

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2015

Iowa

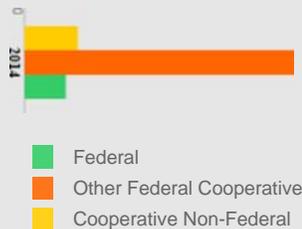


Contact Information:

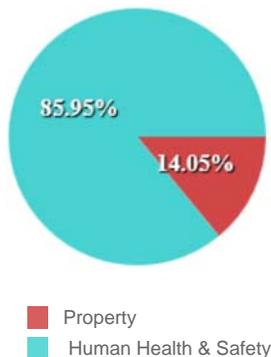
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Total Funding (\$ Million)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Iowa

Every day, the Wildlife Services (WS) program in Iowa 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 while protecting the economic interests of our cooperators. 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.

Iowa is rich with natural resources and agriculture. Natural resources are important to many citizens ensuring that wildlife populations flourish, lakes, rivers and streams are enjoyed for recreation, and general outdoor activities boost the economy. A substantial economic driver in Iowa is its strong agricultural industry which includes row crop agriculture such as corn production and commercial swine production. Iowa has the largest commercial swine industry in the United States. Additionally, the dairy industry, ethanol manufacturing, and feedlots significantly contribute to the agricultural base. Iowa has world-class white-tailed deer, excellent waterfowl hunting opportunities, and a deep heritage of natural resource management. WS-Iowa has offices appropriately positioned in Iowa to assist State and Federal wildlife managers, agricultural producers, and the general public with resolving human-wildlife conflicts.

Applying Science and Expertise to Help the Public

WS frequently provides information, advice, equipment, and materials that enable people to resolve wildlife conflicts without professional intervention. 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-Iowa works closely with aviation officials to provide technical training and information regarding wildlife hazard management at airports. Most facilities receive approximately eight hours of training annually on bird identification, non-lethal harassment tools, and proper reporting. WS also works closely on providing technical information and assistance addressing European starling problems at dairies and feedlots. Technical information is provided to over 30 dairies and ten feedlots on an annual basis.

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 factored into decision making. WS implements a wide range of damage management activities. The following highlight WS' role in protecting resources in Iowa.

Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports Globally, wildlife strikes with aircraft have killed more than 255 people and destroyed more than 243 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 management to reduce wildlife strikes.

WS-Iowa is currently managing wildlife damage at two civil airports, one general aviation airport and two Iowa Air National Guard bases. Wildlife Hazard Assessments are currently being conducted at three civil airports. Typical services range from conducting wildlife hazard assessments or developing a wildlife damage management plan to full- or part-time on-site presence conducting wildlife damage management activities. Habitat modification has been an integral tool used in Iowa to reduce wildlife strikes. These



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

modifications include implementing crop-free zones around runways, standing water drainage, constructing wildlife fences, in addition to training airport personnel in habitat management techniques.

Protecting Iowa 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.

WS-Iowa conducts invasive species activities in partnership with Federal and State agencies and others to protect critical infrastructure such as bridges and railways as well as agriculture facilities. European starling damage to feedlots, dairies, and urban areas is evident from increased fecal matter and noise. Large concentrations of European starlings create environmental conditions conducive to histoplasmosis, defecate in feed bunks and water troughs designed for cattle, and spread E. coli and salmonella. WS-Iowa currently works with over 50 cooperators to protect property from invasive species damage.

Reducing the Negative Impacts of Feral Swine — Feral swine, an invasive species, are prolific breeders and thrive in rural, suburban and urban habitats. By 2014, their populations had expanded to at least 39 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.

While feral swine are at low densities in Iowa, attempts at intentional releases have occurred in the past. WS-Iowa serves on a task force that responds to all feral swine reports, conducts disease surveillance, and provides outreach events to raise feral swine awareness. Feral swine threaten the natural resources of Iowa, but more importantly pose a significant risk of spreading disease to Iowa's multi-billion dollar swine market. Therefore, WS-Iowa responds quickly with a multi-agency approach to address all feral swine issues.

Reducing damage from American crows — WS continues to mitigate damage from American crows in major metropolitan areas of Iowa utilizing an integrated wildlife management plan. During winter months, crows roost in large flocks and often seek shelter in urban areas providing wind breaks, heat and ample lighting to see potential predators. Large numbers of crows create health concerns and unsightly views for the public and business owners from the accumulation of droppings left behind each night, often requiring thousands of dollars to be spent on cleanup efforts. In 2014, WS continued its crow damage management efforts in the Des Moines metropolitan area reducing crow presence and associated damages to downtown businesses.

Looking to the Future

WS continues to provide the citizens of Iowa 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-Iowa is receiving increasing numbers of requests for assistance with problems associated with wildlife at airports, American crows in urban/suburban areas, pigeons at ethanol plants, and European starlings. These urban wildlife conflicts threatened the safety of employees, customers, and the public by negatively impacting human health and safety.

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 Iowa

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 Iowa

- Assessing and reducing wildlife hazards at airports
- Reducing impacts of invasive European starlings
- Reducing migratory and nuisance bird damage to public and private resources
- Protecting agricultural animals and pets from wildlife-borne diseases
- Protecting public safety from wildlife

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Iowa

- Developing tools/methods to reduce European starling damage to dairies and feedlots
- Quantifying and assessing the damage caused by European starlings
- Evaluating the effectiveness of wildlife damage management to reduce bird damage at airports
- Evaluating and monitoring wildlife for diseases
- Conducting research in support of Government registration of the avicide DRC-1339

Major Cooperators:

- Iowa Department of Transportation ??? Office of Aviation
- Iowa Air National Guard
- Corn Milling Facilities & Ethanol Plants
- Sioux Gateway Airport
- Des Moines International Airport
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship