

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2015

Wyoming

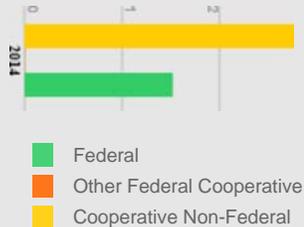


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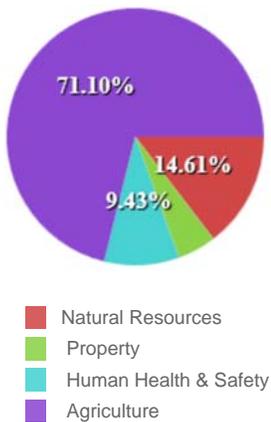
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Total Funding (\$ Million)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Wyoming

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

A significant role of WS-Wyoming is protecting livestock from predators such as coyotes, red fox, mountain lions, black bears, wolves and grizzly bears. WS' specialists accurately identify the cause of livestock damage and resolve the conflict while minimizing impacts on wildlife. WS works with diverse cooperators, including airports, businesses, cities, counties, and individuals to curtail or prevent wildlife damage to a variety of resources.

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 nationwide.

In most cases, landowners and resource managers use technical information to implement habitat management and other methods to reduce damage on their properties. Wyoming livestock producers working with WS use some nonlethal methods to protect livestock. 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 Livestock from Predation — Despite producers' best efforts to protect their livestock, thousands of domesticated farm animals are killed by predators each year. Producers often turn to WS for assistance in reducing and preventing further predation. The integrated approach implemented by WS includes recommendations that are applied by the producers and, in many cases, operational wildlife management implemented by WS.

Agriculture ranks among the top three industries in Wyoming with an estimated \$1 billion economic impact. Cattle account for about 61% of agricultural cash receipts. Wyoming ranks fourth nationally in stock sheep and wool production. WS-Wyoming works with the cattle and sheep industries to protect against predation.

Coyotes remain the most significant predator. Increasing populations of grizzly bears, wolves, and other species have coincided with increased livestock depredation. Wyoming Agriculture Statistics Service (WASS) reported that in 2013 sheep producers lost 17,300 sheep and lambs to predators, valued at about \$ 2.7 million. Without professional and accountable predator damage management, livestock losses could be two to three times greater.

An operations analysis found that 100% of Wyoming livestock producers, who cooperate with WS, use nonlethal methods to protect their livestock. Strategies vary but producers utilize as many as 18 separate nonlethal techniques.

In Wyoming the estimated cost of predator management programs is \$6 million, including the costs of nonlethal methods and expenditures by WS and County Predator Boards. The benefit to cost ratio is estimated at \$2.30 to \$1. The benefit from predator management to cattle is twice that of the sheep industry. Ranch profits decrease by almost 20 percent with just a 2% increase in calf death loss. Since wolves have a larger impact on the cattle industry than coyotes, wolf predation must be responsibly managed.

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 collaborates closely with the Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Defense, and other Government agencies. WS provided



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

assistance to 839 airports in 2014.

Airports in Wyoming effectively protect airfields with high fences, which makes large mammals within the operations area a rarity. Birds are not as easily excluded. WS has completed initial consultations at all of the State's commercial airports and is providing wildlife hazard assessments and associated services at Cody, Cheyenne, Jackson, Rock Springs, and Sheridan. Where wildlife permits are needed for removal, WS assists the airports complete their permit requirements and provides hazard reduction training to airport personnel.

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 2012, WS safeguarded populations of 168 T&E species nationwide.

Following the experimental reintroduction of gray wolves in the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem in 1995, the current population of more than 1,674 wolves in the northern Rockies exceeds established recovery goals. Management responsibilities were transferred from State management to the FWS on September 23, 2014.

When wolves turn from their natural prey species, the wolf management agency requests WS to identify damage and resolve wolf depredation complaints. The efficient and professional management of wolves associated with predation problems builds public support and tolerance for their presence and promotes conservation of all wolves.

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

The wildlife disease biologist in Wyoming plays a supporting role with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD), the Wyoming Livestock Board, and USDA Veterinary Services for in-state disease issues, such as chronic wasting disease and brucellosis. The disease biologist also coordinates and conducts statewide surveillance projects at the request of varied State agencies. Since 2005, WS-Wyoming has cooperated to conduct statewide surveillance for plague and tularemia. Statewide surveillance for the incidence of canine heartworm in wild canines demonstrated very low prevalence in Wyoming.

Protecting People and Animals from Rabies — 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 one of the largest coordinated efforts to control a disease in wildlife populations ever undertaken in North America.

Since 2004, WS-Wyoming cooperated with the Wyoming Animal Damage Management Board (ADMB) and the State Veterinary Laboratory in Laramie to provide striped skunks for an ongoing statewide rabies surveillance program.

Protecting Other Resources — Agricultural landscapes provide abundant wildlife habitat. WS assists farmers and ranchers protect crops and other resources from damage caused by waterfowl, beaver, gulls, black bears, and other species. WS-Wyoming partners with the WGFD, predator management districts, Wyoming ADMB, landowners, and sportsmen groups to conduct projects to protect and enhance populations of game species such as mule deer, pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, sage grouse, and other upland game birds.

Looking to the Future

WS continues to provide Wyoming citizens with safe, effective, and responsible management assistance for a variety of wildlife damage problems. Potential for human-wildlife conflicts likely will increase and WS' ability to respond will depend on personnel and resource availability, as well as legislative authorities.

In Wyoming WS receives increasing requests for assistance with problems with coyotes, wolves, eagles, ravens, and other wildlife. WS works with State and Federal wildlife agencies, having management authority, to address these requests.

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 Wyoming

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 Wyoming

- Protecting livestock from predators, primarily coyotes
- Participating on the damage management boards and wildlife enhancement and disease projects
- Assessing and reducing public health threats from skunk rabies
- Assessing and reducing depredation due to wolf, grizzly bear, black bear, and mountain lion
- Managing damage and threats caused by birds to airports, property, and public health

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Wyoming

- Developing tools/methods/strategies to reduce grizzly bear damage to livestock
- Quantifying, monitoring and assessing the damage caused by predators to sage grouse
- Evaluating the economic effectiveness of wildlife damage management to reduce predator damage to livestock
- Developing methods for oral rabies vaccine delivery to wild striped skunks
- Conducting research in support of registration of compounds for predation management

Major Cooperators:

- Wyoming Wool Growers Association
- Wyoming Stock Growers Association
- Wyoming Department of Agriculture
- Wyoming Game and Fish Department
- Wyoming Animal Damage Management Board
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation
- Wyoming County Predator Management Districts
- Wyoming Department of Health
- Wyoming Airports