

# Wildlife Services

Protecting People  
Protecting Agriculture  
Protecting Wildlife

## State Report

FY 2010

# Wisconsin



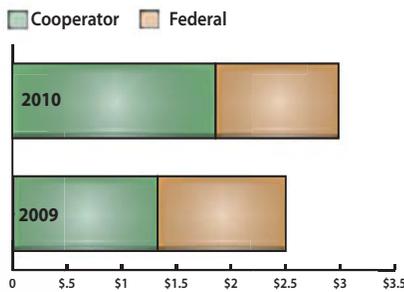
### Contact Information:

Jason Suckow, Wisconsin  
Wildlife Services State Director  
732 Lois Drive  
Sun Prairie, WI 53590  
Phone: (608) 837-2727  
FAX: (608) 837-6754  
Toll-Free Number: 1-866-4USDAWS  
(1-866-487-3297)  
E-mail: [jason.suckow@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:jason.suckow@aphis.usda.gov)  
[www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife\\_damage](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage)

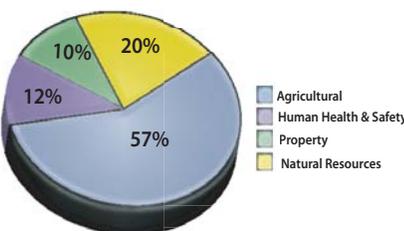
### Major Cooperators

- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
- Wisconsin Department of Health Services
- University of Wisconsin
- Wisconsin Native American Tribes
- U.S. Forest Service
- Counties, Townships, Airports

### Total Funding (Millions)



### Resources Protected % of Total Funds



### USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Wisconsin

Every day, Wisconsin residents, industries, organizations, municipalities and agencies call on Wildlife Services (WS) for assistance in addressing damage or threats posed by wildlife to human health and safety, natural resources, crops and property. Managed by professional wildlife biologists and specialists, WS responds with integrated, effective, selective and humane strategies to resolve wildlife conflicts.

The WS program in Wisconsin administers a variety of wildlife damage management programs, positively impacting a large number of citizens. WS specialists provide assistance to farmers who experience wildlife damage to their crops. Specialists capture and relocate problem black bears and work to reduce conflicts with Canada geese, white-tailed deer, wolves, and beaver. WS' active bird damage management program assists farmers, municipalities, and businesses to deal with over-abundant bird issues. WS also protects public safety and aircraft operations from wildlife hazards at civil and military airports throughout the State.

### Applying Science & Expertise to Wildlife Challenges

WS offers information, advice, equipment, and materials that enable 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**—High levels of crop damage result from abundant white-tailed deer, black bears, wild turkeys, and Canada geese. Under the State's Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims Program, WS cooperates with 49 counties and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) to provide damage abatement and appraisal assistance. WS investigates and verifies more than \$2 million in wildlife damage each year.

**Protecting Livestock from European Starling Damage**—Starling damage remains a concern for Wisconsin dairy farmers and beef producers. High concentrations of starlings consume and contaminate livestock feed and, potentially, increase disease transmission and reduce milk production. WS specialists provide advice on effective techniques to manage starling damage. When requested and warranted, trained and certified WS personnel directly assist producers by using pesticides to reduce local starling populations.

**Protecting Livestock and Gray Wolves**—WS works collaboratively with WDNR to manage conflicts caused by gray wolves. More than 800 wolves in about 200 packs occur throughout Wisconsin's forest regions. Under a cooperative agreement with WDNR, WS investigates approximately 200 wolf complaints annually including human safety threats and wolf depredations involving livestock, pets, and hunting dogs. WS implements an integrated program to reduce valid livestock depredations and threats. WS' ability to respond effectively to wolf depredation of livestock is essential for public support and acceptance of a healthy gray wolf population in Wisconsin.

**Urban Human Health and Safety Issues**—Increasing populations of resident Canada geese cause human-goose conflicts in urban areas. High goose densities in parks, business sites, and residential areas raise human health and safety concerns. To help alleviate such conflicts, WS continues aggressive management including egg oiling, nest removal, and lethal removal, donating the contaminant tested edible meat to local food pantries.



