

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2010

Rhode Island



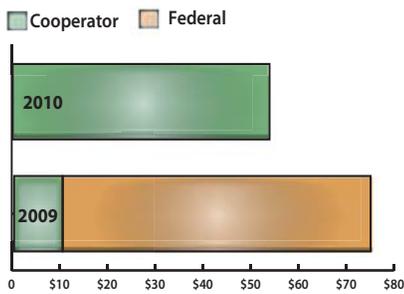
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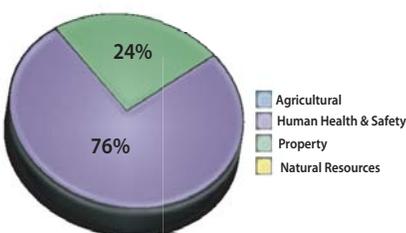
Major Cooperators

- Rhode Island Department of Environmental management— Wildlife Division
- Rhode Island Department of Public Health
- Rhode Island Department of Agriculture
- Rhode Island Airport Corporation
- Rhode Island Air National Guard

Total Funding (Thousands)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Rhode Island

Routinely, residents, and other people from industries, organizations, and agencies call on the Wildlife Services (WS) program Rhode Island for expertise and assistance in protecting agriculture, property, natural resources, and human health and safety from damage or threats posed by wildlife. Managed by professional wildlife biologists, WS personnel respond with effective, selective, and humane strategies to resolve wildlife conflicts.

Rhode Island is a diverse ecological mix of urban, suburban, and rural settings with approximately more than one million residents. WS provides integrated wildlife management programs that are biologically, environmentally, and socially sound, and comply with local, State, and Federal wildlife management regulations.

WS provides agricultural assistance primarily to vegetable and turf farmers experiencing damage by Canada geese. WS also assists the public when buildings are damaged or water supplies are contaminated by gulls, pigeons, crows, or bats. WS protects the traveling public by reducing hazards caused by crows, geese, ospreys or other wildlife, on or near an airport.

Applying Science & Expertise to Wildlife Challenges

The WS program 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 may also provide cooperative on-site help, or direct assistance, to address complex wildlife problems that may be difficult or cannot be safely and effectively resolved by others. To support these efforts, WS in Rhode Island continues to collaborate with researchers of the WS' National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) when and where appropriate to help develop answers to new problems posed by wildlife and to ensure the program benefits from the latest science and technology

Protecting Air Travel—Wildlife strikes with airplanes cost U.S. civil aviation more than \$615 million annually and create hazards to flight crews, passengers, and aircraft. Many Rhode Island airports are expanding as air travel is expected to increase to and from the State. Unfortunately, as wildlife populations such as geese, coyotes, and deer increase around these airports, the risk to air travelers grows as well.

WS is recognized internationally for its scientific expertise in reducing wildlife hazards to the aviation industry. WS' NWRC conducts research to understand the nature of wildlife hazards at airports, develops management tools to reduce these hazards, and provides airport personnel with information to manage hazards. NWRC also maintains the National Wildlife Strike Database used by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and airports to monitor trends and wildlife species that pose the greatest concern to aviation. WS uses the information and technology developed from field research and the strike data base to enhance development of wildlife hazard management strategies and methods for application at local airports in Rhode Island.

WS personnel provide training, conduct wildlife hazard assessments, and direct wildlife management projects at Rhode Island airports through partnerships with the FAA, airport management, and various other State and Federal agencies. During 2010, WS conducted operational wildlife damage management projects at two airports and provided technical assistance to a total of six airport facilities. WS also provided one wildlife hazard management workshop for all Rhode Island State airports.

Wildlife Disease Management and Protecting Human and Livestock Health—As human and wildlife populations grow, the threat of wildlife-borne diseases being passed to humans and livestock increases. To enhance preparedness for emergency disease response the WS program continues to collaborate with USDA-Veterinary Services (VS) and several state and local health agencies.



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Avian influenza (AI), is a viral disease which can infect domestic poultry and some wild birds. The highly pathogenic H5N1 strain of bird flu has been found in increasing numbers of countries in Europe, Asia and Africa. WS continues to lead a national multi-interagency collaboration effort to monitor wild migratory birds in the United States for HPAI H5N1. WS works in collaboration with State agencies and other public and private organizations to conduct surveillance activities for AI by collecting samples from wild migratory birds.

Protecting Personal Property—The resident Canada goose population has been increasing in Rhode Island during the past 30 years and continues to be a major wildlife problem. During FY 2010 approximately 40% of public requests for assistance in Rhode Island involved conflicts caused by Canada geese and gulls. WS in Rhode Island recommends an integrated wildlife damage management program in which several methods are used in combination to manage goose damage. Examples include habitat management, exclusion, harassment, and repellants. WS program specialists currently conduct integrated programs, including egg treatment, with towns and homeowner associations to prevent goose eggs from hatching, in order to slow goose population growth.

Gulls are another wildlife species that causes serious property damage or other conflicts in Rhode Island. During FY 2010, WS provided 19 consultations and evaluations involving both gulls and Canada geese, many of which also involve assistance in providing recommendations on the issuance of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) depredation permits. Assistance with providing recommendations to the FWS was done at no charge to the cooperators or FWS.

Looking to the Future

Preventing wildlife-borne diseases from affecting humans and livestock has also become a growing concern in Rhode Island. Increased air travel through Rhode Island airports, coupled with the population growth of many bird species, has created a greater need for airport managers to deal with safety threats posed by wildlife.

Rhode Island Wildlife Services Funding

In addition to receiving Federally allocated funds, WS also receives funds from agricultural producers, private individuals, businesses, and other Federal, State, and local government agencies that have a vested interest in the program's ability to alleviate conflicts caused by wildlife. These cooperators have a role in wildlife damage management, because, in most cases, they need help to resolve these wildlife damage problems or conflicts.

Top Major Assistance Activities:

- Protecting civilian and military aircraft and passengers from wildlife collisions
- Protecting property, agriculture, and vegetable crops from Canada geese
- Protecting buildings from damage by gulls, crows, pigeons, and various other wildlife species

Top 4 WS Research Projects of Interest to Rhode Island:

- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Developing improved methods to reduce goose damage
- Evaluating activities of waterfowl and impacts to disease and parasite reservoirs
- Monitoring and surveillance various wildlife zoonotic diseases
- Improving assessment, sampling, and economic methods for wildlife damage management