

# Wildlife Services

Protecting People  
Protecting Agriculture  
Protecting Wildlife

## State Report

FY 2010

# Georgia



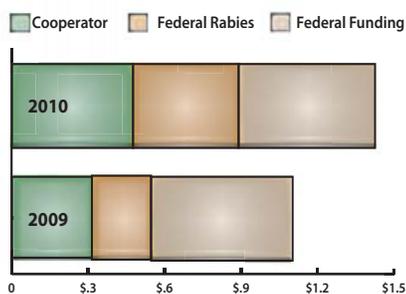
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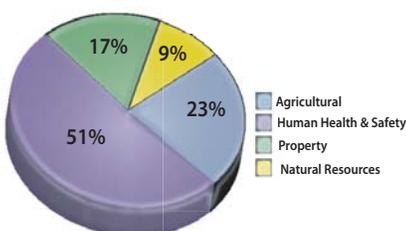
### Major Cooperators

- Georgia Departments of Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Health
- Moody, Warner Robins, Kings Bay and Dobbins Military Bases; US Army COE
- USDA, Agricultural Research Service & Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC)
- Georgia Port Authority
- Georgia Cooperative Extension Service
- University of Georgia, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources
- CSX Railroad & Georgia Power
- Cobb County Water Department and multiple County Road Departments
- Georgia State Botanical Gardens
- Private Companies (timber, transportation, chemical, aerospace, manufacturing, etc)

### Total Funding (Millions)



### Resources Protected % of Total Funds



### USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Georgia

Every day, residents, industries, organizations and agencies call on Georgia Wildlife Services (WS) for assistance in addressing damage or threats posed by wildlife to agriculture, human health and safety, natural resources and property. WS' professional wildlife biologists employ an integrated management approach to resolve conflicts with effective, selective and humane strategies.

WS biologists help protect property and agriculture from damage caused by deer, feral swine, pigeons, vultures, and Canada geese. They strive to minimize wildlife-aircraft conflicts by providing expertise to civilian airports and military installations. WS helps reduce damage to Georgia's timber industry, transportation, natural resources, and property caused by beavers and associated flooding. It also protects people, pets, and livestock from wildlife-borne diseases, such as rabies; guards natural resources from wildlife depredation; and educates the public about wildlife and wildlife damage management.

### Applying Science & Expertise to Wildlife Challenges

WS offers information, advice, equipment, and materials that enable many people to resolve wildlife conflicts on their own. Often, this technical assistance can be provided over the phone. WS also provides on-site expertise, or direct assistance, to manage complex wildlife problems that cannot be safely resolved by others. To support this effort, WS conducts scientific research across the nation to develop answers to new problems posed by wildlife and to ensure the program benefits from the latest science and technology.

**Protecting Agricultural Resources**—With Georgia's abundant wildlife, conflicts commonly arise that require professional assistance. WS provides assistance in protecting tree seedling from deer and timber stands from flooding associated with beavers. Crop damage from deer, blackbirds and geese occurs in grain crops, feedlots, vineyards and hayfields. Vultures not only feed on carrion, but will attack newborn calves, horses, goats and pigs, WS aides in dispersing unwanted flocks of these large scavengers. WS has assisted Federal and State Agriculture Experiment Stations in protecting valuable research plots from depredating species such as deer, blackbirds, and geese.

**Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports**—WS provides certified airport wildlife biologists to assist military and commercial facilities in reducing conflicts with wildlife. When requested, WS prepares Wildlife Hazard Assessments and Management Plans for these airports in conjunction with the Federal Aviation Administration. WS assists in reducing a variety of birds and mammals from airport runways and air space.

**Wildlife Disease Management Activities**—WS works on a variety of wildlife disease issues. Georgia continues to partner with other states in an oral rabies vaccination program to prevent the spread of the raccoon strain of rabies into the central United States, with the ultimate goal of eliminating this form of rabies. Collaborative work has been done with State and Federal agencies for the detection of several wildlife diseases such as classical swine fever, pseudorabies and swine brucellosis among others.

**Protecting Health and Safety in the Workplace**—WS works at military bases, steel manufacturing facilities, power plants, paper mills, railroad facilities, hospitals, and public and private buildings to control overabundant populations of birds from defacing property and creating unsanitary conditions for employees in the workplace. WS applies wildlife damage management to reduce damage associated with various wildlife species including pigeons, blackbirds, starlings, sparrows, crows, vultures, geese, bats, and gulls.



United States Department of Agriculture  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

**Protecting Gamebirds**—Efforts continue to determine how to restore native bobwhite quail in the southern United States. WS' biologists are using safe, effective tools to manage major nest predators including armadillos, raccoons, and bobcats. Results are promising, with potential application not only in Georgia, but the entire bobwhite range.

**Protecting Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites**—WS works cooperatively with Georgia to manage wildlife damage problem at the 63 parks and historic sites through the state. Prime species of concern to park managers are deer, feral swine, ducks, geese, feral cats, bats, opossum, armadillo, squirrel, pigeons, beaver, wild dogs, and raccoons.

**Protecting Property**—Nearly 1,000 requests are received annually to help understand and alleviate wildlife conflicts on public and private property. Typically, resources protected include parks, public beaches, water treatment facilities, golf courses, residential subdivisions, airports, office complexes, schools, private residences, watershed lakes, waterfowl impoundments, power companies, automobiles, aircraft, watercraft, plant nurseries, landscaping, industrial sites, and public and private buildings. Species involved include armadillo, bat, bear, beaver, deer, groundhog, muskrat, skunk, raccoon, opossum, otter, coyote, fox, bobcat, squirrel, alligator, and snakes. Birds include geese, ducks, cormorants, pigeons, herons, egrets, blackbirds, crows, starlings, sparrows, and vultures. A variety of methods are used to assist cooperators, including habitat modification, exclusion, repellents, lethal control, as well as the safe use of explosives to remove beaver dams.

#### **Looking to the Future**

WS will continue to provide safe, professional, and humane assistance to combat the diverse range of wildlife conflicts that exist in the state. Increased habitat loss, human population growth, and the adaptability of many wildlife species to human environments will expand the need for professional resolution of wildlife conflicts and diseases in the future. Significant species of concern include deer, geese, beaver, raccoon, vultures, pigeons, predators, and feral swine.

#### **Georgia Wildlife Services Funding**

In addition to receiving Federally allocated funds, WS also receives funding from agricultural producers, private individuals, businesses, and other Federal, State, and local government agencies. In most cases, these cooperators need help to resolve wildlife damage problems or they play a role in managing wildlife damage.

#### **Top 5 Major Assistance Activities:**

- Safely and efficiently managing overabundant deer herds in sensitive conditions, donating venison to area food banks
- Protecting timber, roadways, natural resources and property from beaver damage and flooding
- Protecting human safety, aircraft and military operations from wildlife hazards at airports
- Humanely relocating Canada goose flocks and controlling overabundant feral pigeon populations to reduce associated property and health problems
- Co-teaching a wildlife damage course at the University of Georgia

#### **Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Georgia**

- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation and problems associated with agriculture, property, and human health and safety
- Evaluating and monitoring wildlife diseases and parasites such as rabies, pseudorabies, swine brucellosis and classical swine fever
- Improving assessment, sampling and economic methods for wildlife damage management
- Protecting forest and wildlife resources as well as evaluating aquaculture problems in the southeastern United States
- Comparing different methodologies for establishing deer density estimations