

# Wildlife Services

Protecting People  
Protecting Agriculture  
Protecting Wildlife

## State Report

FY 2008

# New Jersey



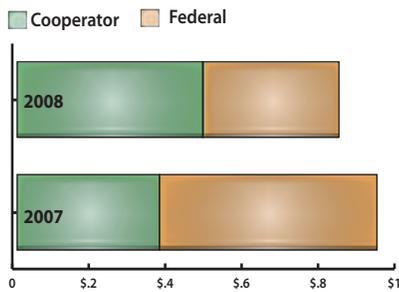
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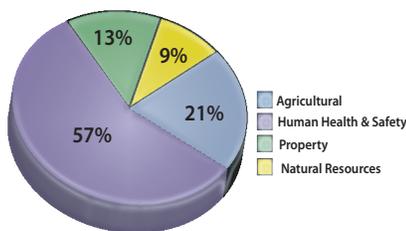
### Major Cooperators

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife
- Federal Aviation Administration
- U.S. Coast Guard
- New Jersey Departments of Agriculture and Health and Senior Services
- New Jersey Meadowlands Commission
- Rutgers University
- South Jersey Transportation Authority
- Municipal and County Health Departments

### Total Funding (Millions)



### Resources Protected % of Total Funds



### USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in New Jersey

Every day, residents, industries, organizations and agencies call on Wildlife Services (WS) in New Jersey 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 with effective, selective, and humane strategies to resolve wildlife conflicts. New Jersey's diverse ecological mix of urban and suburban settings and agricultural, forested, and coastal environments provides wildlife habitats amongst the nation's highest human population density.

WS works to protect human health and property at airports, schools, parks, recreation areas, and other locations throughout the State. It protects agricultural resources from crop depredation and guards natural resources from wildlife damage. WS personnel also educate the public about wildlife and wildlife damage management. Specific projects conducted by WS in New Jersey include protecting rare and threatened birds from predation; sampling and monitoring for wildlife-borne disease; managing damage caused by waterfowl, blackbirds, and other wildlife; and reducing safety hazards at airports.

### 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 WS services benefit from the latest science and technology.

**Protecting Agricultural Crops from Bird Damage**—Bird damage in the Garden State includes resident Canada geese damage to pastures, berries, grains, vegetables, and sod; black and turkey vulture damage to livestock; and blackbird damage at dairies. WS assists farmers in acquiring permits and provides guidance on the use and effectiveness of harassment, farming practice adaptations, and habitat modifications.

**Protecting Dairies and Feedlots**—WS helps reduce blackbird and starling damage at dairies and feedlots coordinated with local officials, farmers, State agencies, and Rutgers Cooperative Extension. Technical assistance includes recommendations for exclusion and cultural practice modification. Direct assistance can include harassment, trapping, and population management.

**Protecting Health and Safety**—Protection of human health and safety from wildlife damage and threats is the largest component of WS in New Jersey. Technical and operational assistance focuses on management of wildlife hazards to aviation and Canada goose damage, and surveillance for wildlife-borne diseases.

**Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports**—Wildlife/aircraft strikes cause more than \$625 million in damage to U.S. civil aviation annually. In New Jersey, many wildlife species are increasing in abundance and distribution and pose unacceptable safety hazards. Statewide, WS biologists assist airports with wildlife hazard management training, conduct on-airport wildlife management consultations, develop wildlife hazard assessments and management plans, and implement programs to protect public and aviation safety.

WS has conducted an integrated wildlife hazard management program at Atlantic City International Airport (ACY) since 1989 and assists many NJ airports in FAA compliance and permit acquisition. Stationed at ACY, WS trains airport personnel and they develop wildlife hazard management patrols. They develop and monitor the mowing plan, collect and manage bird strike information, conduct threatened and endangered species monitoring, and monitors bird hazards associated with waste management. The partnership ensures rare species are not harmed.



United States Department of Agriculture  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

### **Protecting Human Health and Safety from Canada Geese—**

New Jersey supports the greatest density of resident Canada geese on the East Coast, estimated at 82,000 birds. People enjoy seeing some geese, but overabundance results in excessive goose feces, landscape damage due to overgrazing, and aggressive goose attacks on people. WS implements Canada goose damage management based on agreements and support from public agencies, law enforcement, and property owners. Each year, WS assists more than 400 New Jersey residents with goose-related problems through technical advice, removal of goose nests, harassment and behavior modification programs, and local population management. In some cases, biological sampling is conducted by WS through partnerships with State agencies and universities, to investigate potential heavy metal contaminants, bacterial pathogens such as shigella and E. coli, and wildlife-born diseases such as avian influenza.

