

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2015

Ohio



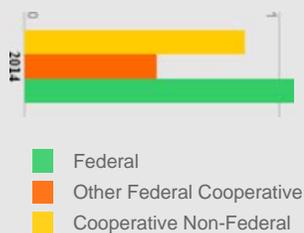
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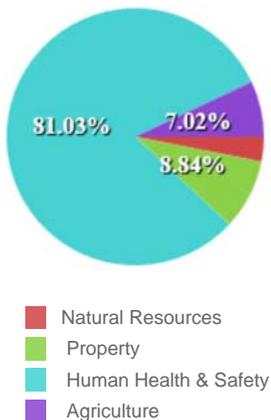
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Total Funding (\$ Million)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Ohio

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

WS oversees a multitude of programs and projects within Ohio to resolve human/wildlife conflicts. WS works on airports to prevent aircraft-wildlife collisions. WS conducts disease surveillance to monitor wildlife diseases that threaten the health of people, pets, livestock, and wildlife. WS provides leadership and is a member of the Ohio Rabies Taskforce, and works year-round to stop raccoon variant rabies (RVR) from spreading westward and to eliminate the disease from the State.

Ohio's livestock producers and crop farmers rely on WS' expertise in resolving conflicts with wildlife such as coyotes, black vultures, feral swine, and blackbirds. As a member of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Task Force, WS-Ohio works to reduce predation on threatened species of turtles, manage mute swans to support trumpeter swan introduction and eliminate feral swine populations to protect natural resources and agriculture in the Lake Erie Region of Ohio. WS works with local communities to reduce wildlife conflicts in urban areas.

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 Ohio during 2014, WS provided over 10,000 people with advice on how to reduce wildlife damage with an emphasis on fundamental methods of modifying habitat, exclusion, and other non-lethal techniques.

WS applies and recommends an integrated wildlife damage management approach that incorporates biological, economic, public, environmental and other information into decision making. WS implements a wide range of damage management activities; the following examples highlight WS' role in protecting resources in Ohio.

Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports — Globally, wildlife strikes with aircraft have killed more than 250 people and destroyed more than 245 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-Ohio provided assistance to 31 airports in FY 2014. WS' staff provides on-site evaluations, comprehensive wildlife hazard assessments, management plans, and consultation on airport expansion and design to minimize wildlife hazards in airport environments. In FY 2014 WS-Ohio trained 79 airport personnel in methods to reduce the risk of aircraft-wildlife collisions as well as providing operational support in the reduction of wildlife hazards at airports. Three full-time WS Wildlife Biologists are stationed at airports in Ohio to monitor and reduce wildlife hazards through habitat management, behavior modification, and other methods.

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.

Since 2007, a Wildlife Disease Biologist has been conducting disease surveillance and management



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

activities in Ohio to protect people, pets, livestock, and wildlife. Working closely with private and Government entities and in conjunction with national objectives, this disease program conducts surveillance for over a dozen different zoonotic and agriculturally important diseases in birds, furbearing mammals, white-tailed deer, and feral swine.

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 in the United States with the goal of controlling and eventually eliminating certain rabies variants to protect human and animal health and reduce associated costs. 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 coordinated by WS have distributed more than 155 million vaccine baits by air and ground across 19 States preventing the further spread of rabies variants.

In an effort to halt the westward spread of raccoon variant rabies (RVR) across Ohio into the Midwest, WS-Ohio cooperated with State and Federal agencies in creating a vaccination zone. ORV baits are distributed throughout the eastern counties from Lake Erie to the Ohio River in the south.

In 2004 a RVR positive raccoon was found 6.6 miles beyond the immune barrier causing WS to create a contingency baiting zone. WS began using direct rapid immunohistochemistry test (dRIT) to test samples in 2005 to monitor areas in Ohio for rabies. Since 2005 WS has tested more than 11,500 samples. From 2004 to 2015, 168 animals have been identified as RVR positive through both public health and enhanced surveillance efforts. In 2007, 18 RVR positives were found in close proximity to one another, triggering an intense four-year trap-vaccinate-release (TVR) effort. During this time WS hand-vaccinated over 13,000 raccoons.

The annual number of RVR cases within the contingency zone has fluctuated since it was first detected, from 48 to zero. 2014 marked the third year in a row that this zone was RVR-free. As a result the ORV zone was reduced in areas of the contingency zone in 2014.

As the program continues and bait zones are further reduced, monitoring of areas in Ohio becomes even more important to track the disease. WS-Ohio is working with the National Rabies Management Program on a pilot study to standardize enhanced surveillance practices for the ORV program nationwide to better track rabies cases.

The combined use of ORV, TVR, enhanced surveillance and the search for more effective vaccines will continue to protect human health and safety as well as agricultural and natural resource interests in the State and further the goal of eliminating raccoon variant rabies from Ohio.

Looking to the Future

WS continues to provide the citizens of Ohio 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-Ohio is receiving increasing numbers of requests for assistance with eliminating feral swine, managing overabundant urban deer, and protecting threatened and endangered species. Continued cooperation among private entities, local Governments, and State and Federal agencies will be paramount in the resolution of these issues.

Wildlife Services Funding in Ohio

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.

Top 5 Major WS Assistance Activities in Ohio

- Protecting livestock from predation
- Mitigating wildlife hazards at airports
- Protecting threatened and endangered species
- Protecting people, pets, livestock, and wildlife from disease
- Eliminating populations of feral swine

Top 3 WS Research Projects of Interest to Ohio

- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Developing methods for managing predation on threatened and endangered species in the Lake Erie Region
- Developing management methods to control feral swine

Major Cooperators:

- Cattleman's, Pork Producers, Sheep Improvement, & Poultry Breeder Association
- Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center
- The Ohio State University Extension
- Ohio Department of Natural Resources-Division of Wildlife, Division of Forestry, Division of Parks
- Ohio Departments of Agriculture, Health, and Transportation
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Department of Defense
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Great Lakes Restoration Initiative