



HUMAN WILDLIFE CONFLICT WORKING GROUP

90th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference

**Galt House Hotel
Louisville, Kentucky**

**Chair: Brian Wakeling (Montana)
Vice-Chair: Doug Brimeyer (Wyoming)**

**Monday, March 10th, 2025
3:30 – 5:30 PM (EDT)**

Minutes of the Meeting

Agenda

- Call to Order/Review Agenda/Introductions (Brian Wakeling)
 - The meeting was attended by ~30 state, federal, and NGO partners
- Approval of [Minutes](#) from the previous meeting (Brian Wakeling)
 - Motion carried for the approval of the minutes
- USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services (Jessica Fantinato, Deputy Administrator)
 - Please see Appendix for report
- Wildlife Management Institute (Dr. Bill Moritz)
 - WMI is looking for more zoos to test bear resistant containers
 - Numerous agencies are interested in this testing program so they can recommend containers that are effective
- Berryman Institute (Dr. Julie Young)
 - Dr. Julie Young provided a briefing from the Berryman Institute at Utah State University. She is now the director at Berryman and Dr. Nicki Frey is the editor of Human Wildlife Interactions journal. Human Wildlife Interactions is the journal that has served as an outlet for the peer-reviewed products developed by the Human Wildlife Conflict Working Group. Following the departure of the former director and editor, there was a backlog of papers for publication, but they are currently almost up to date.
- Update on AFWA papers: (Brian Wakeling/Bryant White)
 - The previous two monographs on bear conflicts and deer conflicts have been downloaded over 3,200 times across multiple countries and continents. The deer paper has been downloaded 1,923 times and the bear paper has been downloaded 1,281 times as of March 1, 2025.
 - Urban Coyote Publication (complete and being distributed)

- Can be downloaded here: [Human–Wildlife Interactions Monographs | Berryman Institute | Utah State University](#)
- Managing Conflicts with Beavers (need approval, submission following)
 - Motion to approve submission of the paper was brought to the floor and approved; follow up indicates the paper has been accepted for publication
- Managing Cougars in North America (WAFWA)
 - Release of the latest edition is expected this calendar year
- Managing Conflicts with Wolves (outline produced, authors selected)
 - This document was approved to move forward
- Potential Multistate Conservation Grant to deliver Wildlife-Human Attack Response Training Workshops (WHART) to state agencies
 - Will look into Multistate Grant to fund these training workshops for agency staff; follow-up indicates that no grant will be submitted
 - A workshop is planned in Cody, Wyoming, April 6-10, 2026
- Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment for the Use of Wildlife Damage Management Methods by APHIS-Wildlife Services (Bryant White)
 - To date over 30 methods have been reviewed involving numerous state agency staff
 - AFWA and Wildlife Services very much appreciate the cooperation from agencies in providing expert reviews by staff
 - Reviews are ongoing and can be viewed
 - <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife-services/publications/nepa/methods-risk-assessments>
- The group received an update submitted by Kate Malpeli with USGS. Kate had approached HWCWG to identify issues of priority and review of products associated with those wildlife conflicts that may be influenced by climate change. The first paper has been published entitled "A systematic review of the effects of climate variability and change on black and brown bear ecology and interactions with humans" in Biological Conservation (Kurth et al. 2024). Bryant White and I met with Kate and USGS team members virtually during fall 2024 to discuss future interests from the working group. The products from USGS are not working group products, and the working group simply provides ideas for investigation and review comments.
- Roundtable: State/Federal/Tribal/Provincial/Regional Associations/AFWA Members
 - Conflicts seem to arise as a result of many species that were once quite rare yet are now very common and respond to anthropogenic attractants. There seems to be growing interest in addressing a best management practice for managing conflicts with Canada geese.
 - Please see Appendix for reports provided by state agencies
- Wrap-up Discussion and Assignments for Next Meeting (Brian Wakeling)
 - The group will submit the document on managing conflicts with beavers
 - The group will begin developing a document on managing conflicts with wolves

Human Wildlife Conflict Working Group

North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference 2025

Appendix

- **Report: USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services Program**
- **Report from Montana**
- **Report from North Carolina**
- **Report from Oklahoma**
- **Report from Wyoming**

**90th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, Wildlife Management
Institute: March 10-14, 2025, Louisville, KY**

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
Wildlife Services (WS)
Human-Wildlife Conflicts Working Group Meeting Report

New Administration's Known Positions

- USDA Secretary - Brooke Rollins (confirmed on Feb 14, 2025)
- USDA Deputy Secretary nominee – Stephen Vaden
- Marketing Regulatory Programs (MRP) Under Secretary nominee - Dudley Hoskins

Goals for USDA include:

- Modernizing programs, including SNAP.
- Supporting farmers, increase market access for U.S. farm products.
- Improving food security, driving economic growth in rural communities.
- [Combat avian influenza \(HPAI\)](#) – announced a \$1 billion-dollar comprehensive strategy to curb HPAI, protect the U.S. poultry industry, and lower egg prices. This is in addition to funding already being provided to indemnify growers for depopulated flocks. This five-pronged strategy includes an additional \$500 million for biosecurity measures, \$400 million in financial relief for affected farmers, and \$100 million for vaccine research, action to reduce regulatory burdens, and exploring temporary import options.
- Optimize USDA workforce – USDA is pursuing an aggressive plan to optimize its workforce by eliminating positions that are no longer necessary, bringing its workforce back to the office, and relocating employees out of the National Capital Region into our nation's heartland to allow our rural communities to flourish.

WS Personnel Updates

WS has undergone several changes in high-level leadership positions at the national, regional, and state levels during FY24.

- Jessica Fantinato is the Deputy Administrator after Janet Bucknall retired in Dec 2024.
- Carson Hawley is the new Associate Deputy Administrator.
- Brett Dunlap and John Forbes are now Assistant Regional Directors for WS' Eastern Region.
- WS has new State Directors in TN/KY (Blaine Hyle) and in CO (Emily Blizzard).

