

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2008

California



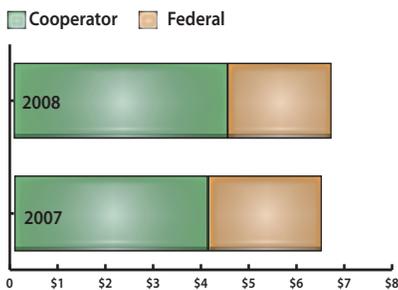
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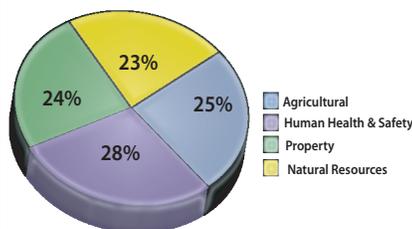
Major Cooperators

- County Departments of Agriculture
- California Department of Fish and Game
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Department of Defense (Navy, Marines, Air Force)
- California Department of Public Health
- Civil and Military Airports

Total Funding (Millions)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA Protects Resources and Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in California

Every day California residents, industries, organizations, and agencies call on California Wildlife Services (WS) for its expertise in protecting agriculture, property, natural resources, and human health and safety from damage or threats posed by wildlife. Employing an integrated pest management (IPM) approach WS Specialists respond to these requests with effective, professional, and selective strategies to resolve the conflicts. Specialists help to protect public health and safety at airports, provide surveillance and response to outbreaks of wildlife diseases, protect livestock and other agricultural resources from depredations by mammals and birds, protect threatened and endangered species, and resolve a multitude of other human/wildlife conflicts. As California's population continues to grow and encroach on wildlife habitat, residents will have increasing interactions, both positive and negative, with wildlife.

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 is provided over the telephone. WS also provides on-site technical expertise, and/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 best science and technology available.

Protecting Health and Safety at Airports—California, with nine percent of the Nation's busiest airports, transports more than 177 million passengers (enplanements and deplanements) annually. California's airports are located within the busiest migratory bird corridor in North America. Globally, wildlife strikes have killed more than 219 people and destroyed over 200 aircraft since 1988. Wildlife strikes cause more than 600,000 hours of aircraft downtime and cost the U.S. civil aviation industry in excess of \$625 million annually. WS, along with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), is recognized nationally and internationally for its scientific expertise and solutions in reducing wildlife hazards to the aviation industry. The California WS program provided assistance to 20 airports in 2008, including technical assistance, training, and direct operational management. On-site evaluations, as well as comprehensive wildlife hazard assessments, were also completed in 2008.

Surveillance of Wildlife Diseases—WS has taken a lead role in California in monitoring for wildlife diseases that may pose threats to humans, other wildlife, domestic pets, and livestock. California WS personnel employed in 42 of the State's 58 counties, collected over 6,200 wildlife disease samples in 2008. Disease surveillance activities included: chronic wasting disease, avian influenza, E. coli, rabies, classical swine fever, tularemia, plague, toxoplasmosis, swine influenza, swine brucellosis, and pseudorabies. Cooperating agencies included: California Departments of Health Services and Fish and Game, USDA/APHIS Veterinary Services, WS' National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC), Centers for Disease Control, and the Food and Drug Administration. WS stands poised, now and into the future, to provide valuable assistance to the State in any wildlife disease emergency situation/response.

Protecting Livestock from Predators—Livestock losses attributed to predators cost U.S. ranchers and producers more than \$71 million annually, according to statistics compiled by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). Approximately, 75 percent of WS' California and other Western States cooperative agreements are with small farmers and ranchers. A NASS survey (2005) of California cattle producers found they lost 6,500 cattle and calves to predators, resulting in more than \$3 million in losses. NASS also conducted a similar study of sheep producers in 2004 and found that their losses in California were estimated at \$894,000 (11,000 sheep). In addition to the many factors that cause economic hardships for livestock



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

producers, predators like coyotes, bears, and mountain lions cause additional and sometimes significant losses by attacking sheep, cattle, and goats. Research suggests these figures could be two to three times higher in the absence of an effective livestock protection program. WS' NWRC is continually working to develop additional methods for managing predators that prey on livestock. The WS NWRC's research efforts on traps, snares, and chemical control have improved the selectivity of these tools and have provided national and international leadership in this role. Pan-tension devices on traps and breakaway snares help ensure that only depredate wildlife species are caught.

Protecting Threatened and Endangered Species—California has 309 federally listed threatened and endangered species. Habitat destruction and urbanization pose both short and long term threats to many of these species. Predators such as feral cats, non-native species like red fox, and native species such as raccoons, coyotes, striped skunks, and raptors can also negatively affect these species. California WS biologists and specialists worked on 43 projects to protect threatened and endangered species in fiscal year 2008. Some of the species protected were the western snowy plover, California least tern, several species of clapper rail, desert tortoise, and the Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep. California WS worked in cooperation with Department of Defense, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the California Department of Fish and Game protecting these valuable resources.

Protecting Resources in Urban Areas—Numerous species of wild animals inhabit cities and suburbs throughout California. Striped skunks, coyotes, opossums, and raccoons commonly forage in backyards and seek shelter under porches and buildings or in attics, causing substantial damage to the structures. In addition, these animals potentially carry diseases and may leave behind offensive odors that can render the structure temporarily uninhabitable. WS wildlife specialists responded to over 13,000 requests to investigate and resolve wildlife damage to urban/suburban property in 2008.

Looking to the Future

In California, protecting public safety is a major concern for wildlife managers and public health officials. This is particularly true at airports. Increased travel through California's airports, coupled with a growth in the population of many bird species, has created a greater need for airport managers to manage threats posed by wildlife. A second issue related to public safety involves the increased need to protect people from large predators such as coyotes, black bears, and mountain lions. In FY 2008, WS personnel responded to over 6,200 requests for assistance (non-airport) where public health and safety was being threatened by wildlife. In addition, WS will continue to work with NWRC, universities, and other Federal and State agencies throughout California, to conduct surveillance for wildlife-borne diseases that negatively impact humans, livestock, and other wildlife.

California Wildlife Services Funding

California WS, in addition to receiving federally allocated funds, provides services to, and receives money from, cooperators such as: private individuals, businesses, universities, and other Federal, State, and local government agencies that have a vested interest and require solutions from the WS program. In most cases, these cooperators need help to resolve wildlife damage problems or they play a role in wildlife damage management.

Top 5 Major Assistance Activities:

- Protecting public health through monitoring for wildlife diseases (E. coli, plague, swine brucellosis, avian influenza, rabies, and others)
- Protecting sheep and lambs, cattle and calves, goats and kids, and poultry from predation
- Protecting passengers and aircraft from collisions with wildlife
- Protecting public safety against attacks and threats by mountain lions, black bears, coyotes, and other wildlife
- Protecting Federal and State listed threatened and endangered species

Top 5 Research Projects of Interest to California:

- Ecology and epidemiology of Escherichia coli O157:H7 in fresh produce production regions of California.
- Managing predators through new methods to protect livestock and wildlife
- Wildlife Disease monitoring (swine brucellosis, pseudorabies, avian influenza, plague, West Nile virus, rabies, etc.
- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Estimating the costs and benefits of WS' efforts to manage wildlife damage