



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection
Service

FY 2006

WILDLIFE SERVICES—OREGON

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USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Oregon

Every day, residents, industries, organizations, and agencies call on Oregon Wildlife Services (WS) for expertise in protecting agriculture, property, natural resources, and human health and safety from damage or threats posed by wildlife. Managed by professional wildlife biologists, WS responds with effective, selective, and humane strategies to resolve wildlife conflicts.

Oregon is a diverse mix of urban, suburban, and rural settings with coastal, mountain, desert, forest, and agricultural environments. This ecological and geographic diversity gives the State a remarkably varied

range of wildlife species. WS biologists assist Oregon livestock, timber, fruit, and grass-seed producers to reduce losses caused by predators, birds, and rodents. The program addresses serious beaver damage to transportation infrastructure, timber, and water control structures, and protects the lives of pilots, air passengers, and aircraft from dangerous wildlife collisions. WS also assists in protecting natural resources, including threatened and endangered species, from wildlife predators.



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 Agriculture Resources—Agriculture is an economic force in all 36 Oregon counties. A 1997 National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) study reported that Oregon farmers lost \$158 million in crops to wildlife damage, which affected 47% of Oregon's farms. Unfortunately, these losses are felt most acutely by small farmers and ranchers. Ninety-five percent of WS customers are small family farms. The NASS survey further documented that agriculture producers spent more than \$6 million on efforts to prevent wildlife damage. Each producer assisted by WS was able to prevent approximately \$3,100, on average, in wildlife damage. During the past calendar year, WS assisted more than 4,400 agricultural producers, saving them more than \$13.8 million, conservatively, in avoided losses to crops and

livestock. This savings represents a benefit to cost ratio of 6.1:1, or \$6.10 saved for each \$1 spent.

The most recent NASS surveys of livestock producers reported that sheep producers lost 2,800 adult sheep and 5,800 lambs to predators in 2005 and cattle producers lost 400 adult cattle and 4,100 calves to predators in 2004.

Timber production plays a vital role in Oregon's economy, culture and customs. The forest products industry is Oregon's largest manufacturing employer, with approximately 65,000 Oregonians working in sawmills, plywood plants, pulp and paper manufacturing, logging and trucking companies, and wood furniture manufacturing facilities. Timber harvests dramatically shifted from public lands to private lands since the early 1990's. Bear damage to stands of trees on private lands is conservatively estimated to be \$11.5 million annually. Bears emerging from hibernation forage for food by peeling the outer bark and eating the newly forming vascular tissues causing significant damage to trees. A single bear can damage 50-70 trees in a day. If left unchecked, bear damage can occur to more than 70% of the trees in a stand. WS assists Western Oregon timber producers by providing an integrated wildlife damage management (IWDM) program which incorporates multiple methods to

Top 5 Major Assistance Activities:

- Protecting livestock and crop resources from mammalian and avian predators
- Protecting timber from bear and beaver damage
- Conducting wildlife disease surveillance and monitoring throughout the state
- Protecting people and pets from injuries and diseases caused by wildlife, including predators like cougars, coyotes, raccoons, skunks, and bears
- Protecting passengers and aircraft and military operations from wildlife hazards at airports

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Oregon:

- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Evaluating waterfowl as disease, parasite, and noxious weed reservoirs; including identifying potential disease transmission to people and livestock via waterfowl feces
- Managing predators through new methods to protect livestock and wildlife
- Protecting timber and forest resources
- Improving assessment, sampling, and economic methods for wildlife damage management

minimize or eliminate damage. In the case of bear damage to timber, steps could include selectively removing bears causing damage, providing alternative feed for bears, and instituting silvicultural and management practices that may make trees less palatable to bears.

Protecting Public Health and Safety—

Local cougar population densities exceed any documented in North America. Young and displaced cougars looking to establish their territories encroach on residential areas and threaten public safety. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and the Oregon State Police Wildlife Division (OSP) have increased their reliance on WS to investigate and resolve cougar conflicts. Annually, WS responds to 400 or more conflicts between cougars and human interests; one in three involves threats to human health and safety. WS personnel have provided training for ODFW, OSP, and local law enforcement agencies on how to identify cougar signs and victims and how to implement cougar management techniques. WS personnel are an integral part of ODFW’s Cougar/Human Attack Response Plan.