National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee (NWSAC)

- In early 2023, Secretary Vilsack selected NWSAC members to represent program stakeholders including academia, airport safety, farming and livestock producers, and state wildlife agencies, among other interest groups.
- The NWSAC serves as an open forum for diverse interests to have a voice in WS policies, guidance, and strategic planning. Committee members are appointed for a 2-year term and can serve up to three consecutive two-year terms.
- The NWSAC selected members, John Michael Tomeček (Academia, TX) as their chair, and Sherry Wilson Russell (State/County Government and Associations, MO) as their vice chair.

- NWSAC members convened twice, in October 2023 and in October 2024, to review prior committee recommendations and to develop new recommendations based on current priorities and values.
- Following the first meeting, NWSAC Chair Tomeček shared the final committee developed recommendations with the Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) and the APHIS Administrator, for provision to the Secretary, in November 2023.
- Following the second meeting, NWSAC members finalized and put forth 21 recommendations for USDA's consideration pertaining to several key WS program and operational functions. Recommendations were vetted and approved through APHIS and MRP leadership and WS formally submitted the recommendations to USDA in late November 2024. USDA approved them shortly thereafter in December 2024. WS posted the recommendations to [its public-facing website](#).
- WS would like to extend our thanks to Ron Reagan (AFWA Executive Director) for his membership on this NWSAC.

Livestock Protection Update

- WS assists farmers and ranchers in 50 states and 3 territories to reduce the impact of predators on their animals, protecting 9.4 million head of cattle, 5.2 million head of sheep, and 57 million head of other livestock in 322,000 direct control actions.
- In FY24, WS provided more than 21,000 technical assistance activities that enabled 5,488 livestock producers to implement improved husbandry and methods such as use of guard animals, exclusion, fencing, and predator dispersal. These activities included 53 predator management workshops attended by more than 1,600 individuals from 15 states.
- In collaboration with state wildlife agencies, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and tribes, WS addresses livestock depredation and protects human health and safety related to wolves and grizzly bears.
 - WS manages conflicts with gray wolves or Mexican gray wolves in 11 states.
 - WS conducted operations with grizzly bears in 3 states, dispersing 30, capturing-relocating 11, and lethally removing 6 in FY24.
 - Congressional funding of \$4.5 million in FY24 supported protecting livestock from large carnivore predation in 12 states using nonlethal strategies such as range riding, fladry installation, and electric fence construction. WS filled 35 full-time positions and supported 7 part-time position to implement these strategies. Nonlethal projects also received support from more than 50 other WS staff. WS' National Wildlife Research Center evaluated the effectiveness of activities to reduce depredation.
- WS flew 82 aircraft for 16,096 flight hours over a total of 1.02 million miles of flight operations to conduct livestock protection via predator removal, removal of invasive feral swine and brown tree snakes, aerial delivery of vaccine baits (rabies), emergency response, and other missions.

Black Vulture Update

- In response to increased livestock loss and vulture predation, WS provides both direct control and technical assistance to those experiencing vulture damage. The top 5 resources threatened by black vultures (as per requests received by WS) are beef cattle calves, aviation-related human safety, adult beef cattle, lambs, and adult sheep.

- In FY24, black vulture nationwide removal numbers dropped slightly to 10,715 birds removed (compared to 13,665 removed in FY23) and dispersal numbers increased to 68,268 birds harassed and dispersed to protect resources (compared to 57,087 dispersed in FY23).
- In response to producer complaints about the USFWS depredation permitting process, USFWS and WS designed a pilot program that expedited the permitting process for livestock producers in participating states.
 - Those states (14) are: AL, TN, KY, AR, TX, MS, OK, MO, OH, IN, IL, MD, FL, and VA.
- WS programs from 19 states collaborate with NWRC staff, including financially supporting a devoted wildlife biologist position, on a five-year research program assessing gaps in understanding black vulture life history and ecology, ways to improve upon existing take models, as well as test current and develop new management methods. States prioritized seven research areas and research will occur as allows (highest to lowest priority):
 - Conducting field evaluations to determine efficiency of emerging vulture management tools.
 - Improving demographic estimators for black vulture for modifying allowable take models.
 - Developing movement models for vultures and vulture response to field management actions.
 - Leveraging WS operational activities to determine optimized methodology for roost dispersal.
 - Evaluating use of patagial tags and mark-resight data for estimating abundance and comparing mark-resight abundance estimates with those used to develop current allowable take models.
 - Evaluating damage and assessing risk of black vulture damage using existing data and social science-based surveys: private property and utility focused.
 - Replicating the Southern Indiana livestock vulture study to include a state within the historical range of black vulture.

Aquaculture Update

- WS continues supporting the aquaculture industry and stakeholders by:
 - Helping producers receive and renew Migratory Bird Depredation Permits
 - Providing technical assistance, integrated damage management (harassment/removal), and surveillance
 - Outreach, research, and collaboration with federal regulatory agencies.
- WS is assisting USFWS and state wildlife agencies with double-crested cormorant surveys. These surveys provide the basis for population estimates for setting cormorant take limits for depredation permits. WS conducts aerial roost counts of cormorants every two weeks from October - April in aquaculture producing areas of Mississippi. These counts are used to support a regional dispersal program to reduce bird depredation by moving birds away from aquaculture.
- In FY24, WS issued 196 Form 37s recommending permits for individual producers with the top five states including Mississippi (49), Arkansas (26), Ohio (19), Florida (11), and Alabama (7).
 - In FY24 WS dispersed more than 168,000 double-crested cormorants and removed of 2,416 cormorants at aquaculture facilities, and other farmed fish protection from avian

depredation in 16 states. The industry is worth \$1.5 billion nationally (per National Marine Fisheries Service).

- Further examples of coordination with partners on cormorant issues include:
 - WS is a member of the AFWA Bird Fish Conflict Working Group that brings together experts from federal and state agencies with management authority over birds and fish to address and respond to conflicts associated with various species.
 - WS participates on the USFWS “Population Monitoring Team”, which developed survey methods and coordinated with states on cormorant surveys.
 - WS is a member of the Cross Flyway Team comprised of USFWS Migratory Bird Division and State Agency Flyway representatives to address cormorant surveys and depredation issues.
 - WS met with producers, researchers, and USDA Risk Management Agency staff to discuss means of providing indemnity to producers for various sources of loss including bird depredation.
- The WS NWRC conducts research to find science-based solutions to bird depredation. WS, NWRC’s MS field Station has ongoing research projects focusing on:
 - Disease transmission from birds to catfish
 - Disease transmission from birds to shellfish
 - Depredation impacts to inland shrimp aquaculture in AL and FL
 - Deterrent methods on shellfish aquaculture
 - Depredation impacts of fish-eating birds on catfish aquaculture in MS and AL
 - Depredation impacts of blackbirds on baitfish aquaculture in AR
 - Depredation impacts of fish-eating birds on redfish, hybrid striped bass, catfish and shrimp aquaculture in TX

Feral Swine Management Update

Feral Swine Operations

- The National Feral Swine Program (NFSP) conducts operations in 32 states and three territories to control existing and emerging populations of feral swine that threaten agriculture, other property, native ecosystems, and human and animal health.
- Agriculture continues to comprise the majority (48%) of resources protected, followed by property (27%).
- Since the NFSP’s inception, WS has eliminated feral swine in twelve states (declared eliminated in CO, ID, MD, MN, ME, NJ, NY, IA, and VT and monitoring continues to confirm elimination in IN, WA and WI).
- In states where feral swine elimination has occurred, NFSP provides funding to maintain collaborations and monitoring activities; if new populations are detected, additional resources are provided to eliminate new incursions.

Feral Swine Surveillance

- NFSP also conducts targeted surveillance for diseases of highest concern.
- The risk-based surveillance system prioritizes collection of disease samples in areas at highest risk of foreign animal disease entry and areas with high numbers of domestic pigs.
- National surveillance includes serosurveillance for Influenza A and H5 antibody, African swine fever (ASF), classical swine fever, swine brucellosis, and pseudorabies.
- Targeted surveillance for African Swine Fever virus infection (PCR) as well as antibody (ELISA) occurs in the U.S. Protection Zone (USVI and PR) and in 12 states (AL, AZ, CA,

FL, GA, LA, MS, NM, OK, SC, TN, and TX) in counties where the risk of ASF is the highest.

- In August 2024, targeted surveillance for HPAI in feral swine began in three states (CA, TX, and NC) representing the three wild bird flyways in counties where previous HPAI detections in wild or domestic animals occurred, or where previous sampling found H5 antibody in feral swine.

Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program (Farm Bill)

- After a short cessation of activities in pilot project areas following conclusion of the 2018 Farm Bill, an extension of funding was provided in 2024 (\$15M split between Natural Resources Conservation Service {NRCS} and WS) and work in pilot project areas was resumed.
- WS continued feral swine management activities in 33 pilot projects in 12 states (AL, AR, FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, SC, HI, MO, OK, and TX; one project in Texas was not continued during the extension because feral swine were already eliminated in this project area.
- Congress continues work to establish a Feral Swine Eradication Program in the next Farm Bill.

Research

- *Feral Swine Genetic Archive*: Presently 52,000 unique samples; 25,000 genotyped to date. Especially valuable tool in identifying source populations and tracking illegal movement of swine. Over the past year, support from the Feral Swine Genetic Archive has been requested by law enforcement agencies in Michigan and Mississippi to help enforce prohibitions on the possession and/or transport of feral swine.
- *Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)*: Program collaborations continue to look at possible roles feral swine serve in the dispersal of CWD. Current findings suggest wild pigs take up CWD prions. Additional research will explore if feral swine can move prions by depositing them onto the landscape in their feces.

Feral Swine Toxicant Research

- As previously reported, WS did not move forward to register HOGGONE 2 to the EPA because our field trials revealed unacceptable levels of nontarget take of passerine birds that consumed HOGGONE 2 toxic bait that was spilled by feral swine as they consumed the bait. This was decided in the best interests of WS and its stakeholders.
- WS remains committed to pursuing a feral swine toxicant that meets regulatory requirements and will be an effective management tool for feral swine.
- To meet the needs of the APHIS WS Program and our stakeholders, a feral swine toxicant must meet the following requirements for operational field use:
 - Rapid-acting product with high lethality for feral swine
 - Low risks for non-target species
 - Ease of use for applicators
 - Good shelf stability
 - Cost effective
 - Manufactured in the U.S. with $\geq 75\%$ U.S.-sourced materials to meet Buy American Act requirements

National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) Updates

The WS Wildlife Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (WDDL) was established in 2022; the WDDL currently consists of well-appointed laboratories located at NWRC in Fort Collins, CO. The WDDL fills an important gap and function in wildlife disease diagnostics, in that it will prioritize wildlife samples over those from other sources and it will provide timeliness and responsiveness as an internal APHIS and WS facility. WDDL became a National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) affiliate in February 2025, and will support WS Operational Programs, WS National Programs, NWRC Researchers, and external stakeholders by providing microbial diagnostic services focused on samples derived from wildlife and the environment. The formation and expansion of the WDDL is part of a larger APHIS priority to develop laboratory expertise and capacity within the Agency. The WDDL is expected to interact closely with other APHIS laboratories, and the NAHLN, to facilitate the collection, analysis, and sharing of information.

The WS NWRC Wildlife Disease Research Project (WDRP) conducts research and development related to avian influenza viruses, emerging pathogens and other disease agents. Recent examples of the WDRP work with emerging pathogens include rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus 2 and SARS coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). WDRP members work in unique and state-of-the-art animal facilities at the NWRC campus for biosafety level 2 (BSL-2) pathogens and in high containment laboratories at Colorado State University (CSU) when working on BSL-3 pathogens.

The WS Bio-Archive Storage (BAS) facility was completed in July 2024, at NWRC in Ft. Collins, CO. The 7300 ft² building is a specialty warehouse designed to house ultra-cold (-80° C) freezers for the long-term storage of biological samples. The BAS will house the sample archives for three WS National Programs: NRMP, NFSP, and NWDP. The ability to maintain an archive of biological samples from these extensive surveillance efforts will create an important resource, available for use by other federal, state, and tribal partners to aid with the storage of disease-specific samples and increase overall research opportunities.

Brief Wildlife Disease Updates (additional details included in the Wildlife Disease Working Group Report)

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Update

Detections of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in cattle in March 2024 raised additional questions about the circulating virus. To help answer those questions, the WS National Wildlife Disease Program (NWDP) broadened its surveillance program to include spring sampling of any avian species, concurrent with the outbreak in cattle. WS Wildlife Disease Biologists and WS personnel in 45 states/territories collected 5,282 samples from 145 bird species from April 1 – June 30. HPAI was detected in only two of those samples, but not the B3.13 strain circulating in cattle. The low detections of avian influenza viruses built confidence that the foundational surveillance of ducks is on target, and the absence of B3.13 indicates that the cattle strain is likely not circulating in wild bird populations.

- *Wild Birds*
 - WS is targeting surveillance in all four flyways, and 49 states. WS is collecting opportunistic samples in Hawaii and the Caribbean territories of Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands.

- WS updates HPAI detection data weekly on the APHIS website, found here: [Detections of HPAI in Wild Birds](#)
- *Mammals*
 - Partner agencies, state wildlife agencies, and wildlife rehab facilities collect and submit samples to the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) or NAHLN laboratories (who then forward non-negative samples to NVSL for confirmation), who share the findings with APHIS for awareness and reporting to the [World Organisation of Animal Health](#) (WOAH), if necessary.
 - APHIS coordinates with the Department of Interior and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to record, analyze, and monitor sample collections. APHIS reports finding on its “[Detections of HPAI in Mammals](#)” website with permission from outside entities.
- *Wildlife Biosecurity Assessments (WBA)*
 - During 2023 and 2024 WS implemented a wildlife biosecurity pilot project (WBA) conducting WBAs on commercial poultry premises in four upper Midwest states (IA, MN, SD, ND). Goals of the WBA project include:
 - Increased biosecurity at commercial poultry operations related to wildlife.
 - Reduced probability of transmission of HPAI (and other diseases) from wildlife to commercial poultry populations.
 - Reduced number of commercial production facilities testing positive for HPAI.
 - Reduced national costs and impacts to the U.S. poultry industry.
 - Improved food security and stabilization of the national food chain across the United States.
 - Maintain consumer confidence in food supply chain.
 - Net savings to Americans by reducing expenditures on disease outbreak response.
 - As a result of the overwhelming success of the wildlife biosecurity assessment pilot project, USDA Secretary Rollins recently [announced](#) that the WBA project will be expanded to be administered in all 50 states over the next 3 years.

African Swine Fever (ASF) Prep & Response

- WS continues to collaborate with Veterinary Services (VS) in the ASF technical working group and implementing the ASF Preparedness and Response Plan.
- This includes conducting operational activities, outreach, and foreign animal disease surveillance of free-roaming and feral swine in the United States Caribbean territories (U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico) and in the Continental United States, lowering the risk of ASF introduction to susceptible swine populations in the United States and territories.
- The *Squeal on Pigs!* outreach and reporting campaign is a collaborative campaign facilitated by the Transboundary Feral Swine Working Group to allow for citizen science reporting of feral pig sightings in states with few or no known feral swine populations. The campaign provides a multi-agency public reporting tool, an outreach and education toolkit, branding guidance, and facilitates rapid response and removal of new feral swine populations.
- In 2024 WS updated the *Squeal on Pigs!* application to include reporting of morbidity/mortality that may indicate ASF infection or other foreign animal disease infections. An online training hosted September 5, 2024, introduced the app to federal and state partners, including the morbidity/mortality reporting.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Update

- WS state operation programs work cooperatively with state wildlife and agriculture health programs (~20 states) on CWD surveillance, targeted cervid removals, and assistance at hunter check points. In ~14 States, during unrelated deer removal projects, WS biologists continue collecting and submitting CWD samples to state diagnostic labs supporting CWD surveillance.
- At the WS NWRC, the CWD Research project continues to be led by Dr. Jennifer Malmberg and her staff of scientists.

2024 Wild Cervid CWD Funding

FY 2024 Cooperative Agreement Overview

- On October 3, 2024, APHIS announced approximately \$12 million for states, tribes, universities, and research institutes to further develop and implement CWD management and response activities in wild and farmed cervids across three separate funding opportunities.

Wild Cervid CWD Management and Response Activities Opportunity

- APHIS provided 29 awards totaling \$5,500,000.
 - state wildlife agencies – 17 proposals totaling approximately \$3,076,511
 - States: AR, CA (2), FL, IN, KY, LA, NV, NJ, ND, OR (2), UT, VA, WA, WI, WY
 - state departments of agriculture – 1 proposal for \$184,745
 - This was for the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) – Animal Diagnostic Laboratory to increase CWD ELISA diagnostic capacity for wild cervid testing.
 - universities – 10 proposals totaling approximately \$2,140,204
 - tribal government – 1 proposal for \$98,539
- APHIS received 55 proposals requesting \$10,637,387 in APHIS funding.
 - state wildlife agencies – 23 proposals received requesting \$4,083,296
 - state department of agriculture – 1 proposal received requesting \$184,745
 - universities – 29 proposals received requesting \$6,116,181
 - research institute – 1 proposal received requesting \$154,626
 - tribal government – 1 proposal received requesting \$98,539

USDA APHIS Tribal Nations Wild Cervid CWD Opportunity

- APHIS provided 9 awards totaling \$500,000.
 - 9 federally recognized tribal governments were awarded funding to manage CWD on tribal lands.
- APHIS received 12 proposals requesting \$720,372 in APHIS funding.

Farmed Cervid CWD Management and Response Activities Opportunity

- APHIS provided 30 awards totaling \$6,045,215.
 - 17 state departments of agriculture received funding.
 - Includes funds for indemnity.
 - 5 universities received funding.

FY25 CWD Funding Opportunities

- It is unclear at this time what CWD funding opportunities will look like in FY25.

Risk Assessments (RA) Update

- WS appreciates AFWA’s ongoing assistance with our RAs.
- WS has been preparing RAs on many of the methods it uses, which analyze the impacts of wildlife damage management methods on people and the environment.
- AFWA selects peer reviewers to review. All assessments (including drafts) are available to the public on the APHIS-WS-NEPA webpage.
- Bryant White (Program Manager of Trapping Policy, Furbearer Research, and Human-Wildlife Conflicts) is our primary POC for Risk Assessments.
- WS has completed 30 RAs.
- The Laser and Alpha-chloralose RAs are undergoing internal review and will be finalized for submission to AFWA by March 7, 2025.
- The UAV RA is in the early phases of drafting.

