

Wildlife Services

Protecting People
Protecting Agriculture
Protecting Wildlife

State Report

FY 2008

Oregon



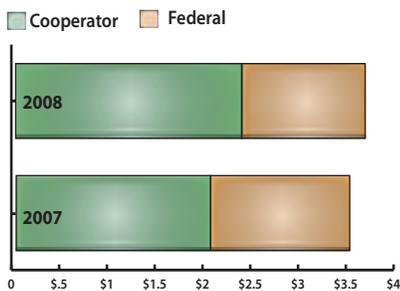
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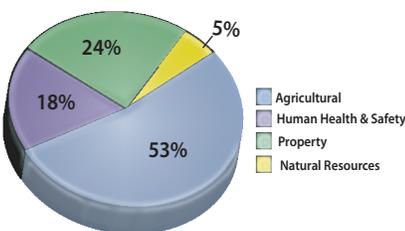
Major Cooperators

- Oregon state agencies and universities
- County governments and sheriff's departments
- Cities and municipalities throughout Oregon
- Federal Aviation Administration, civilian airports and military airbases
- Private individuals and associations
- Agricultural associations
- Sportsmen
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management

Total Funding (Millions)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Oregon

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

Oregon is a diverse mix of urban, suburban, and rural settings with coastal, mountain, desert, forest and agricultural environments. This ecological and geographic diversity gives the State a remarkably varied range of wildlife species. WS biologists assist Oregon livestock, timber, fruit and grass-seed producers to reduce losses caused by predators, birds and rodents. The program addresses threats to human health and safety posed by cougars, bears and coyotes, assists in managing serious beaver damage to transportation infrastructure, timber and water control structures, and protects the lives of pilots, air passengers, and aircraft from dangerous wildlife collisions. WS also assists in protecting natural resources, including threatened and endangered species, from wildlife predators.

WS has over 10,000 agreements with private and public entities to assist with wildlife conflicts throughout Oregon.

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. In Oregon, WS conducts research to develop new tools for managing conflicts with the burgeoning populations of geese that reside in Oregon year round and the 300,000 migratory geese that winter in the Willamette Valley/lower Columbia River valleys. Some urban parks spend over \$20,000 per year in cleaning up after resident geese while damage to agricultural crops caused by wintering geese totals \$15 million per year. Oregon's Willamette Valley is the grass seed capital of the world. Annual damage to Oregon's grass seed industry caused by geese is over \$5.7 million. Recent field studies in Oregon include: The evaluation and development of a reproductive inhibitor to help manage the resident geese that render urban parks, golf courses and residential areas unusable by the public due to their grazing and droppings; and ongoing research efforts to develop a repellent to reduce damage to agricultural crops caused by the foraging of the wintering geese in the Willamette Valley/lower Columbia River valleys of Oregon. These research efforts are intended to develop nonlethal goose management tools for an integrated wildlife damage management (IWDM) strategy that the public can implement.

Protecting Agriculture Resources—Agriculture is an economic force in all 36 Oregon counties. A 1997 National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) study reported that Oregon farmers lost \$158 million in crops to wildlife damage, which affected 47% of Oregon's farms. Unfortunately, these losses are felt most acutely by small farmers and ranchers. Ninety-five percent of WS customers are small family farms.

The most recent NASS surveys of livestock producers reported that sheep producers lost 2,800 adult sheep and 5,800 lambs to predators in 2005 and cattle producers lost 400 adult cattle and 4,100 calves to predators in 2004. According to NASS, these losses occurred despite Oregon livestock producers spend \$1.3 million on their own efforts to prevent predator losses. Overall, agricultural producers in Oregon spend over \$6 million to prevent wildlife damage of all types.

Timber production plays a vital role in Oregon's economy, culture, and customs. The forest products industry is Oregon's largest manufacturing employer, with approximately 65,000



United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Oregonians working in sawmills, plywood plants, pulp and paper manufacturing, logging and trucking companies, and wood furniture manufacturing facilities. Timber harvests dramatically shifted from public lands to private lands since the early 1990s. Bear damage to stands of trees on private lands is conservatively estimated to be \$11.5 million annually. Bears emerging from hibernation forage for food by peeling the outer bark and eating the newly-forming vascular tissues causing significant damage to trees. A single bear can damage 50 to 70 trees in a day. If left unchecked, bear damage can occur to more than 70% of the trees in a stand. WS assists Western Oregon timber producers by providing a program which incorporates multiple methods to minimize or eliminate damage. In the case of bear damage to timber, steps could include selectively removing bears causing damage, providing alternative feed for bears, and instituting silvicultural and management practices that may make trees less palatable to bears.

