

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2008

Illinois



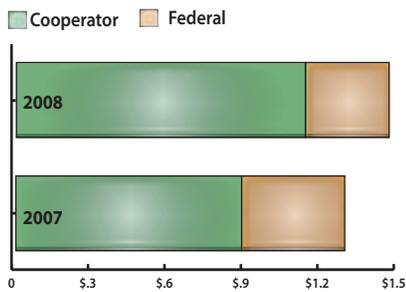
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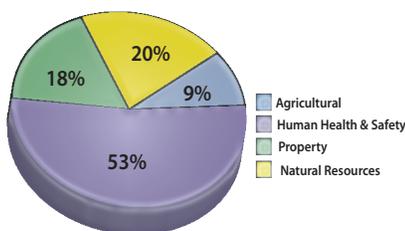
Major Cooperators

- City of Chicago (O'Hare International and Midway International Airports)
- U.S. Department of Energy – Fermi National Accelerator and Argonne National Laboratories
- Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics
- Forest Preserve Districts of Cook and DuPage Counties
- Lake County Forest Preserve District
- Numerous power generating stations, railroads, and other industrial facilities

Total Funding (Millions)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Illinois

The Wildlife Services (WS) program in Illinois helps residents, industries, organizations and governments resolve conflicts with wildlife that affect agriculture, human health and safety, natural resources, public infrastructure, and private property. Our professional wildlife biologists and specialists are located throughout Illinois and are trained to manage wildlife conflicts with effective, selective, and humane strategies that value the integrity of the wildlife resource and the resources protected.

WS works to protect property and safety at airports, on public land, and on private property. The program also protects people, pets, and livestock from wildlife-borne diseases; guards natural resources from wildlife damage; and educates the public about wildlife and wildlife damage management.

Specific projects of WS in Illinois include hazard management at airports, assisting State agencies with wildlife disease monitoring, assisting livestock producers with European starling damage, and assisting in the protection of employees and equipment at industrial facilities. WS helps manage white-tailed deer populations in the greater Chicago area to protect property, sensitive native vegetation, and human safety at risk from deer/vehicle collisions.

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 telephone. On-site expertise, or direct assistance, is provided to manage complex wildlife problems that cannot be safely resolved by others. 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 Agricultural Resources—WS works with the agricultural industry to resolve conflicts caused by wildlife including bird damage to crops and livestock. Although often localized, such conflicts can significantly impact producers. Birds can destroy corn crops, spread disease in feedlots, and significantly decrease milk production in dairy cows. WS works with the Illinois Departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources and USDA's Cooperative Extension Service to identify and resolve wildlife conflicts with agricultural resources.

A member of the Illinois Veterinary Emergency Response Team, WS participates in tabletop exercises with other government agencies, veterinarians, landowners, and others to prepare for emergency animal disease outbreaks in Illinois.

Wildlife Hazard Management at Airports—Wildlife-aircraft collisions cost U.S. civil aviation more than \$625 million annually and represent a hazard to flight crews and passengers. From 1990 to 2007, more than 4,100 wildlife strikes, involving 95 species, occurred at Illinois airports according to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reports maintained by WS to monitor trends and wildlife species posing the greatest concern to aviation safety. Illinois WS biologists collaborate with scientists from WS' National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) to study methods for reducing wildlife hazards to aircraft and evaluate the affect of airport habitat management methods on wildlife abundance.

WS biologists in Chicago are working with researchers at WS NWRC and the University of Illinois to evaluate radars for identifying and managing wildlife hazards to aircraft. This collaborative research is designed to determine how avian radars can be best used to promote aviation safety through wildlife hazard management at airports.

WS biologists work with Chicago's international airports and others throughout the State to manage wildlife that may pose hazard to aircraft. Habitat manipulation, which made



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

airports less attractive to wildlife, has reduced collision rates with specific species. WS has captured over 1,100 raptors and relocated the birds 50 to 200 miles away from Chicago airports, reducing threats. WS works with other airport managers and the Illinois Department of Transportation to assess and resolve conflicts throughout the State. Hazard assessments are conducted to help identify potential wildlife risks to safety and strategies are planned to resolve conflicts. In addition, WS biologists provide training to airport staff statewide to enable them to comply with FAA safety training requirements.