Table 1. WS Risk Assessment Status:

RISK ASSESSMENT	STATUS	COMMENTS	Status 02/20/2025
Introduction	Complete		
Cage Traps	Complete		
Cable Devices	Complete		
Foothold Traps	Complete		
Aircraft	Complete		
Firearms	Complete		
Sodium Cyanide	Complete		
Carbon Monoxide	Complete		
Aluminum Phosphide	Complete		
Zinc Phosphide	Complete		
GonaCon	Complete		
Lead	Complete		
Nets	Complete		
Quick-kill Traps	Complete		
Dogs	Complete		
Egg Addling	Complete		
DRC-1339	Complete		
Hand Capture	Complete		
Strychnine	Complete		
Sodium Fluoroacetate	Complete		
Explosives/Pyrotechnics	Complete		
Exclusion	Complete		
Carcass Disposal	Complete		
Registered Chemical Repellents	Complete		
Avitrol	Complete		Completed June 2023
Chlorophacinone	Complete		Completed June 2023
I&E Drugs	Complete		Completed January 2024

Minimum Risk Pesticides	Split out from chemical repellents- Complete		Completed July 2024
Diphacinone	Complete		Completed May 2024
Non-Chemical Deterrents	Complete	Submitted March 2024	Out for Peer Review March 2024 Received comments Oct 2024, finalized December 2024
Brodifacoum	Complete	Submitted March 2024	WSMT/NWRC identified as Priority 1 for next batch (07/27/2023). Out for Peer Review March 2024. Received comments January 2025, Finalized February 2025.
Bromadioline	Not started		Not needed at this time.
Bromethalin	Out for Peer Review	Submitted September 2024	WSMT/NWRC identified as Priority 3 for next batch (07/27/2023). Draft submitted for peer review September 2024. Waiting on comments.
Vaccinia*	Not started- on hold	On hold	No change to status.
Acetaminophen	Not started		We decided to put a hold on this one since the use is limited and covered in EAs.
Sodium Nitrite	Updating w/ new info.		Waiting on Registration decision.
Lasers	Under internal review	Expected peer review- March 2025	WSMT/NWRC identified as Priority 2 for next batch (07/27/2023). Submission for peer review delayed due to WS directive finalization. Expected peer review March 2025.
Miscellaneous WDM Methods	Not started	Expected peer review- FY24	
Alpha Chloralose	Under internal review	Expected peer review- March 2025	Draft completed in December 2024, under internal review with I&E committee members and state programs that use AC.
Drones		Expected peer review- September 2025	

*OSS-NEPA staff has decided to put this on hold until use pattern changes or additional uses arise.

Report to AFWA Human Wildlife Conflict Working Group

AGENCY: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
STATE: Montana

DATE: March 7, 2025

Submitted by
Brian Wakeling

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E-mail: brian.wakeling@mt.gov

1. MOST SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

a. On-Going

Previously, Montana game wardens precisely record activities that involve urban wildlife, but biologists do not similarly record these activities. The reasons that wardens recorded responses to urban wildlife dealt primarily with their ability to code their time to a specific fund source, which has now been allocated to other activities and not urban wildlife. Consequently, Montana doesn't have any effective method for tracking urban or conflict activities. Lack of a consistent reporting mechanism limits Montana's ability to report on prevalence of these issues.

b. Emerging

Montana has recently updated the grizzly bear management plan and has recently released the environmental impact statement on the wolf plan required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act. We anticipate a decision notice on the wolf plan shortly. Montana's legislature meets during odd-numbered years, and a number of bills are still being debated that may influence everything from wolf and bear management to nonresident participation in many of our hunts.

The elk management plan was updated in 2023, and the mule deer management plan is undergoing revision currently. All of Montana's planning efforts tend to take a good deal of effort and public involvement. Each revision generally takes 2–4 years to complete.

2. CONFLICT INCIDENT REPORT BY SPECIES

We have no contemporary measures of the frequency or duration of our agency response to urban or conflict issues. Salvage permits for elk, deer, antelope, or moose struck on highways are issued for any request within 24 hours following recovery by a motorist. In 2024, 1097 salvage permits were issued.

3. SIGNIFICANT REGULATORY OR POLICY CHANGES OR ISSUES?

Nothing has passed the legislature at this point. I will try to provide a substantive update in September.

Report to AFWA Human Wildlife Conflict Working Group

AGENCY: North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC)

DATE: March 10, 2025

STATE: North Carolina

Submitted by: Falyn Owens, Wildlife Extension Biologist

Telephone: 919-616-2208

E-mail: falyn.owens@ncwildlife.org

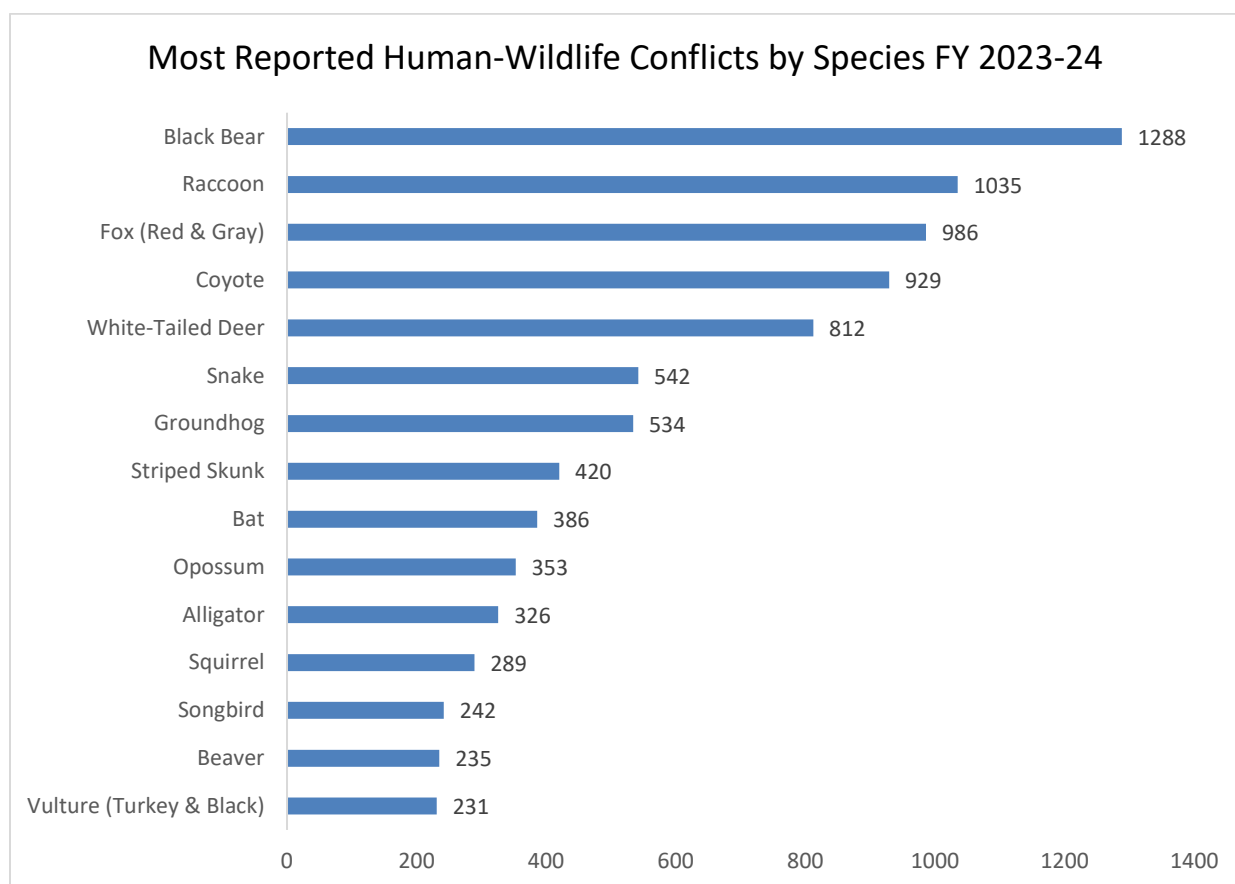
MOST SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

On-Going

Immigration from other states and population growth continues; in 2024, North Carolina experienced the fourth largest population gain in the nation (U.S. Census Bureau). Growing lack of familiarity with North Carolina's fauna, wildlife regulations, and coexistence practices continue to pose a challenge. A significant number of wildlife-related complaints made to NCWRC involve sightings of a wild animal where its presence is unexpected, such as in a residential neighborhood, regardless of whether that species is common in the area, or the animal is causing damage or posing a realistic threat. Fear-based complaints often involve common rabies vector species (e.g., red/gray foxes and raccoons) or larger, locally common carnivores/predators (black bear, coyote, alligator). Efforts to promote conflict prevention and coexistence continue via multiple communications platforms, including the agency's website, social media posts, press releases, newsletters, webinars, in-person outreach events, and NCWRC's statewide Wildlife Helpline.

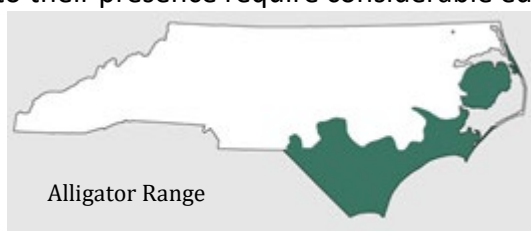
CONFLICT INCIDENT REPORT BY SPECIES

The following figure shows the 15 most common species associated with complaints reported to the NC Wildlife Resources Commission in state fiscal year 2023-24 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024). We define a human-wildlife conflict as any situation where an interaction was reported as negative or unwanted, regardless of whether the animal was causing damage or posing a realistic threat. These data reflect complaints made to the NC Wildlife Helpline as well as to field staff.



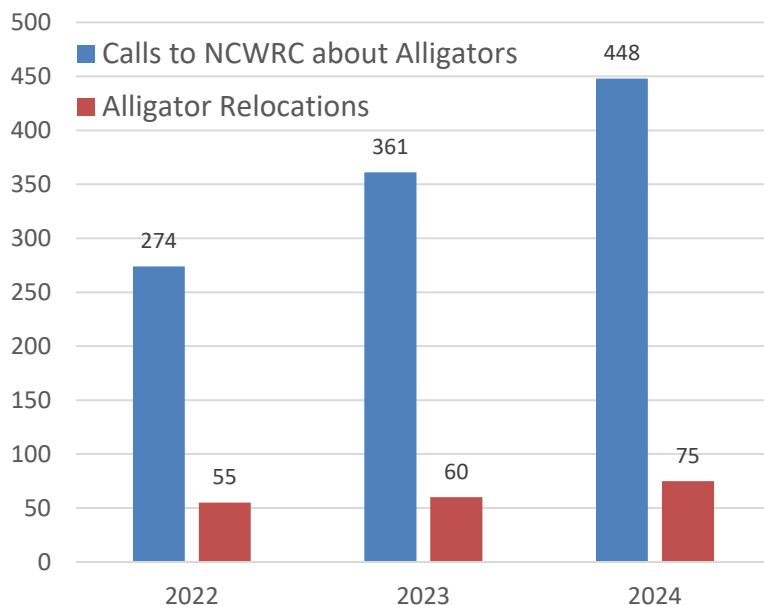
Alligators

Though alligators occupy only the southern coastal region of the state, complaints related to their presence require considerable education and management effort, in part due to



lack of awareness on the part of new coastal residents and visitors that alligators are present in the state. Because North Carolina is the northernmost part of American Alligator range, and their growth rate is slow compared to more southern states in their range, NCWRC relies on

outreach and education to prevent conflicts with alligators and promote coexistence. When it is deemed necessary to remove an alligator (often due to its location, such as in a roadway or garage), NCWRC relocates the animal to an area that minimizes the potential for future conflict. In recent years, NCWRC has observed an increase in the numbers of alligator-related calls and subsequent relocations alongside the continuous increase in human populations and associated development of coastal areas.



Black Bears

In 2024, NCWRC received 3 reports of humans and bears making direct physical contact, all occurring in Buncombe County where the vast majority of human-bear conflicts occur in the state. All 3 victims were treated and released from the hospital with minor injuries. The incidents were all determined defensive on the part of the bear, requiring no attempts to capture the offending bears.

SIGNIFICANT REGULATORY OR POLICY CHANGES OR ISSUES?