**Partnering to Investigate Wildlife Disease Issues—**An oral rabies vaccination (ORV) program has been conducted in Cape May County since 1991, the longest continually running ORV program in the Nation. Almost a half-million baits containing vaccine have been distributed. Raccoons that eat the baits become vaccinated. Since 2002, WS has partnered with NJ State agencies to evaluate the program's effectiveness and conduct rabies surveillance in three counties. County funding for ORV bait drops, was lost in early 2009, but WS will continue surveillance through FY 2010.

WS participates in the national surveillance for highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 in wild migratory birds and coordinated a multi-agency partnership among Federal, State, and private agencies to collect samples from shorebirds, waterfowl, and the environment. Since 2003, WS has cooperated in testing harvested deer for chronic wasting disease (CWD), a fatal neurological disease in deer and elk. To date, all tests have been negative, indicating the State is free of CWD.

Since 2008, WS has partnered with other agencies to conduct population and disease surveillance of feral swine. Nine feral swine were captured and tested for classical swine fever, pseudorabies, and swine brucellosis, with negative results.

**Conserving Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Birds—**New Jersey's 150-mile-long coastline has potential as valuable habitat for threatened and endangered (T&E) shorebirds. Wildlife competition, predation, and suburban shore community development can be detrimental. WS protects the State endangered piping plover (Federally threatened) and least tern at three coastal sites. It coordinates interagency meetings on predation management in order to increase involvement, operational support and enhanced communications for T&E programs. Participation of private organizations with State and Federal agencies will improve programs to ensure continuation of these rare species in New Jersey.

WS biologists at the ACY conduct T&E species monitoring surveys to identify the number and location of nesting upland sandpipers (State endangered) and grasshopper sparrows (State threatened). The data are used in airport operation decisions and bird hazard management activities, which contributes to species conservation by reduced bird/aircraft strikes involving rare birds.

**Protecting Rare Habitats from Depredation—**WS conducts management to reduce Canada goose damage on restored wetlands in the New Jersey Meadowlands complex and on a rare native wild rice ecosystem on the Maurice River. Integrated goose damage management programs are implemented through partnerships with State agencies, private organizations, and citizens.

**Protecting Property—**WS New Jersey provides technical recommendations to those experiencing wildlife damage to property and assists in obtaining Federal permits to reduce property damage associated with migratory birds, especially Canada geese, snow geese, and gulls. WS biologists demonstrate the use of specialized methods, including pyrotechnics, night-vision equipment, remote-controlled vehicles, and laser devices to detect and harass birds away from damage sites.

**Protecting Property from Vulture Damage—**Bird surveys indicate increasing State populations of both turkey and black vultures. New Jersey citizens report damage to decks, rooftops, automobiles, and other property due to accumulation of feces and other activities. WS offers technical advice, assists in requirements of the Federal permit process, and implements vulture harassment projects.

### **Looking to the Future**

WS provides New Jersey with safe, effective, and humane assistance for a diverse and expanding range of wildlife conflicts, but some people continue to experience wildlife damage problems. Assessing wildlife conflicts and implementing appropriate management requires expertise and resources beyond the reach of some citizens. New Jersey's large population of resident Canada geese will pose increased challenges as will the increasing populations of deer, gulls, vultures and other species posing threats to airports. Public health situations, such as that posed by West Nile virus, may emerge and challenge wildlife managers and public health officials.

### **New Jersey Wildlife Services Funding**

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

### **Top 5 Major Assistance Activities:**

- Protecting property and public health and safety from damage associated with Canada geese
- Protecting civil and military aviation from wildlife strikes
- Managing agricultural damage caused by blackbirds and starlings
- Protecting rare, threatened, and endangered birds from predation
- Partnering with other agencies to monitor wildlife diseases

### **Top 3 WS Research Projects of Interest to New Jersey:**

- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Evaluating waterfowl as disease, parasite, and noxious weed reservoirs
- Managing wildlife transmission of rabies and other diseases