.

Illinois Wildlife Services Funding

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 Assistance Activities in Illinois

- Identifying and reducing wildlife hazards to human safety and aircraft at airports
- Managing white-tailed deer damage to sensitive native vegetation and property
- Managing bird damage/threats to livestock, property, public health, and public safety
- Protecting public safety and property from ring-billed gull, Canada goose, and white-tailed deer damage
- Reducing invasive feral swine effects on wildlife and natural resources

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Illinois

- Evaluating and improving methods of managing wildlife hazards to human safety and aircraft at airports
- Investigating the biology/ecology/behavior of raptors and the threats they pose to human safety and aircraft at airfields
- Managing bird damage to property, public health, and public safety
- Increasing knowledge of wildlife vectors of diseases/pathogens that affect humans, wildlife, and agriculture in Illinois
- Managing conflicts with gulls and white-tailed deer in urban environments

Major Cooperators:

- City of Chicago - O'Hare and Midway International Airports
- U.S. Department of Energy - Argonne National Laboratory
- Forest Preserve District of Cook County
- Numerous industrial plants, power generating stations, petroleum refineries, and airports
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics