

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2008

Delaware



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Major Cooperators

- Delaware Department of Agriculture
- Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
Division of Fish and Wildlife
- Delaware River and Bay Authority
- New Castle County Airport

USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Delaware

Every day, residents, industries, organizations, and agencies call on Wildlife Services (WS) in Delaware 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.

Delaware WS has been called upon by the Division of Fish and Wildlife of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control to help businesses, farmers, and residents who are experiencing problems with migratory birds. WS provides technical assistance to resolve conflicts with Canada geese, snow geese, and vultures. WS also works to reduce human safety risks and direct damage to aircraft by providing technical assistance to airports about wildlife management.

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, 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.

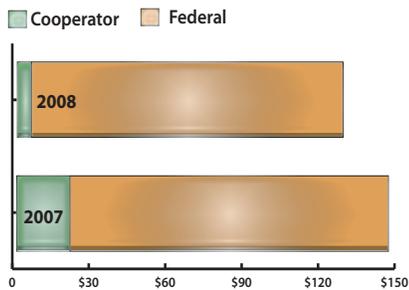
Protecting Agriculture—Delaware's geographic location between the Chesapeake Bay and the Delaware Bay is an attractive and popular stop for many migratory waterfowl in the Atlantic Flyway. The Atlantic Flyway Council (AFC) reports that the number of migratory Canada geese and snow geese have steadily increased in the past five years. The AFC also reports that greater numbers of snow geese are damaging coastal salt marsh habitat, as well as the agricultural crops on which they feed during their over-winter stays. This has placed additional pressure on Delaware's small grain producers who already sustain crop damage from Canada geese. WS has provided technical assistance to farmers, residents, and golf course managers. These individuals reported approximately \$75,000 in damage due to conflicts with geese.

Protecting Air Travel—Wildlife hazards at airports have become a major concern due to the potential for significant damage to aircraft and the threat posed to public health and safety. Wildlife collisions with aircraft cost the U.S. civil aviation industry more than \$625 million annually. WS works with the Delaware River and Bay Authority to identify and reduce wildlife hazards at Delaware's New Castle County Airport.

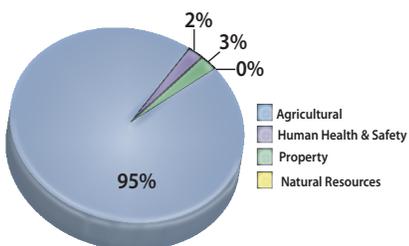
In addition, WS' National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC), conducts research from its Sandusky, OH Field Station to reduce hazards to aviation and the flying public. Studies are underway at several large airports where scientists evaluate habitat management practices and wildlife dispersal techniques.

NWRC also maintains the National Wildlife Strike Database used by the Federal Aviation Administration and airports to monitor trends and wildlife species of greatest concern to aviation.

Total Funding (Thousands)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Looking to the Future

Nationwide, wildlife managers have placed a renewed focus on public safety, particularly true at airports. An increase in air travel coupled with increased populations of deer and many bird species has created a greater need for wildlife management at airports to reduce wildlife threats. Delaware WS must be able to meet the growing demand for this very specialized area of work.

Another public health and safety issue is the greater demand to protect people, pets and livestock from diseases. Working closely with State of Delaware to monitor for avian Influenza, West Nile virus, chronic wasting disease, and avian influenza are major health concerns.

Delaware Wildlife Services 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.

Major Assistance Activities:

- Providing technical assistance and equipment to alleviate damage by migratory birds
- Reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Reducing goose damage and deer damage
- Protecting public health through monitoring for avian influenza

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Delaware:

- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Managing problems caused by vultures
- Evaluating waterfowl as disease, parasite and noxious weed reservoirs
- Improving assessment, sampling and economic methods for wildlife damage management
- Reducing goose damage and deer damage