

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2015

North Carolina

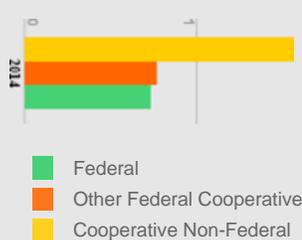


Contact Information:

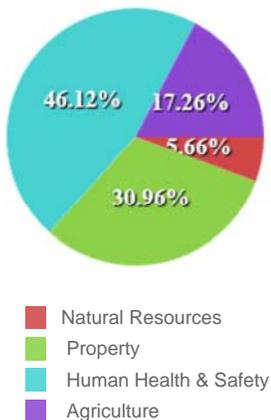
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Total Funding (\$ Million)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in North Carolina

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

North Carolina is one of the nation's fastest growing States, with an estimated 9.4 million people in 2014. More people are moving into the suburbs and rural areas making increased interactions with wildlife inevitable. This coincides with increased calls for assistance with wildlife damage management issues.

WS protects property and reduces human health and safety risks at airports, along highways and railways. The program also protects people, pets, and livestock from wildlife-borne diseases, such as rabies; protects timber and other crops from wildlife depredation; and educates the public about wildlife and damage management.

WS-North Carolina programs include managing damage by beaver, Canada geese, pigeons, and vultures; protecting civilian and military aviation from wildlife strikes; and conducting disease sampling and monitoring of feral swine and raccoons. WS also conducts rabies detection, prevention, and control efforts.

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.

Each year, WS-North Carolina helps thousands of citizens address wildlife damage issues themselves. Problem situations include woodpeckers banging on metal gutters, vultures roosting in backyards, and Canada geese leaving feces on sidewalks, parks, and beaches. WS frequently recommends eliminating attractants (food, water, perches), constructing barriers to exclude wildlife, and scaring wildlife using visual or audio techniques. Many techniques are specific to species, such as hanging effigies to frighten vultures or treating Canada goose eggs to make them infertile.

Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports

Natural Resources cause more than 590,000 hours of aircraft down time and cost the nation's civil aviation industry \$173.365 million (5.66%) 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.

WS partners with the North Carolina Division of Aviation to deliver services to airports statewide. In 2014, WS trained 70 airport personnel from 20 airports in wildlife hazard management techniques, conducted 1-year wildlife hazard assessments at 3 passenger-certificated airports, and conducted 4 direct management projects.

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. WS coordinates cooperative oral rabies vaccination (ORV) programs with the goal of controlling and eventually eliminating certain rabies variants. This management program is one of the largest coordinated efforts to control a disease in wildlife populations ever undertaken in North America. Since 1992 ORV operations have distributed more than 155 million vaccine baits by air and ground, preventing the further spread of rabies variants. In 2014 WS distributed 223,000 ORV baits in North Carolina's western counties.

WS is assisting State wildlife and agriculture agencies monitor and test wildlife for rabies. The State verified 352 rabies cases in wildlife, livestock, and pets in 2014.

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. This expanding population and distribution is



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

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.

North Carolina ranks second nationally in domestic pork production. Of the top 10 U.S. counties with commercial hog operations that are also populated by feral swine, 7 are located in North Carolina. Because diseases can spread from feral swine to domestic hogs, WS conducts extensive sampling and testing of feral swine to help growers better understand disease threats and take appropriate action.

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.

The WS-NC Beaver Management Assistance Program (BMAP) was established in 1992 to assist the NC Department of Transportation (DOT), city and county Governments, soil and water conservation districts, public utilities, private landholders, and others with beaver damage problems. WS-NC administers BMAP with funding from State, county, Federal, and private sources. In FY 2014, BMAP services prevented the impending loss or repair expenditures of an estimated \$ million in timber, agricultural resources, roads and railroad infrastructure, dams and ditches, sewer systems, water treatment facilities, landscaping, and other resources such as homes and golf courses. Comparing BMAP expenditures to savings, the estimated cost-benefit ratio was 1 to 5.28 meaning for every \$1 spent, \$5.28 in resources was saved.

Looking to the Future

WS continues to provide the citizens of North Carolina 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-North Carolina is receiving increasing requests for assistance with problems associated with beaver, waterfowl, wildlife at airports, coyotes in urban/suburban areas, feral swine, and wildlife diseases. Additional attention will be given to protecting aviation, continuing to protect travelers from beaver-flooded and washed-out roadways and rail beds, and protecting the public from rabies. Awareness of these concerns dramatically increased following recent aircraft/bird collisions, a train derailment carrying hazardous chemicals due to a railroad trestle undermined by beaver, and increased incidences of rabies, including attacks on people by rabid foxes, coyotes, and beavers. With increases in non-Federal cooperatively funded programs, WS envisions increasing work on such activities.

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 North Carolina

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 North Carolina

- Protecting highways, railways, timber, agricultural crops, public utilities, and natural resources from beaver damage
- Protecting people and public safety from wildlife threats on highways and railways and at airports
- Assessing and reducing wildlife hazards at airports
- Assessing and reducing public health threats from wildlife diseases such as rabies
- Protecting agricultural animals and pets from wildlife-borne diseases

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to North Carolina

- Developing tools/methods to reduce beaver and nutria damage to roads, railways, timber, and utilities
- Evaluating and monitoring feral swine for wildlife diseases
- Evaluating the effects of prescribed burning on wildlife habitat at airports
- Evaluating the use of portable radar units to detect real-time movement of birds at airports
- Using satellite telemetry to track the movements of bald eagles in the vicinity of airports

Major Cooperators:

- North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
- North Carolina Department of Transportation
- North Carolina Division of Aviation
- North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Fort Bragg Military Reservation
- Seymour Johnson Air Force Base
- Marine Corps Air Stations Cherry Point and New River
- Piedmont Triad International Airport
- Duplin, Lenoir, Nash, New Hanover, Pender, Robeson, and Wayne Counties
- City of Fayetteville (Cumberland County)