

addressed 133 incidents of wildlife damage to other crops. Ducks, geese, raccoons, and other wildlife were responsible for \$133,000 in damages.

Beaver Damage Management—WS responded to 628 incidents of beaver damage to trees, roadways, and crops which resulted in losses totaling \$1.1 million. Beaver damage and resulting losses increased 16 percent and 63 percent respectively from 2001 levels. WS certified explosive specialists used binary explosives to remove 130 beaver dams in order to restore normal water flow in streams and creeks and prevent flooding.

Public Health and Safety—In 2002, WS documented 119 incidents involving wildlife threats to public health. Nearly 75 percent of the concerns dealt with the threat of wildlife transferring rabies to people or domestic pets.

Urban Wildlife Conflicts—Each year WS responds to an increasing number of conflicts between people and wildlife in urban areas. These conflicts range from animals inside homes to tree, lawn, and garden damage. Wildlife typically responsible for these problems include bats, squirrels, raccoons, rabbits, and pocket gophers. In 2002, WS documented \$63,000 in wildlife damage to urban residences.

Protecting Air Travelers—Every year, lives are endangered worldwide and billions of dollars are wasted when birds and other wildlife damage aircraft. Experts estimate that wildlife strikes with airplanes cost the U.S. civil aviation industry more than \$470 million annually.

WS has assisted civilian airports in Bismarck, Fargo, Grand Forks, and Minot with a variety of potentially hazardous situations involving wildlife. Of primary concern are wildlife found either on airport property or within the facility's airspace. Deer, ducks, geese, and gulls are the species that pose the greatest hazards to air safety.

Information Transfer—WS' assistance program includes extensive educational training to help North Dakotans with their specific wildlife conflicts. A total of 1,300 personal consultations and 55 instructional sessions were provided for 4,300 individuals. In addition, 3,200 informational leaflets were distributed to the public. Lastly, 400 pieces of equipment, including live traps and propane cannons, were loaned free of charge so that individuals could solve

specific problems on their own. WS provided instruction on the safe, effective, and humane use of all equipment that was loaned.

Looking to the Future

Public health and safety is a growing concern for the North Dakota WS program. The threat of rabies, West Nile virus, and other diseases being transferred from wildlife to humans or domestic animals continues to be a concern. An extensive public education campaign needs to be initiated to better inform the public about the steps they can take to minimize the hazards associated with wildlife-borne diseases.

Although WS has conducted assessments of wildlife hazards at some civilian airports, more systematic and thorough evaluations must be completed at all civilian and military airports in North Dakota.

North Dakota Wildlife Services Funding •••••

In addition to receiving federally allocated funds, WS also receives money from cooperators; such as producers; private individuals; 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.

