

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2015

New York

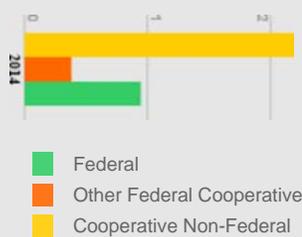


Contact Information:

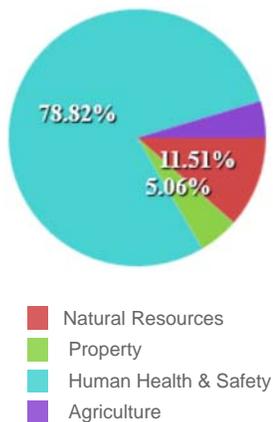
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Total Funding (\$ Million)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in New York

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

New York contains a mix of urban, suburban and rural settings. Although largely rural with agricultural and forested land, it is home to more than 19 million people. WS-New York reduces public safety risks and property damage by managing wildlife populations at and near airports; protects domestic animals from rabies; protects natural resources from invasive feral swine; and protects threatened and endangered species.

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.

WS-New York responded to nearly 500 requests for information, educational programs, site visits, and demonstration related to 43 wildlife species. Nonlethal recommendations were provided to many groups because landowners and managers are best positioned to implement habitat alteration, conduct harassment, and change animal husbandry and human behavior.

WS also implements solutions on-site, through direct management, 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.

Protecting Crops and Other Agricultural Resources — New York ranks third nationally in milk production. When overabundant starling flocks at dairies consume livestock feed, they can decrease production, increase costs, and threaten the herd's health by spreading diseases such as salmonella. To address this problem, during the winter months WS-New York's certified pesticide applicators use approved methods to reduce starling numbers in partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension and the State agriculture department.

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.

Since the 2009 emergency landing of U.S. Airways Flight 1549 in the Hudson River, WS-New York expanded management of resident Canada geese near all New York major airports in cooperation with local agencies. At LaGuardia Airport, the number of geese struck by aircraft has declined 89% since 2004. A unique partnership to alleviate various forms of resident Canada goose damage was formed by John F. Kennedy International Airport, Gateway National Recreation Area and WS-New York that resulted in a 43% decline in Canada Goose and aircraft strikes since 2006.

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. WS-New York works with FWS and the Army Corps of Engineers to protect threatened breeding piping plovers and least terns on Long Island by removing predatory wildlife prior to the nesting season. Also, WS-New York worked with NYS DEC to protect nesting common terns, a state threatened species, in the Lake Erie watershed from gull, red fox and mink predation in the Buffalo area.

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.



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

WS-New York coordinated with State agencies to manage resident Canada geese to improve water quality in Great Lakes watersheds. WS evaluated 28-34 sites for goose damage and excessive fecal coliform bacteria levels annually from 2011 to 2014. Geese were removed from 14-25 sites annually, which prevented 91-130 tons of fecal material from entering the Lake Ontario and Erie watersheds each year.

Protecting People and Animals from Rabies — Rabies poses a serious threat to public and animal health. Although human deaths from rabies are rare, the estimated public health costs associated with rabies detection, prevention, and control nationally exceed \$300 million annually. This management program is one of the largest coordinated efforts to control a disease in wildlife populations ever undertaken in North America.

During the past 14 years, WS work contained the spread of raccoon rabies in western New York, pushed raccoon rabies out of the Champlain Valley and St. Lawrence River Plain, and kept it from entering New York from Vermont and Quebec. WS has completed four years of field trials collecting data towards the licensing of a new rabies vaccine for raccoons. The new vaccine has been instrumental in eliminating raccoon variant of rabies from Quebec and Ontario Provinces. Additionally, WS-New York is collaborating with Cornell University and the New York City Department of Health to test strategies to eliminate raccoon rabies for the third time in the last 7 years.

Protecting New York 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.

WS-New York partners with Federal and State agencies to protect the Great Lakes from invasive species, especially mute swans, which compete with native swans for food and nest sites. WS-New York has saved an estimated 310 acres of wetland habitat from excessive mute swan use in the last 4 years.

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 5 million animals. Currently, the total aggregate cost of damage associated with feral swine is estimated to be \$1.5 billion annually, with at least \$800 million related to direct costs to agriculture.

Feral swine damage New York's natural resources, agriculture, and properties, while threatening human health and safety. WS assisted New York State agencies develop and implement a management plan for feral swine, which involved activities on more than 62,000 acres of private and public properties, as well as education and outreach. After 7 years of locating and removing more than 240 feral swine from the landscape, the State of New York has eliminated all Russian boar from the state and will initiate two years of monitoring to confirm elimination.

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. Beaver presence increases wetland habitats, but in some areas that is problematic.

In 2015, WS-New York worked with two county highway departments and the state and along three railroad lines to reduce flooding to roads and rails. New techniques were implemented to remove beaver dams inside road culverts and water levelers were used to resolve flooding due to beaver.

Looking to the Future

WS continues to provide the citizens of New York with safe, effective, and responsible management assistance for a variety of wildlife damage problems.

In New York, WS is receiving increasing numbers of requests for assistance with problems associated with wildlife at airports, urban and suburban deer property damage and tick-borne disease issues, predation on threatened and endangered migratory birds by wild and feral predators, and invasive species. WS will help airports and nearby properties reduce bird attractants. Each year more cities and towns request assistance with deer damage to native trees, shrubs and forbes in public land forests and tick-borne diseases infecting citizens with debilitating Lyme, Ehrlichiosis and Powassan Diseases. Requests continue for assistance regarding cormorant damage to unique island vegetation, harm to other nesting waterbirds and to native sport fisheries. WS anticipates responding to increased beaver damage to roads and railways. With a statewide resident Canada goose population nearly four times greater than the State's social carrying capacity, public requests for damage relief will continue.

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 York

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 York

- Reducing Canada goose damage to property
- Protecting livestock from damage caused by starlings
- Assessing and reducing wildlife hazards at airports
- Reducing impacts deer to environment and public health
- Protecting the public, domestic pets, and livestock from rabies

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to New York

- Assessing deer damage to the environment and efficacy of management methods
- Developing tools/methods to reduce Atlantic brant damage to aviation and property
- Quantifying and assessing the damage caused by invasive species to wetlands
- Evaluating relocation of raptors from airports to reduce risk of aircraft damage from a strike
- Use of anthropogenic sites by birds near landfills and trash transfer stations

Major Cooperators:

- Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
- New York City Departments of Environmental Protection, Health, Sanitation, and Parks and Recreation
- New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation, Health, and Agriculture and Markets
- Westchester County Airport
- Albany Airport
- Dairy farmers
- Cornell University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory and Cooperative Extension