Protecting Public Health and Safety—Local cougar population densities exceed any documented in North America. Young and displaced cougars looking to establish their territories encroach on residential areas and threaten public safety. WS works cooperatively with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and the Oregon State Police Wildlife Division (OSP) to resolve cougar conflicts. Oregon's cougar population has expanded from 3,000 cougars in 1994 to a present population estimated at 5,200. Along with the expansion of the cougar population there has been an increase in conflicts with livestock production, human health and safety and the loss of pets. WS personnel have provided training for ODFW, OSP, and local law enforcement agencies on how to identify cougar signs and victims and how to implement cougar management techniques.

Protecting Air Travel—WS has assisted most of Oregon's major airports and associated Air National Guard Units by providing technical assistance, conducting wildlife hazard assessments, writing wildlife hazard management plans, providing wildlife removal services, and training airport staff on ways to minimize wildlife threats to air travelers.

The Oregon Department of Aviation (ODOA) relies on WS to review land development projects to evaluate the potential to attract wildlife and create wildlife hazards to aircraft operations. Additionally, ODOA calls on WS to conduct emergency removal of wildlife on airports that have or may cause collisions with aircraft.

Protecting Public Roads and Infra Structure—WS assists the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to complete critical state highway infrastructure projects while minimizing impacts on federally protected migratory birds. In a unique working relationship with ODOT, WS implements nonlethal exclusion and bird harassment techniques at bridge sites that are slated for repair or replacement in order for important public transportation projects to be completed while allowing ODOT to carry out their Avian Protection Plan. In 2008, WS worked at 166 state highway construction sites on a nonlethal project to prevent birds and bats from using these sites as nesting or roosting sites. If these projects had to be curtailed due to the presence of protected birds or bats, several transportation safety projects could not be completed costing the state hundreds of millions of dollars.

Protecting Threatened and Endangered Species—Historically, predators have been responsible for more than 60% of all egg destruction and mortality of young Western Snowy Plover (plover), a federally threatened bird. For several years Federal and State agencies had unsuccessfully attempted to halt predation with nonlethal methods. With WS assistance to the plover conservation effort through the selective removal of avian and mammalian predators, fledgling success has dramatically improved. Since the involvement of WS, the nesting success of plovers on Oregon beaches has been the highest on record since monitoring began

in 1990. Hatchlings surviving long enough to learn to fly and become independent of their parents has more than doubled the average of 45 annually since 1990. The data indicate that predator management is helping plover numbers climb toward recovery goals.

During the past four years WS has assisted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in the protection of the federally threatened Columbia white-tailed deer, which live on islands in the Columbia River. WS removed coyotes, which have historically caused a complete failure of the annual fawn crop. Through carefully timed coyote control, conducted by WS personnel, fawn success has soared to 100 percent.

Looking to the Future

Successful wolf reintroduction in Idaho means future wolf / livestock conflicts in Oregon. The confirmation of Oregon's first wolf pack in Union County and other substantiated wolf sightings in Eastern Oregon means that WS must take precautions to safeguard wolves during the course of conducting predator damage management for other predators. It must prepare to respond to wolf predation events. As in other States with wolf populations, the presence of wolves in Oregon will increase and complicate demands on the program. WS' efforts to manage predator damage caused by coyotes, cougars, bears, foxes and bobcats will be hampered because traditional predator management tools will be restricted when wolves are present. If wolves become established in Oregon, the cost of protecting livestock from all predators will increase as it has in every state with wolf populations.

In February 2005, the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife Commission approved a State Wolf Management Plan developed by the Oregon Wolf Advisory Council, comprised of representatives of wolf advocate groups, local governments, land management agencies, Tribes, producer groups, academia and citizens. The plan calls on WS to perform critical roles such as the investigation of suspected wolf predation and conducting Federal- and State-authorized wolf management actions.

Oregon Wildlife Services Funding

In addition to receiving federally allocated funds, WS also receives money from cooperators who value the service they receive from the WS program: producers, private individuals, sportsmen, 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 livestock and crop resources from mammalian and avian predators
- Protecting timber from bear and beaver damage
- Conducting wildlife disease surveillance and monitoring throughout the state
- Protecting people and pets from injuries and diseases caused by wildlife, including predators like cougars, coyotes, raccoons, skunks, and bears
- Protecting passengers and aircraft and military operations from wildlife hazards at airports

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Oregon:

- Evaluating nonlethal management tools (reproductive inhibitors and repellents) for resident and migratory waterfowl to address disease, parasites, and the spread of noxious weeds, crop depredation and property damage
- Identifying and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Managing predators through new methods to protect livestock and wildlife
- Protecting timber and forest resources
- Improving assessment, sampling and economic methods for wildlife damage management