

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2015

Minnesota

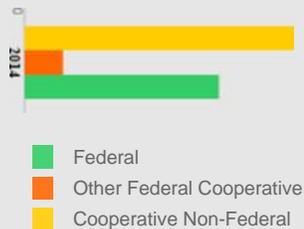


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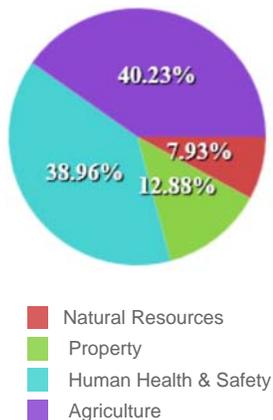
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Total Funding (\$ Million)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Minnesota

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

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. During 2014, WS delivered technical advice and recommendations to more than 1.6 million people.

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.

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, wild turkeys, gulls, black bear, and other species.

WS-Minnesota administers a starling management program to reduce starling flocks at dairy farms and cattle feedlots where starlings consume and contaminate livestock feed, potentially transmitting diseases and causing a decrease in milk production and livestock weight gains.

Protecting Livestock from Predation — 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.

WS-Minnesota assists livestock producers and pet owners experiencing losses due to wolf predation. In FY 2014, WS-Minnesota responded to 121 requests for assistance involving wolves harassing or killing livestock and domestic animals including cattle, horses, sheep, poultry, and dogs.

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, 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.

There were 128 documented wildlife strikes at Minnesota airports in 2014. WS-Minnesota provided 36 Minnesota airports with technical assistance on resolving wildlife hazard issues in 2014. Training and operational assistance to 9 Minnesota airports were also provided.

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. The program's Wildlife Disease Biologists act as WS' first responders through the National Wildlife Disease Program's Surveillance and Emergency Response System. Information obtained through disease surveillance in wildlife populations enables agencies to better prepare for and respond to outbreaks and emergencies.

WS-Minnesota has collaborated with State, Federal, tribal, and private cooperators to conduct wildlife



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

disease surveillance. WS-Minnesota collects over 1,000 disease samples annually from live and hunter harvested animals.

Protecting Aquaculture and Natural Resources from Fish-eating Birds — The U.S. aquaculture industry is valued at more than \$613 million per year in processed product sales. Wildlife depredation, especially by fish-eating birds, can significantly impact production. A National Agricultural Statistics Service survey has indicated that 70 percent of the catfish producers from 13 catfish-producing states reported measurable losses to wildlife. WS provides recommendations and direct management assistance to aquaculture producers to reduce losses to fish-eating birds, while supporting migratory bird conservation objectives.

WS-Minnesota works cooperatively with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and the state Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) to protect multiple public resources from double-crested cormorants on Leech Lake. Cormorants nesting on Little Pelican Island are displacing common terns, a State-listed threatened species and have also been implicated in the decline of the Leech Lake walleye fishery. WS-Minnesota also assists the MNDNR and private landowners with cormorant damage on several other lakes throughout Minnesota.

Protecting Multiple Resources from Beaver Damage — Beaver historically have been a valuable economic and natural resource. During the past 20 years their populations have increased throughout the United States due to lower demand for beaver products and subsequent decreases in recreational trapping. This growth has positive effects, such as increased wetland habitat, as well as negative impacts from dam building and tree cutting. Beaver dams back up water that floods and kills valuable timber and destroys or damages cropland, roadways, sewer and septic systems, and water treatment and electric utilities. Dams may also negatively impact fish populations by changing the movement and temperature of stream water. Beaver cut down trees that are valued for timber production and landscaping.

In FY 2014, WS conducted more than 100 beaver trapping and dam removal projects protecting fish habitat and resolving damage to roadways, bridges, forest resources, and wild rice lakes.

Beaver dams have a significant negative impact on high quality trout streams by warming water, blocking trout movement, and reducing or eliminating trout reproduction and survival. WS-Minnesota's beaver and dam removal efforts, including continued annual maintenance, have restored approximately 100 miles of high quality trout streams to free-flowing conditions, which has enhanced the natural reproduction of the State's trout populations.

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 extensive training in the Incident Command System, and can be mobilized within 24-48 hours of a request.

Looking to the Future

WS continues to provide the citizens of Minnesota 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-Minnesota is receiving increasing numbers of requests for

assistance with problems associated with beaver damage, urban wildlife damage, and wildlife disease surveillance.

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.

Minnesota 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 WS Assistance Activities in Minnesota

- Protecting livestock from wolf predation
- Protecting bridges, roads, timber, crops, and natural resources from beaver damage
- Reducing cormorant damage to natural resources and vegetation
- Assessing and reducing wildlife hazards at airports
- Protecting wildlife, agricultural animals and pets from wildlife-borne diseases

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Minnesota

- Developing tools/methods to reduce wolf damage to livestock
- Evaluating the efficacy of translocating immature bald eagles to promote aviation safety
- Investigating the biology and transmission of Newcastle disease in double crested cormorants
- Identifying, monitoring, and preventing the transmission of wildlife diseases to other wildlife, livestock and humans
- Monitoring the movements of resident Canada geese relative to airports to promote aviation safety

Major Cooperators:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S Geological Survey ??? National Wildlife Health Center
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Services
- Fort Snelling National Cemetery
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Minnesota Department of Agriculture
- Minnesota Board of Animal Health
- Minnesota Department of Transportation
- Minnesota Department of Health
- University of Minnesota Extension
- Metropolitan Airports Commission
- Minnesota State Cattleman's Association
- St. Louis County Public Works Department
- The Cities of Blaine, Plymouth, Maplewood, Edina and Golden Valley