

# Wildlife Services

Protecting People  
Protecting Agriculture  
Protecting Wildlife

## State Report

FY 2010

# North Dakota



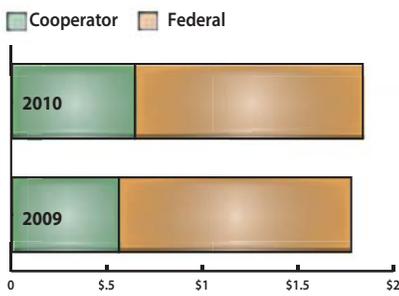
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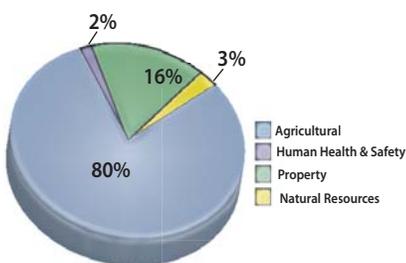
### Major Cooperators

- North Dakota Department of Agriculture
- North Dakota Game and Fish Department
- North Dakota Association of Counties
- North Dakota Department of Transportation
- North Dakota Department of Health
- North Dakota State University; Dept. of Biological Sciences
- National Sunflower Association
- North Dakota Lamb and Wool Producers
- North Dakota Stockmen's Association
- North Dakota Farm Bureau
- Federal Aviation Administration
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- USDA Forest Service
- Bureau of Land Management

### Total Funding (Millions)



### Resources Protected % of Total Funds



### USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in North Dakota

Everyday, residents, industries, organizations and agencies call on North Dakota Wildlife Services (WS) for help in protecting agriculture, human health and safety, natural resources, and property from damage or threats posed by wildlife. WS' professional wildlife biologists respond to these requests with effective, selective, and humane strategies to resolve wildlife conflicts.

WS works to protect property and reduce human health and safety risks at airports, homes, and along roadways. The program also protects people, pets, and livestock from wildlife-borne diseases; guards many natural resources, such as timber, from wildlife damage and educates the public about wildlife and wildlife damage management. Specific projects conducted by North Dakota WS include managing damage caused by coyote and beaver; managing blackbird damage to sunflowers; mitigating waterfowl damage to grain crops; sampling and monitoring for avian influenza, plague, and tularemia; mitigating wildlife hazard assessment at civilian and military airports; and managing wildlife damage in urban environments.

### 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 Crops**—Annually, blackbirds are responsible for substantial economic losses to sunflower and grain crops in the upper Great Plains. In 2010, WS identified over 4,500 acres of cattail wetlands as blackbird roost habitat. These areas were treated with an aquatic herbicide to make them less attractive to the blackbirds while improving habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife. Other assistance, specifically the distribution of 39,000 rounds of pyrotechnic scare devices and 465 propane cannons, were provided at no cost to 225 sunflower producers.

In response to increased occurrences of Canada goose damage to crops, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department continued a program that allowed landowners with chronic goose damage to legally remove geese and destroy nests under the authority of depredation permits. WS, working in cooperation with the North Dakota Game and Fish and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, assisted 195 farmers who reported goose damage. Scare devices, including pyrotechnics (10,000 rounds), propane cannons (207), and mylar flagging (665) were provided at no cost to the landowners.

**Protecting Livestock**— In 2010, WS assisted 498 livestock producers who reported conflicts with predators. USDA/National Agricultural Statistics Service documented over \$1.6 million in livestock losses to predators with a control program in place. Scientific research shows that in the absence of a livestock protection program, the economic impacts resulting from coyote predation on livestock could have been three to five times higher.

**Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports**— Wildlife collisions with airplanes cause more than 600,000 hours of aircraft downtime, cost U.S. civil aviation in excess of \$615 million annually, and pose a significant hazard to flight crews and passengers. Within North Dakota, WS assisted the 8 major civilian airports, several general aviation airports, and 3 military airports with a variety of potentially hazardous situations involving wildlife. Deer, ducks, geese, and gulls are the species which pose the greatest hazards. WS' NWRC scientists continue to investigate and develop management techniques to reduce wildlife hazards at airports.



United States Department of Agriculture  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

**Beaver Damage Management**—WS assisted 325 property owners where beaver had damaged trees, roadways, and crops. Documented damage totaled more than \$300,000 in 2010. Certified explosive specialists used binary explosives to remove 60 beaver dams in order to restore normal water flow in streams and creeks. Explosives are a cost-efficient means for removing beaver dams. Every \$1 spent on explosives saved property owners over \$2 on the cost of using heavy machinery to remove the dams. WS personnel are trained and certified in the safe and effective use of explosives.

**Wildlife Disease Surveillance**— In 2010, WS and the North Dakota Game and Fish Department participated in a national avian influenza surveillance program. This project was initiated to determine if highly pathogenic avian influenza was present in wild birds. Each agency set a goal of collecting a combined total of 1,600 samples from 20 species of birds. The highly pathogenic strain of avian influenza was not detected in North Dakota or other areas within the United States.

WS also collected blood samples from various species to screen for the presence of plague and tularemia. This project was conducted in cooperation with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

WS served as the lead agency for the removal of feral swine which pose threats to livestock health and the environment. WS cooperated with the North Dakota Board of Animal Health, Dakota Game and Fish Department, and USDA/Veterinary Services in efforts to ensure that feral swine do not establish populations within the state.

**Urban Wildlife Conflicts**—Human/wildlife conflicts in urban areas increase each year. These conflicts range from animals inside homes to damage to trees, lawns, and gardens. Wildlife typically responsible for these problems include beaver, geese, rabbits, raccoons, skunks, and squirrels.

**Information Transfer**—WS continued its extensive educational program to help residents of North Dakota with their specific wildlife conflicts. Over 1,000 personal consultations and instructional sessions were provided for individuals throughout the state. Informational leaflets and equipment, such as live traps, were loaned free-of-charge so that individuals could solve their specific problems. WS provided instruction on the safe, effective, and humane use of all loaned equipment.

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

WS strives to provide North Dakota with safe, effective and humane assistance for diverse wildlife conflicts, but the need is on-going and increasing. Public safety, particularly at airports, concerns wildlife managers, as does surveillance and response to diseases which may be carried by wildlife.

#### **North Dakota 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 wildlife damage management.

#### **For Research:**

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The NWRC Bismarck field station primarily develops new methods and refines current techniques of reducing blackbird damage to sunflower. Current research includes developing environmentally safe repellents to reduce blackbird populations. Originally established in 1989, the field station includes two wildlife biologists, a program assistant and seasonal and graduate students.

#### **Top 5 Major Assistance Activities in 2010:**

- Mitigating coyote predation on livestock
- Managing blackbird damage to sunflowers
- Protecting property and public health and safety from beaver damage
- Protecting civil and military aviation from wildlife strikes
- Managing damage caused by Canada geese

#### **Top 3 WS Research Projects of Interest to North Dakota in 2010:**

- Developing methods to reduce blackbird damage to sunflowers
- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Evaluating early detection measures for wildlife-borne diseases