

## WILDLIFE SERVICES—IOWA

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### USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Iowa

Every day, residents, industries, organizations and agencies call on Iowa 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, schools, and along roadways. The program also protects people, pets, and livestock from wildlife-borne diseases; guards many natural resources, such as fisheries and timber, from wildlife depredation; and educates the public about wildlife and wildlife damage management. Specific projects conducted by Iowa WS include, protecting livestock from predation; conducting sampling and monitoring for chronic



wasting disease (CWD) and West Nile virus; and managing damage caused by beavers, pigeons, starlings, and other wildlife.

### 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 Livestock**—Ninety-two percent of Iowa's land base is used for agriculture. As a result, Iowa ranks second in the Nation for the production of red meat. WS has worked to provide both technical and direct assistance to resolve wildlife conflicts that impact livestock producers. Research studies suggest that in the absence of a livestock protection program, losses due to wildlife could double or even triple.

**Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports**—WS also works with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and WS' National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) to reduce threats to air traffic safety. NWRC conducts research from its Sandusky, OH field station to reduce wildlife hazards to aircraft and travelers. WS is conducting assessments at several Iowa airports to address the potential hazards associated with wildlife.

#### Top 5 Major Assistance Activities:

- Protecting property and public health and safety from beaver damage
- Protecting civil and military aviation from wildlife strikes
- Managing damage caused by pigeons, starlings, and blackbirds
- Managing damage caused by Canada geese
- Protecting aquaculture from bird depredation

#### Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Iowa:

- Improving aquatic rodent damage management methods
- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Managing bird predation to aquaculture
- Managing wildlife transmission of various diseases
- Reducing hazards to public health and safety due to bird roosts

**Protecting Health and Safety in the Workplace**—WS provides both technical and direct assistance to communities reporting problems with large bird roosts and their associated health hazards. The Iowa WS program also serves as a direct link to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and aids the public in obtaining necessary permits for alleviating threats caused by federally protected migratory species.

**Addressing Residential Property Damage Caused by Roosting European Starlings**—WS provides technical assistance to residential property owners to disperse roosting European starlings. The birds can cause property damage as well as being a threat to human health due to the large accumulation of droppings associated with roosting birds. Large concentrations of European starlings or other birds may create environmental conditions conducive to histoplasmosis, a fungal disease, in areas where exposed humans can develop severe respiratory problems.

**Major Cooperators**

- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
- Iowa Department of Health
- Des Moines International Airport
- Iowa Department of Transportation

**Protecting Multiple Resources from Beaver Damage**—Protecting transportation, agriculture, and natural resources through beaver damage management is a major consideration for WS in Iowa. 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 a decrease in trapping, and subsequent increase in beaver numbers. Beaver now occupy nearly all watersheds in the State. While this population escalation has resulted in some benefits derived from beaver activities, such as increased wetland habitat, reduced downstream sedimentation, and improved water quality, the detrimental impacts from beaver activities have also increased. Typical requests for assistance involved damage to roadways and bridges, agriculture and forest resources, and flooding of municipal sewer and water treatment facilities.

**Looking to the Future**

In Iowa, public safety is a concern for wildlife managers, particularly at airports. Additional attention must be given to this very specialized area of work.

Wildlife diseases are becoming more common in the United States. Monitoring and surveillance for highly contagious diseases will be an important role for WS due to the high wildlife populations found in Iowa and the impacts these diseases could have on humans as well as wild and domestic animals. Feral hogs are one animal found in Iowa that can spread diseases (such as classical swine fever, swine brucellosis, and pseudorabies) to wild and domestic animals.

**Iowa Wildlife Research Funding**

In addition to receiving federally allocated funds, WS also receives money from cooperators who have a vested interest in the program: 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.

**Total Funding (Thousands)**



**Resources Protected FY 06 % of Total Funds**