Urban and Rural Human Health and Safety Issues—WS works with private industries and the Illinois Department of Public Health to alleviate disease threats to public health. For example, large concentrations of European starlings or other birds may create environmental conditions conducive to histoplasmosis, a fungal disease, in industrial or residential areas where exposed humans can develop severe respiratory problems. WS also monitors for wildlife diseases including rabies, West Nile virus, and avian influenza. Biologists also help to alleviate public exposure concerns and to respond to reports of dead birds found by the public.

Chronic Wasting Disease—WS cooperates with the U.S. Department of Energy, the Illinois Departments of Natural Resources and Agriculture, and local governments to implement chronic wasting disease (CWD) surveillance and management programs to eliminate this disease threat to natural and agricultural resources in northern Illinois. For CWD surveillance, WS collects biological samples from wild white-tailed deer removed during cooperative deer damage management programs.

Avian Influenza Surveillance— Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 spread rapidly from Asia to Europe, raising concern that the disease could be carried by migratory birds and introduced into North America. WS is working with several State and Federal agencies, local governments, universities, and businesses to address this potential disease threat.

WS conducted statewide surveillance as part of the Interagency National Strategic Plan for the Early Detection of the Asian H5N1 HPAI in Wild Migratory Birds and as part of a Mississippi flyway surveillance plan. WS collects samples from live wild waterfowl and shorebirds, hunter-harvested waterfowl, and bird feces from the environment. As of late 2008, this strain of avian influenza had not been detected in North America.

Bird Damage Management—WS responds to ever-increasing reports of feral pigeon and European starling damage to property and human safety. These invasive birds often nest and roost at power generating stations, rail yards, and industrial sites where excessive fecal droppings deteriorate equipment, contaminate livestock and human food products, and threaten human health and safety. In these situations, WS helps identify methods to exclude birds from sensitive locations and reduce populations inhabiting the facilities.

Looking to the Future

Illinois WS provides safe, effective, and humane assistance for diverse wildlife conflicts, but the need continues to increase. Public safety concerns wildlife managers, particularly regarding airports and wildlife born diseases.

WS continues to cooperate with APHIS-Veterinary Services, the Illinois Departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and participating landowners to conduct surveillance of feral pigs for disease to protect the swine industry, one of Illinois' major economic resources. This surveillance assists the State in maintaining its Class V-pseudorabies-free status.

Illinois Wildlife Services Funding

WS receives federally allocated funds, which are utilized to assist in managing conflicts with starlings and blackbirds, wildlife diseases, and identifying wildlife hazards at airports. Additionally, WS receives money from cooperators who have a vested interest in the program such as agricultural producers, private individuals, industrial facilities, and other Federal, State, and local government agencies. These cooperators have sought WS assistance in resolving their wildlife-related conflicts because of the effective and professional assistance provided by WS personnel.

Top 5 Major Assistance Activities:

- Protecting airline passengers and aircraft from wildlife hazards at airports
- Protecting property, human health, and human safety from bird damage
- Protecting sensitive native vegetation, public safety and property from white-tailed deer damage
- Protecting sensitive native vegetation and property from beaver damage
- Protecting agricultural resources and public health and safety from disease threats (e.g., West Nile virus, histoplasmosis, rabies, and HPAI)

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Illinois:

- Identifying and reducing wildlife hazards to aircraft and human safety
- Managing bird damage to agricultural resources, property, public health and public safety
- Increasing knowledge of wildlife vectors of rabies, chronic wasting disease, classical swine fever, and pseudorabies
- Managing conflicts with Canada geese and Ring-billed gulls in urban environments
- Managing beaver damage to property and agricultural and natural resources