Alligators

After several years of planning and development, NCWRC launched two programs in Spring 2022 that authorize licensed Wildlife Control Agents (WCAs) and local enforcement officers to handle wild alligators as Alligator Control Agents (ACAs) and Jurisdictional Alligator Handlers (JAHs), respectively, in certain situations requiring removal of an alligator. Participants in each of these programs are required to attend classroom and field training provided by NCWRC staff, pass a written exam with a score of at least 80%, obtain required equipment and transportation devices that pass inspection by NCWRC staff, maintain an Endangered Species permit (issued by NCWRC) that authorizes ACA or JAH activities for a calendar year, and submit required data collected from each alligator handled under the permit. To date, 16 WCAs and 55 officers from 11 local law enforcement agencies have participated in these programs.

Feral swine

Threats from feral swine continue to cause concern among agricultural producers, landholders, and conservation managers. Though already illegal, in July 2024, the NC General Assembly increased the punishment for transporting or releasing live feral swine from a civil to criminal penalty. The fines were raised from $\geq \$250$ to $\geq \$1,000$ for a first offense and $\geq \$5,000$ or \$500.00 per pig, whichever is greater, for a second or subsequent offense.

RESEARCH /SPECIAL PROJECTS

GatorWise

SEAFWA's Alligator Working Group members are developing a GatorWise program aimed at promoting public safety and coexistence with alligators by providing consistent messaging about responsible human behavior in places where alligators occur. Modelled after the successful AFWA BearWise program, GatorWise will likewise be anchored by a website with content developed and approved by alligator biologists from each state agency within the species range; the website is anticipated to launch later this year.

BearWise®

NCWRC continues to work with Buncombe County and the City of Asheville to enforce recently enacted ordinances against the intentional feeding of bears, and to expand their bear-resistant garbage cart programs. NCWRC staff, in partnership with local governments, the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, NC State Parks, and other organizations, continue to promote BearWise® to residents and visitors to the state.

NCWRC developed short videos for each of the At-home and Outdoor BearWise Basics. These videos are available to all BearWise member states and local organizations as a spring social media campaign. NC also has a robust BearWise Recognition Program - where communities, businesses, campuses, and outdoor recreational areas receive BearWise recognition by committing to follow the BearWise Basics. North Carolina has the highest participation in such a program among BearWise member states, with 7 communities, 4 businesses, 3 campuses, and 1 outdoor recreation area receiving recognition since 2018.

4. RESEARCH /SPECIAL PROJECTS

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks held a joint 2-day summit with Montana Department of Transportation to focus more on addressing roadway conflicts.

5. OTHER

Montana is working with neighboring states and provinces through the WAFWA Forest Carnivore Subcommittee to develop and maintain monitoring for wolverine, lynx, swift fox, and fisher (among others). We continue to update our secretarial order 3362 movement and migration management plans to incorporate action and funding for wildlife movement challenges.

Report to AFWA Human Wildlife Conflict Working Group

AGENCY: ODWC

DATE: 3-1-25

Submitted by
(name) Jerry Shaw

Telephone: 405-301-6885

E-mail: Jerry.shaw@odwc.ok.gov

1. MOST SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

a. On-Going

We are seeing our usual issues with resident and migratory geese. Additionally, white-tailed deer and elk are providing depredation conflict across the state. Other issues are minor complaints of nuisance small game animals in residential settings. There have also been some mountain lion depredation issues with one lion killed by USDA Wildlife Services with cooperation and assistance from ODWC law enforcement. Black bears continue to be an issue with bee hives and trash foraging issues.

b. Emerging

Receiving complaints from central and eastern OK concerning river otters in farm ponds consuming fish.

2. CONFLICT INCIDENT REPORT BY SPECIES

See above

3. SIGNIFICANT REGULATORY OR POLICY CHANGES OR ISSUES?

No new regulations or policy changes this past cycle

4. RESEARCH /SPECIAL PROJECTS

None related to wildlife conflicts

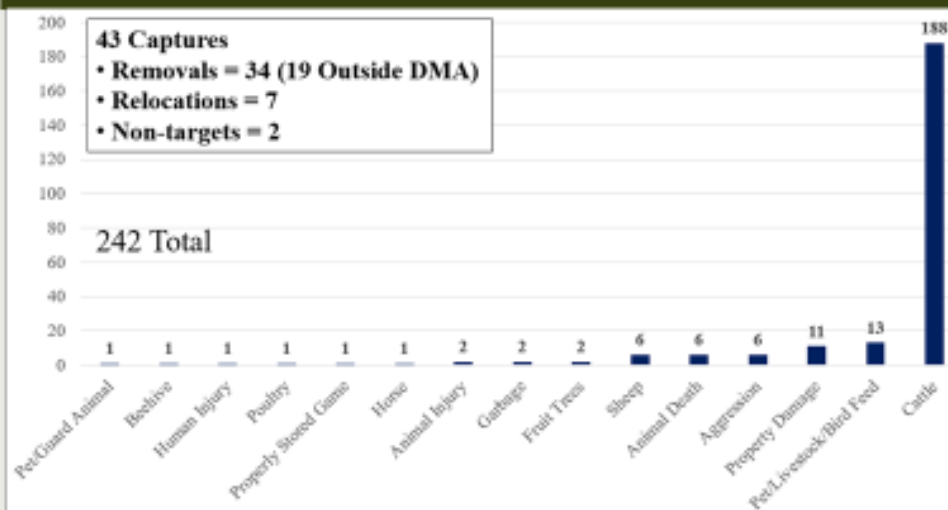
5. OTHER

Grizzly Bears

- Over the last decade Wyoming has averaged 222.4 verified conflicts annually. This resulted in an average of 16 relocations and 18 removals each year. To put this into context, the Department has increased removal of bears outside of suitable habitat as bears continue to expand into human dominated landscapes. Management removals within the DMA and recovery zone have stabilized. This past year the Department relocated 4 grizzly bears (well below average) and removed 26 (above average) - of the 31 bears handled for management purposes 23 were male and 8 female. A busy year was expected following two below average years. The number of bears caught in management actions was higher than the last few years. The primary conflict between grizzly bears and humans is livestock depredation, comprising usually 60% or more of total conflicts. A more in-depth breakdown is available for the Upper Green region of the state as an example:
 - **Grizzly bear depredations - 86**
of which 26 were walking wounded
73 calves, 12 yearlings, and 1 adult cow have been killed or wounded by GB
 - **Wolf depredations - 3 (1 calf and 2 yearlings)**
Of which 1 yearling was wounded
- 2024 was a very successful year for research monitoring with 23 grizzly bears captured. We also successfully translocated 2 grizzly bears from the NCDE (a subadult female and subadult male) to fulfill commitments made and address 9th Circuit Court Issues. Observation flights are conducted each year noting grizzly bear distribution and use of moth sites. This year a record number of observations were made with 109 grizzly bears observed during one morning's flight
- We updated the Conservation Strategy for GYE grizzly bears, serving as the overarching document for a delisted grizzly bear population in the GYE. Waiting on an answer from FWS on the Wyoming petition.
- Great deal of work reviewing Federal proposed rule and working on comments related to the future for grizzly bears.



