

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2015

New Jersey

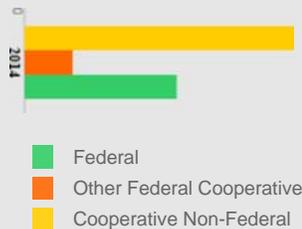


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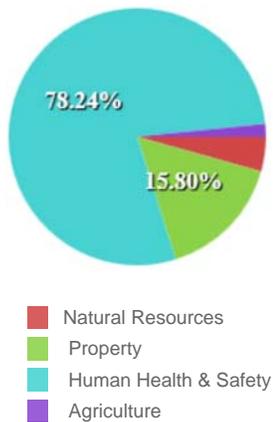
Aaron Guikema, New Jersey
Wildlife Services State Director
140-C Locust Grove Road
Pittstown, NJ 08867

Phone: (908) 735-5654
FAX: (908) 735-4513
Toll-Free Number: 1-866-4USDAWS
(1-866-487-3297)
aaron.t.guikema@aphis.usda.gov
www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife-damage/

Total Funding (\$ Million)



Resources Protected
% of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in New Jersey

Every day, the Wildlife Services (WS) program in New Jersey 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. The program 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.

New Jersey's mix of urban and suburban settings and agricultural, forested, and coastal environments provides varied wildlife habitats. With a dense human population, a wide variety of wildlife-human conflicts occur. WS protects public health and safety and property by managing wildlife populations at airports, schools, parks, recreation areas, and other locations throughout the State. WS-New Jersey also protects agricultural and natural resources from wildlife damage and educates the public about wildlife issues.

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. In New Jersey, WS increases awareness through outreach efforts and helps requestors learn to manage wildlife damage on their own.

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. For example, New Jersey is the year-round home to twice the number of resident Canada geese than the area should support, leading to the majority of assistance requests. Too many geese results in excessive droppings, landscape damage due to overgrazing, water contamination, and aggressive goose attacks on people. In 2014, WS-New Jersey assisted more than 415 residents, organizations, and agencies with goose-related problems, offering technical advice, consultations, scientific information, and assistance in obtaining the proper permits. Services included treatments to limit reproduction, habitat modification, harassment, behavior modification programs, and population management. The following examples highlight WS' role in protecting resources in New Jersey.

Protecting Crops and Other Agricultural Resources — In New Jersey, WS protects agricultural resources from damage caused by birds, such as resident Canada geese, black vultures, and starlings. WS helps farmers acquire permits and offers guidance on harassment techniques, farming practice adaptations, and habitat modifications.

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.

In New Jersey, increasing wildlife abundance creates hazards to aviation. WS-New Jersey has worked with New Jersey airports since 1989 to minimize threats to aviation while still protecting natural resources. In 2014, WS-New Jersey assisted 12 airports/airfields by conducting training, providing wildlife management consultations, developing assessments and management plans, and implementing methods to protect



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

public and aviation safety. WS-New Jersey biologists implement management techniques developed by WS researchers to reduce airport hazards at airports.

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 (FWS), 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, consulting with the FWS to ensure that WS programs do not jeopardize listed species, and developing and sharing information that contributed to conservation of listed species.

New Jersey's coastline offers valuable habitat for T&E shorebirds, but predation and competition with other wildlife and shore development can be detrimental. WS-New Jersey protects the piping plover, least tern, and black skimmer on Federal coastal lands. WS coordinates interagency meetings on predation management to increase involvement, operational support, and communications for T&E programs to help ensure that rare species continue to survive in New Jersey.

WS-New Jersey helps reduce Canada goose damage to restored wetlands, a rare native wild rice ecosystem, and to the sensitive joint-vetch, a Federally threatened plant. WS also takes action to minimize aircraft strikes involving rare bird species such as nesting upland sandpipers and grasshopper sparrows.

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

WS' wildlife disease sampling efforts include avian and tick-borne diseases; feral swine diseases such as pseudorabies and brucellosis; chronic wasting disease in deer; and plague, tularemia, and a wide variety of other diseases. From 2008 to 2014, WS-New Jersey has tested 33 trapped and hunter-harvested feral swine for 8 diseases.

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 quickly.

In 2012, WS-New Jersey helped the FWS collect turtles and fish to look for contaminants in a northeastern NJ lagoon. Following Hurricane Sandy, an oil refinery requested WS' help handling oiled wildlife following an unexpected release of petroleum. WS collaborated with Federal and State wildlife agencies, bird rehabilitation groups, and the oil industry to capture oiled birds for cleaning and release back into the wild.

Looking to the Future

WS continues to provide the citizens of New Jersey 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-New Jersey is receiving increasing numbers of requests for assistance with problems associated with wildlife at airports, wildlife diseases, Canada geese and other waterfowl, vultures, gulls, blackbirds, and starlings. WS will continue to expand efforts to provide effective and cost efficient assistance with wildlife damage issues to those who request it.

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 New Jersey

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 New Jersey

- Assessing and reducing wildlife hazards at airports
- Assessing and reducing public health threats from wildlife diseases
- Reducing Canada goose damage to wetlands, recreational areas, and other properties
- Protecting agricultural crops from damage caused by birds
- Conserving threatened and endangered species

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to New Jersey

- Evaluating the effectiveness of wildlife damage management to reduce Canada goose damage to parks, wetlands, and natural areas
- Evaluating and monitoring wildlife for diseases
- Investigating the biology, ecology, and behavior of raptors at airports
- Quantifying and assessing the damage caused by resident Canada geese and vultures to natural resources, property, and human health and safety
- Developing methods to reduce blackbird and starling damage to agriculture

Major Cooperators:

- New Jersey Departments of Agriculture, Health, and Transportation
- New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife
- Federal Aviation Administration
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Air National Guard
- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Air Force
- National Park Service
- Port Authority of NY & NJ
- South Jersey Transportation Authority
- New Jersey Meadowlands Commission
- Rutgers, The State University
- New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station
- East Stroudsburg University
- County and Municipal Governments