Protecting Air Travel—WS has assisted most of Oregon’s major airports and associated Air National Guard Units by providing technical assistance, conducting wildlife hazard assessments, writing wildlife hazard management plans, providing wildlife removal services, and training airport staff on ways to minimize wildlife threats to air travelers. WS constructed wire grid systems to nonlethally deter waterfowl from using water features on the Portland Air National Guard base located on the Portland International Airport (PDX). This project was incorporated in to the wildlife hazard management efforts

Major Cooperators:

- Oregon state agencies and universities
- County governments and sheriff’s departments
- Cities and municipalities throughout Oregon
- Federal Aviation Administration, civilian airport and military airbases
- Private individuals and associations
- Agricultural associations
- Sportsmen
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Bureau of Land Management

for PDX , which safeguards public and military aviation.

The State Oregon Department of Aviation (ODOA) relies on WS to review land development projects to evaluate the potential to attract wildlife and create wildlife hazards to aircraft operations. Additionally, ODOA relies on WS to remove wildlife on airports that have or may cause collisions with aircraft.

Protecting Threatened and Endangered Species—

Historically, predators have been responsible for more than 60% of all egg destruction and mortality of young Western Snowy Plover (plover) , a Federally threatened bird. Federal and State agencies had unsuccessfully attempted to halt predation with non-lethal management methods.

With WS assistance to the plover conservation effort through the selective removal of avian and mammalian predators, fledgling success has dramatically improved. During the 2006 nesting season, the nesting success of plovers on Oregon beaches was the highest on record since monitoring began in 1990. In 2006, 110 young birds survived long enough to learn to fly and become independent of their parents, more than double the average of 45 annually since 1990. The data indicate that predator control is helping plover numbers climb toward recovery goals.

During the past two years WS has assisted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to protect the Federally threatened Columbia white-tailed deer, which live on islands in the Columbia River. WS removed coyotes, which have historically caused a complete failure of the annual fawn crop. In two years of carefully timed coyote control, conducted by WS personnel, fawn success has soared to 100%.

Looking to the Future

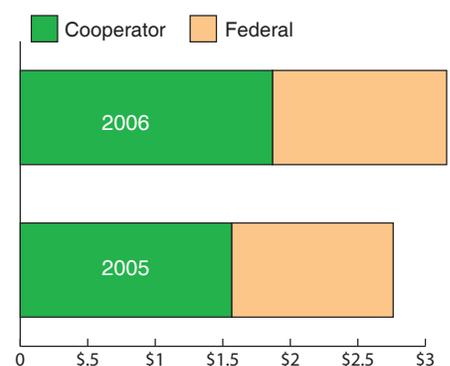
Successful wolf reintroduction in Idaho means future wolf /livestock conflicts in Oregon. At least three wolves have entered Oregon from the experimental population in Idaho. FWS anticipates many more wolves entering Oregon in the future. In February 2005, the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife Commission approved a State Wolf Management Plan developed by the Oregon Wolf Advisory Council, comprised of

representatives of wolf advocate groups, local governments, land management agencies, Tribes, producer groups, academia and citizens. The plan calls on WS to perform critical roles such as the investigation of suspected wolf predation and conducting Federal- and State-authorized wolf management actions. As in other States where wolves have been reintroduced, the presence of wolves in Oregon will increase and complicate demands on the WS program. WS’ efforts to control predator damage caused by coyotes, cougars, bears, foxes, and bobcats will be hampered by the presence of wolves because traditional predator management tools will be restricted when wolves are present. If wolves become established in Oregon, the cost of protecting livestock from all predators will increase as it has in every state in which wolves have been reintroduced or have colonized.

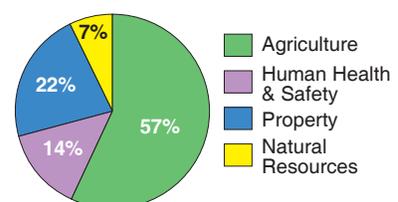
Oregon Wildlife Services Funding

In addition to receiving Federally allocated funds, WS also receives money from cooperators who value the service they receive from the WS program: producers, private individuals, sportsmen, 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 (Millions)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



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