Grizzly Bear Conflicts - 2024

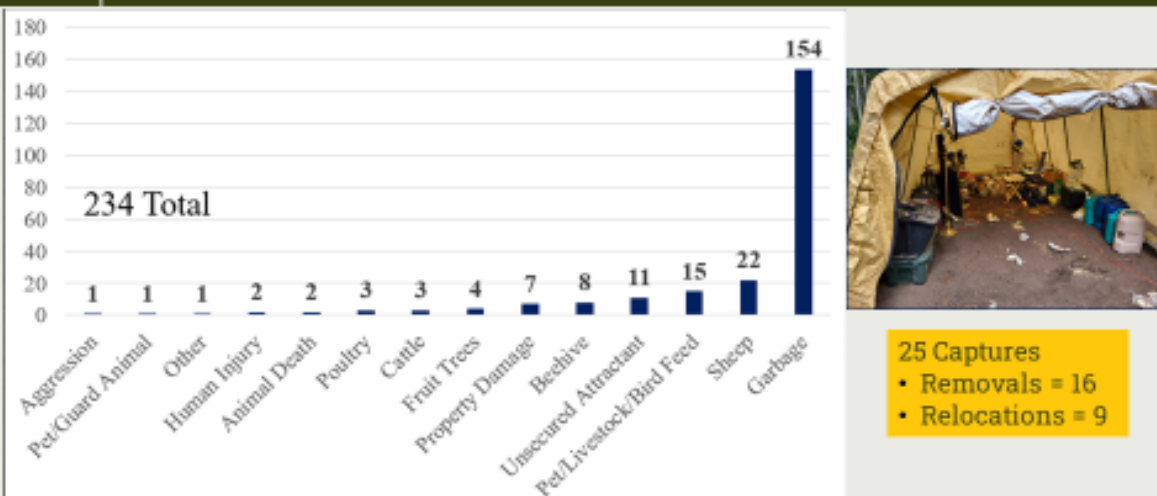


Black Bears –

- We don't have a tally on statewide black bear conflicts but it is likely well above average if not a record year of black bear conflicts.
- We completed our first revisit to a black bear DNA hair snare grid in the Greys River of southwest Wyoming. Samples will be analyzed to estimate density/abundance and compare with the first estimate of density/abundance.
- Hosted the WAFWA Black Bear Workshop in Spring of 2024.
- There has been some scrutiny of the agency's regulatory framework during the 2025 legislature. HB0186 failed during the session would have provided a bear coupon for all elk license holders.



Black Bear Conflicts - 2024

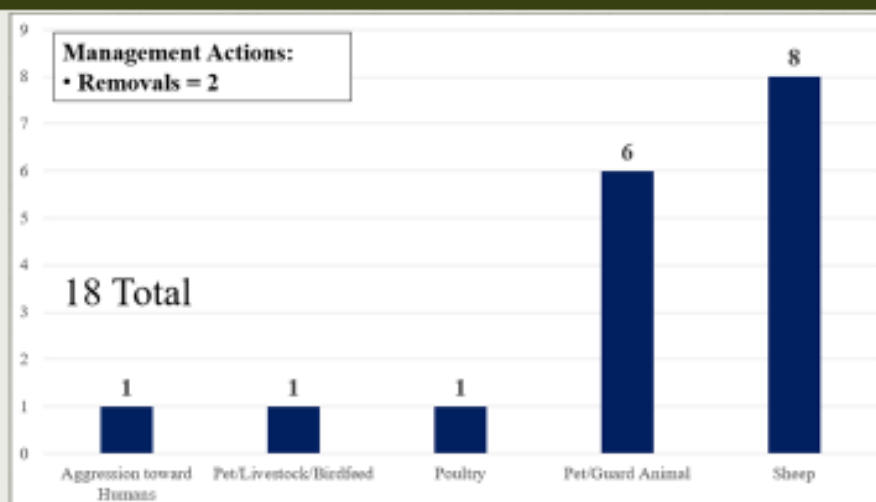


Mountain Lions –

- Wrapping up PhD project evaluating role of predation in relation to CWD – also evaluating scavenging behavior (not specific to mountain lions) between CWD positive and negative carcasses.
- Maintained a marked sample of mountain lions in the Wyoming Range of southwest Wyoming for the University of Wyoming to evaluate fine scale movement patterns between migratory mule deer and mountain lions – ancillary information regarding fine scale movements after an apocalyptic winter
- Will be analyzing harvest data to set seasons for the next 3 year cycle, lot of things happening around Wyoming likely to impact mountain lion hunting and houndsmen. Continued scrutiny of mountain lions in regards to mule deer numbers and legislation was proposed that would have liberalized the take of lions. HB0286 failed during the general session in 2025.
-



Mountain Lion Conflicts - 2024



Wolves –

- We were above objective for wolves last year, primarily due to reproduction and recruitment, feels like we're above average for depredation and removals. Seasons going on now.
- There was an incident in Daniel, WY that drew national and international attention. This incident did not impact wolf management which continues to use annual estimates of populations to derive available harvest with the goal of maintain wolves in suitable habitat while attempting to reduce conflict potential. Since we've managed wolves we have reduced livestock depredation an agency take by maintaining an objective of approximately 160 wolves in suitable habitat in northwest Wyoming. We annually are in excess of 300 wolves in Wyoming, more than double minimum recovery criteria.



Wolf Conflicts (WTGMA) - 2024

