



United States
Department of
Agriculture

**Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection
Service**

FY 2002



WILDLIFE SERVICES—NEW JERSEY

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USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in New Jersey

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

New Jersey is a diverse ecological mix of urban and suburban settings and agricultural and forested environments that are home to valuable wildlife populations. WS protects New Jersey's citizens from human health and safety problems associated with birds at airports and Canada geese around homes, schools, and workplaces.

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.



Through partnerships with natural resource management agencies, WS biologists protect threatened and endangered species from negative impacts caused by more abundant wildlife species. Additionally, WS biologists teach a semester-long undergraduate course at Rutgers University to advance an integrated, scientific approach for resolving wildlife damage problems that will continue to challenge wildlife management professionals in the future.

Protecting Air Travel—Since 1995, collisions between aircraft and wildlife have killed more than 115 people and destroyed more than 56 aircraft worldwide. The threat to human safety from wildlife strikes is increasing. Experts estimate that wildlife strikes cost U.S. civil aviation more than \$470 million annually. New Jersey's airports serve millions of passengers annually and are situated in the Atlantic Flyway, the north-south migration corridor for birds such as gulls and Canada geese. Airports, the traveling public, and government agencies are keenly interested in managing wildlife strikes to protect public safety.

WS' National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) conducts research to understand the nature of wildlife hazards at airports, develops effective management tools to reduce hazards, and monitors the effectiveness of wildlife hazard management programs. NWRC also maintains the National Wildlife Strike Database used by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and airports to monitor trends and wildlife species that pose the greatest threat to aviation.

In New Jersey, WS biologists provide expert wildlife management recommendations to airports to reduce or eliminate wildlife hazards. The program assists airports with wildlife permitting processes, pro-

Top 5 Major Assistance Activities:

- Protecting human safety from aggressive geese during springtime nesting season
- Protecting children, the elderly, and other citizens from potentially harmful effects of Canada goose feces
- Protecting passengers, aircraft, and communities from bird collisions with aircraft
- Protecting restored wetlands and rare native plant habitats from grazing by Canada geese
- Protecting threatened and endangered birds from predation

Top WS Research Projects of Interest to New Jersey:

- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Evaluating waterfowl as disease, parasite, and noxious weed reservoirs
- Developing repellents and other tools for wildlife damage management

vides wildlife hazard management training to airport personnel, and conducts direct management programs to reduce hazards. In addition, WS works closely with the FAA and the South Jersey Transportation Authority to monitor and reduce aircraft hazards from gulls and other birds through habitat management, bird behavior modification, and other methods. This program, in operation at Atlantic City International Airport in southern New Jersey since 1991, has significantly reduced strikes between aircraft and laughing gulls, from 23 in 1990 to none in 2000.

Currently, WS biologists are working cooperatively with Newark International, Trenton Mercer, Teterboro and other airports and air facilities to assess wildlife hazards and to develop site-specific wildlife hazard management programs.

Protecting Threatened and Endangered Species—New Jersey's 150-mile-long coastline has the potential to provide valuable habitat for threatened and endangered shorebirds. However, competition and predation from other wildlife species, as well as suburban development in shore communities, has been detrimental to a number of beach-nesting shorebird species. WS works cooperatively with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Coast Guard to protect piping plovers, least terns, and black skimmers from the negative impacts of red fox, raccoons, and opossums. These efforts, in combination with the efforts of cooperating agencies, have dramatically improved the status of these rare shorebirds so they will continue to be a part of New Jersey's coastal ecosystems.

Managing Canada Goose-Related Problems—In New Jersey, resident Canada geese are found in backyards, farm fields, playgrounds, municipal and county parks, and on corporate, hospital, and other properties throughout the State. Although most people enjoy seeing a few geese around, problems quickly develop as goose feces accumulate, overgrazing damages landscaping, and aggressive geese guarding nests attack children, senior citizens, and unwary customers, visitors, and clients. Each year, WS assists more than 400 New Jersey residents with goose-related problems through technical recommendations, presentations to groups, assistance with permit processes, removal of goose nests, and local population management to protect public safety. These efforts protect public safety, property, agriculture, and valuable natural resources such as restored wetlands and native wild rice habitats.

Citizens and governments in the eastern United States are challenged by problems associated with expanding goose populations.

Increasingly, population management may be considered where traditional methods have failed to protect human safety, property, natural resources, and agriculture from goose damage. Community-based programs and innovative solutions will be needed to resolve problems in a way that balances the needs of people and geese.

Looking to the Future

While WS provides the people of New Jersey with safe, effective, and humane assistance for a diverse and growing range of wildlife conflicts, some people continue to experience wildlife damage problems. Assessing wildlife conflicts and implementing appropriate management measures requires expertise and resources that may be beyond the reach of some citizens.

New Jersey's large population of resident Canada geese will pose increasing challenges for the protection of public health and safety and natural resources, as well as property, including schools, hospitals, airports, and urban/suburban backyards.

Similarly, increasing populations of deer, gulls, and other species are posing growing threats to New Jersey airports. Furthermore, emerging public health situations, such as those associated with the West Nile virus, will continue to challenge wildlife managers in New Jersey.

New Jersey Wildlife Services Funding

In addition to receiving federally allocated funds, WS also receives money from cooperators; such as producers; private individuals; airports; businesses; and other Federal, State, and local government agencies who have a vested interest in the program. In most cases, these cooperators need help to resolve wildlife damage problems or they play a role in wildlife damage management.

