

# Wildlife Services

Protecting People  
Protecting Agriculture  
Protecting Wildlife

## State Report

FY 2008

# North Carolina



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### Major Cooperators

- North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
- North Carolina Department of Transportation
- North Carolina Division of Aviation
- Seymour Johnson Air Force Base
- Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point
- Department of the Navy
- Piedmont Triad International Airport
- Brunswick, Columbus, Cumberland,
- Duplin, Nash, New Hanover,
- Pender, Pitt, and Robeson counties.
- National Park Service
- Marine Corps Air Station New River
- NC Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- NC Farm Bureau

### USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in North Carolina

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

WS works to protect property and reduce human health and safety risks at airports, schools, and along roadways. The program also protects people, pets, and livestock from wildlife-borne diseases such as rabies; guards natural resources, such as fisheries and timber, from wildlife depredation; and educates the public about wildlife and wildlife damage management. Specific projects conducted by WS in North Carolina include protecting endangered shorebirds and sea turtles from predation; conducting sampling and monitoring for avian influenza and rabies; and managing damage caused by beavers, Canada geese, pigeons, feral swine, and other wildlife.

### 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.

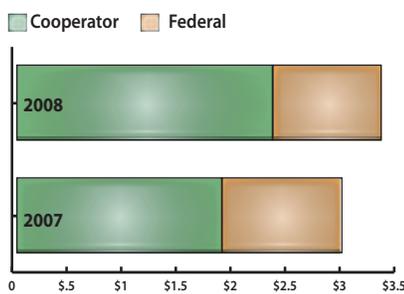
**Protecting Agricultural Resources**—WS assists dairy farmers concerned about starlings that consume and contaminate high-quality feed supplements, which impacts health, sanitation, and milk production. WS helps farmers safely use a registered pesticide to reduce starling populations at dairy operations. The program also works with the State Department of Agriculture (NCDA) to monitor feral swine for swine brucellosis and pseudorabies.

**Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports**—Wildlife collisions with airplanes cost U.S. civil aviation more than \$625 million annually and pose a significant hazard. The Department of Defense (DoD) experiences similar concerns related to aviation safety. WS assists civilian and military airports statewide to evaluate wildlife hazards and develop hazard management plans. WS personnel also provide direct assistance to airports. Together, these efforts reduce the potential costs and dangers associated with wildlife strikes. In FY 2008, WS served 21 civilian airports and six DoD airbases. The program continues to provide cooperative services to the state Division of Aviation at all 65 general aviation airports and nine regional airports. WS also trained 209 airport staff and flight crew members on basic wildlife/aviation hazards and mitigation methods.

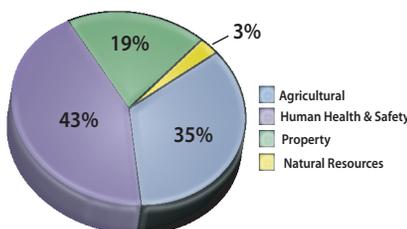
WS personnel in North Carolina work closely with WS' National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) scientists to develop management techniques to reduce wildlife hazards at airports. In FY 2008, WS personnel completed projects involving survey methodology for assessing wildlife populations at airports and the effects of bio-solids application on airport grassland habitats. The program is collaborating on tests designed to determine the viability of fescue grass types, which may reduce wildlife use of grassland areas at Piedmont Triad International Airport and MCAS Cherry Point. WS and NWRC personnel also are collaborating with the USN Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command and academic and industry leaders on further development of portable radar units used to detect and reduce real-time bird hazards at airports.

**Urban Human Health and Safety Issues**—WS works with municipal water treatment plants and county and city parks and golf courses to control resident Canada geese. This work includes egg addling, harassment and physical removal, if necessary.

### Total Funding (Millions)



### Resources Protected % of Total Funds



United States Department of Agriculture  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

**Wildlife Disease Issues**—WS continues to assist the State wildlife and agriculture agencies in monitoring for wildlife diseases that could impact agriculture or human health, such as avian influenza, rabies, feral swine diseases, and chronic wasting disease. WS also participates in a national program to eradicate rabies in the United States through vaccination of raccoons and other rabies-susceptible wildlife.

**Protecting Sea Turtles and Shorebirds**—WS assists other agencies and organizations remove predators to protect endangered or threatened sea turtles and shorebird nesting colonies.

**Protecting Property**—WS advises property owners on wildlife damage issues ranging from Canada geese in the backyard to squirrels and bats in the attic. WS remains an active partner in annual training for certifying and licensing Wildlife Damage Control Agents in the state, which enables private enterprise to address many residential wildlife damage issues.

**Protecting Resources from Beaver Damage**—Beaver have been historically a valuable economic and natural resource. Recently, however, the lower demand for beaver products has led to a decrease in trapping and subsequent increase in population. Beaver now occupy most of North Carolina watersheds, and statewide population estimates are over 500,000. Escalating beaver activity brings some benefits, such as increased wetland habitat, reduced downstream sedimentation, and improved water quality, but also detrimental impacts. In 2008 WS received more than 1,850 requests for assistance with beaver damage problems, typically involving roadways and bridges, agriculture and forest resources, and municipal sewer and water treatment facilities.

To address these, WS worked with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) and State, county, and Federal officials to establish the Beaver Management Assistance Program (BMAP). BMAP assists the Department of Transportation (DOT), local governments, soil and water conservation districts, private landholders, and others with beaver problems. WS runs the programs through a cooperative service agreement with NCWRC, with funding from State, county, Federal and private sources. In FY 2008, beaver management activities prevented the loss of, or damage to resources valued at an estimated \$6.7 million. The benefit-cost ratio for these services was a remarkable \$5.65 in resources saved for every \$1 spent. FY 2008 BMAP activities protected motorists and saved the DOT an estimated \$1 million in repair costs by alleviating flooded roadways and damaged roadbeds.

WS personnel are trained in the safe and effective use of explosives prior to conducting any work; currently 18 North Carolina staff are certified. WS routinely uses explosives to remove beaver dams.

### **Looking to the Future**

In North Carolina, public health and safety are significant concerns. Additional attention will be given to protecting the flying public and military personnel, protecting the traveling public from beaver-flooded and washed-out roadways and rail beds, and protecting the public from the spread of rabies. Awareness of these concerns increased after aircraft collisions with birds, derailment of a train carrying hazardous chemicals due to a railroad trestle undermined by beaver, and increased

incidences of rabies, including attacks on people by rabid beavers. Monitoring wildlife for avian influenza also will be a high priority as USDA APHIS continues to implement early warning strategies for this potentially devastating disease. Expanding feral swine populations pose a significant threat to North Carolina's vital pork industry. WS continues to monitor feral swine for important disease threats and is working with state government and industry leaders to explore ways of mitigating the risk from feral swine. With increases in Federal and non-federal cooperatively-funded programs, WS envisions increasing work on all of these activities.

### **North Carolina Wildlife Services Funding**

In addition to receiving federally allocated funds, WS also receives funding from cooperators who have a vested interest in the program: 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/safety from beaver damage
- Protecting civil and military aviation from wildlife strikes
- Monitoring and surveillance of wildlife disease
- Managing damage caused by Canada geese
- Managing damage caused by pigeons, starlings, and blackbirds

#### **Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to North Carolina:**

- Improving aquatic rodent damage management methods
- Identifying and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Evaluating wildlife disease issues impacting human, livestock, and wildlife health
- Managing wildlife transmission of rabies
- Managing bird predation to aquaculture