United States Department of Agriculture  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

**Disease Issues**—In addition to emergency response assistance in Wisconsin, WS participates in disease monitoring and surveillance projects to safeguard American agriculture, human health, and wildlife. WS works closely with various State and Federal wildlife, agriculture and human health agencies with chronic wasting disease (CWD) surveillance and management in free-ranging and captive white-tailed deer and elk herds. WS also conducts feral swine population management and disease surveillance for swine brucellosis, pseudorabies and classical swine fever. WS manages a toll-free phone line for statewide public reporting of sick and dead birds and testing for West Nile virus, avian influenza, Newcastle disease and other avian diseases of significance to human and animal health; and monitoring for the presence of tularemia in aquatic rodents and other susceptible species.

**Double-crested cormorants**—The cormorant breeding population in the Green Bay–Lake Michigan region increased 33 percent annually between 1973 and 1997, and 72 percent between 1997 and 2009, raising concerns about associated impacts on local fisheries and also negative impacts to sensitive habits and wildlife. In recent years, WS has assisted the WDNR with egg oiling and limited removal of adults to manage local growing cormorant populations.

**Protecting Property**—WS also cooperates with WDNR to manage black bear damage to agriculture crops and property as well as threats to human health and safety. WS receives over 1,000 requests for assistance to resolve black bear complaints annually. The majority are resolved through technical assistance. Some require direct control operations, resulting in capture and relocation of 600-800 bears annually. The majority of the bears trapped and relocated are in response to bear damage to corn and other crops.

**Protecting Multiple Resources**— Protecting multiple natural resources through beaver damage management is a major objective in Wisconsin. WS manages about 200 complaints involving flooding of timber or roadways per year. WS has cooperative agreements with counties and townships to provide damage management for road and timber resources in which beaver and dam removal are estimated to save over \$1 million annually.

WS continues to cooperate with WDNR, U.S. Forest Service, Wisconsin Tribes and private organizations to manage beaver damage on high-quality trout streams to protect coldwater natural resources. Beaver dams cause significant negative impacts to coldwater streams by warming water, blocking trout movement, and reducing trout reproduction and survival. WS' beaver and dam removal efforts, including annual maintenance, have restored approximately 1,500 miles of high-quality trout streams to free flowing conditions, enhancing the natural reproduction of native brook trout populations.

WS also manages beaver damage on several northern Wisconsin lakes to restore and enhance wild rice growth. Dams on lake outlets create fluctuating water levels that reduce or prevent wild rice germination in early summer and negatively impact the later growth stage. Beaver and dam removals have restored wild rice beds with positive impacts on wildlife habitat and recreational harvest of wild rice.

## Looking to the Future

Demands for WS assistance on various issues continue to increase. Two emerging issues are assistance with invasive species (feral swine) and endangered species (Kirtland's warbler and piping plover). Invasive species concerns may be gaining ground in Wisconsin with feral swine currently reported in multiple, counties. Complaints from landowners continue and are a concern due to disease transmission and property damage issues. WS partnered with multiple agencies to improve Kirtland's warbler nesting success by removing local brown-headed cowbirds, leading to increased nesting success in Wisconsin. Also, WS efforts in the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore to protect nesting piping plovers from predation have been highly successful increasing the number of fledglings.

## Wisconsin 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, cooperators request assistance from WS in resolving wildlife damage problems or play a role in wildlife damage management.

### Top 5 Major Assistance Activities in 2010:

- Protecting and assessing crop and livestock damage caused by Canada geese, black bear, white-tailed deer, and wild turkeys
- Resolving crop and property damage complaints and human health and safety threats from nuisance and depredating black bears and gray wolves
- Protecting coldwater ecosystems, forest resources, roads and bridges from beaver damage
- Protecting public safety and air operations from wildlife hazards at civil and military airports
- Surveillance and monitoring for avian influenza, chronic wasting disease, West Nile virus and diseases that threaten the health of humans, domestic animals and wildlife

### Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Wisconsin in 2010:

- Investigate techniques for effective management of gray wolf depredations
- Determine effects of overabundant double-crested cormorants on natural resources
- Investigate black bear utilization of agricultural crops; movements, behavior, and damage abatement techniques
- Development of improved techniques to reduce wildlife hazards to aviation
- Improve assessment, sampling, and economic models and methods for determining the benefits of wildlife damage management