

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2010

Colorado



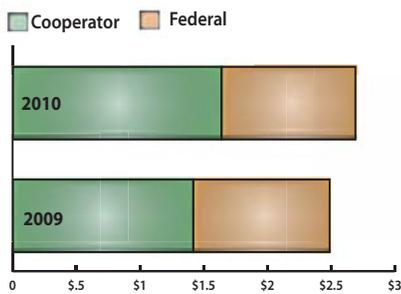
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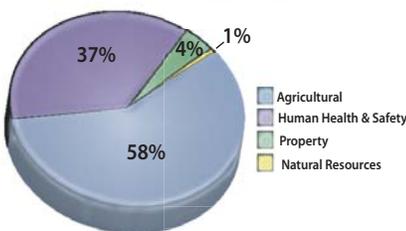
Major Cooperators

- Colorado Department of Agriculture
- Colorado Division of Wildlife
- Colorado Department of Transportation
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Southern Ute Tribe
- Denver International Airport
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Counties
- Livestock Associations

Total Funding (Millions)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Colorado

Every day, residents, industries, organizations and agencies call on Colorado 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 employees help Colorado's livestock industry reduce losses from predators. The program assists property owners with migratory bird problems and helps them obtain the proper permits from the appropriate agency as necessary. WS also assists with beaver and prairie dog damage issues across the State. In addition, the Colorado program assists the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Colorado Division of Wildlife with monitoring efforts to detect plague and other wildlife diseases. WS also provides assistance to several airports across the State to protect air passengers and aircraft from dangerous wildlife collisions with aircraft.

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.

The Colorado WS Program staffs an exhibit at the National Western Stock Show each year. This exhibit gives the WS program an opportunity to assist livestock producers from across the nation, as well as the opportunity to educate the general public regarding wildlife damage management issues.

Protecting Livestock— Livestock production is an important industry in Colorado. In January 2008, the total value of Colorado's cattle and calves was \$2.21 billion, and the value of the State's sheep inventory was \$49.88 million. In addition to many factors that cause economic hardships for livestock producers including the recent drought, predator attacks by coyotes, black bears, and mountain lions can result in significant losses for some producers. In FY 2010, the Colorado branch of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) reported that Colorado livestock producers lost an estimated 16,000 sheep and lambs to predators during 2009, accounting for 44 percent of all losses. This was in spite of the fact that many, approximately 80 percent, of these same producers reported using nonlethal predator deterrent tools (NASS, 1997). The value of this loss was placed at \$1.67 million. Research suggests that these losses could be two to three times higher in the absence of an effective livestock protection program. Colorado WS works cooperatively with the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW), Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA), counties, and local livestock associations to provide assistance to livestock producers with predation from coyotes, black bears, mountain lions, and other predators as needed.

Protecting Aircraft and Passengers— Every year, lives are endangered worldwide and billions of dollars are spent when birds and other wildlife damage aircraft. Bird strikes to aircraft cost civil aviation more than \$615 million annually in the United States and pose a hazard to flight. Globally, wildlife strikes have killed more than 219 people and destroyed over 200 aircraft since 1988. In the United States, wildlife strikes killed 11 people and injured 197 people from 1990 to 2007.

The WS Program is recognized internationally for its scientific expertise in reducing wildlife hazards to the aviation industry. WS' National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) conducts



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

studies to understand the nature of wildlife hazards at airports, develop management tools to reduce these hazards, and provide personnel with information to control or prevent these potential risks. WS also maintains the National Bird Strike Database used by the Federal Aviation Administration and airports to monitor trends and wildlife species that pose the greatest threat to aviation.

Applying this scientific expertise, the Colorado WS program provided assistance at 19 airports in FY 2010. Currently airport funding supports six full-time Wildlife Biologists and three full-time Wildlife Specialist positions in the Colorado WS Program. In addition to providing training and advice, WS also works on-site to resolve wildlife conflicts.

Protecting Threatened and Endangered Wildlife— In 2001, black-footed ferrets were released for the first time into the Wolf Creek area of northwest Colorado. The Fish and Wildlife Service, in cooperation with WS, the Bureau of Land Management, CDW, and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, is working to reestablish a self-sustaining population in northwest Colorado and northeast Utah. The Colorado WS program continues to cooperate with this group by collecting blood samples from coyotes to determine the presence of plague, a major threat to the success of the black-footed ferrets' reintroduction.

Wildlife Disease Assistance— Colorado WS has cooperated with CDOW, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, the CDA, and several local health departments in providing assistance in capturing wildlife in areas where rabies is a concern. The State of Colorado has seen a significant increase in the number of confirmed rabies' cases over the past few years. In 2008, Colorado reported 65 positive rabies cases, 103 cases in 2009, and through November 2010 a total of 138 cases were confirmed. The Colorado WS Program is a member of the Colorado Rabies Task Force.

Protecting Property from Beaver Damage— Historically, beaver were considered a valuable natural resource and an extremely important part of the economy. In recent years, however, little demand for beaver products has resulted in decreased trapping and subsequent increases in beaver numbers. Beaver now occupy nearly all watersheds in the State. WS conducts beaver damage management to reduce beaver damage to transportation, agriculture, and natural resources. Typical requests for assistance involved damage to roadways and bridges, agriculture and forest resources, and flooding of municipal sewer and water treatment facilities. The Colorado WS Program continues a Cooperative agreement with the Colorado Department of Transportation to provide assistance in controlling beaver damage statewide. WS routinely uses explosives to remove beaver dams that are flooding property. Before using explosives, Colorado WS personnel are trained and certified in the safe and effective use of explosives.

Feral Swine Management— In the past three years, the Colorado WS Program has been requested by the CDA and the CDOW to assist with the control of feral swine. Although the known population of feral swine is small in Colorado at this time, potential for the population to increase exists. Efforts are being made to address this problem before it becomes a larger problem. The Colorado WS Program has cooperated with the CDA and CDOW in control projects in southeast Colorado for the past three years.

Looking to the Future

In Colorado, public safety is a concern for wildlife managers. This is particularly true at airports. Although progress has been made, additional attention must be given to this very specialized area of work.

As Colorado's human population continues to grow, especially in rural areas, the potential for human-wildlife conflicts increases. WS' ability to respond to this growing need for service will depend on the availability of personnel and program resources.

Colorado Wildlife Services Funding

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

Top 5 Major Assistance Activities:

- Protecting livestock from predation from coyotes, black bears, and mountain lions
- Protecting civil and military aviation from wildlife strikes
- Managing damage caused by migratory birds
- Monitoring for plague, avian influenza, rabies and other wildlife diseases
- Protecting property from beaver damage

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Colorado

- Improving predator damage management methods in rural and urban environments
- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Managing prairie dog damage to agriculture
- Evaluating methods to control damage by resident Canada geese
- Managing wildlife diseases (e.g. rabies, West Nile virus, plague, avian influenza)