



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection
Service

Wildlife Services

1400 Independence
Avenue, SW
Washington, DC
20250

WILDLIFE SERVICES STAKEHOLDER'S NEWSLETTER 2007 Fall Edition

I am pleased to provide you, our valued stakeholders, with a brief update on what has been keeping APHIS' Wildlife Services (WS) program busy over the past several months. I want to take this opportunity to inform you that WS is conducting a nationwide safety review following several accidents in WS' programs. In addition, we have announcements regarding our expanding role in international wild bird surveillance for highly pathogenic avian influenza, as well as updates on invasive species, the rabies program, and airport safety.

Finally, you may be seeing some new faces in your states, as several vacancies have been filled due to retirements and other personnel changes. Of particular note in personnel matters, our former colleague Cindy Smith was recently named Administrator of APHIS. Cindy replaces Dr. Ron DeHaven, who stepped down as APHIS Administrator to accept the position of Executive Vice President/CEO of the American Veterinary Medical Association. Cindy began her career with APHIS in 1979 and has most recently served as Associate Administrator of APHIS. During her career with APHIS, Cindy has also served as Deputy Administrator for Biotechnology Regulatory Services and Associate Deputy Administrator of WS. We wish her the best in her new leadership position.

I hope you find this newsletter informative, and encourage you to visit our Web site (<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ws/>) for more news.

Sincerely,


William H. Clay
WS Deputy Administrator



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National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee Meeting

On June 19-21, 2007, the National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee held its annual meeting at Utah State University in Logan, Utah. The Committee discussed and formulated 15 recommendations for the Secretary to consider, including recommendations related to WS' budget, oral rabies vaccines, aerial operations, and traps.

WS Conducts Safety Review

In the wake of several accidents in WS' programs, WS is conducting a nationwide safety review focusing on aviation and aerial operations, explosives and pyrotechnics, firearms, hazardous chemicals, immobilization and euthanasia, pesticides, vehicles, watercraft, and wildlife disease activities. The review will be conducted by subject matter experts from WS, federal and state government, and private industry. We expect the review to be completed in the next year.

Update on WS' Avian Influenza Efforts

WS has expanded its role in international wild bird surveillance for avian influenza by assigning Dr. Dale Nolte to the USDA Asia Avian Influenza Regional Team in Bangkok, Thailand. The team provides assistance to the region with avian influenza preparedness and response, and surveillance and detection. Dr. Nolte is the team's wild bird expert.

Rabies Program Update

In recent months, WS' National Rabies Management Program and cooperators distributed more than eight million baits containing oral rabies vaccine in 15 eastern states. The primary goal of this campaign is to prevent raccoon rabies from spreading westward to new, uninfected areas.

WS continues to work with international partners in Canada and Mexico and cooperators in the United States on the development of a North American Rabies Management Plan (NARMP) to better address border rabies surveillance and control issues of mutual interest. We have held two formal meetings with our international partners in 2007 and the international planning team is nearing completion of a NARMP. This plan is designed to enhance and strengthen the international collaboration of rabies-related activities through the exchange of information, surveillance, research and control among the three countries.

WS employees across the United States took part in the inaugural World Rabies Day held on September 8, 2007. The mission of World Rabies Day is to raise awareness about the impact of rabies on animals and people, prevention strategies, and how to reduce or eliminate rabies. The day was celebrated with symposiums, educational displays and fun runs/walks.

Invasive Species Update

On August 7-9, 2007, the National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) hosted a 3-day international symposium in Fort Collins, CO, on managing invasive birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. The goal of the symposium was to highlight research, management, and public education campaigns associated with invasive wildlife. Plenary speakers provided national and international perspectives and summaries of overall invasive species problems. More than 50 additional speakers, from eight countries, presented information on economic and other impacts of invasive species; the regulatory environment; the need for coordination of efforts among agencies and nations; pathways and means-of-entry for invasives; and detection, prevention, eradication and monitoring of individual species. Smaller gatherings, focusing on specialized topics, followed the conference.

New Research on Scare Devices for Wolves Shows Promise

NWRC scientists are examining the use of electrified fladry to keep wolves away from livestock. Fladry is a line of flags hung along the perimeter of a pasture and it has a long history of use in Europe for deterring wolves. Some studies have shown normal fladry effectively keeps wolves from pastures for up to 60 days. If the fladry were electrified, wolves could potentially receive a very negative first impression and, therefore, be less likely to cross the barrier. In an initial study, NWRC scientists tested electrified fladry on 36 wolves in 10 groups. Eight of the groups crossed the normal fladry barrier, but only two crossed the electrified fladry. Additional field studies are planned in Montana later this year and will be conducted with the help of the Montana WS state office and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

WS and FAA Publish Report on Wildlife Strikes to Civil Aircraft

WS, through an interagency agreement with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), continues to manage the National Wildlife Strike Database for Civil Aviation. In August 2007, WS and FAA jointly published a detailed report entitled "Wildlife Strikes to Civil Aircraft in the United States, 1990-2006" which analyzed over 73,000 strike reports in the database. This report, providing the most comprehensive analysis of wildlife strikes ever conducted, documented that wildlife strikes cost U.S. civil aviation in excess of \$600 million every year. Birds account for roughly 97 percent of all aircraft collisions with wildlife; the remainder is attributed to large mammals, primarily deer and coyotes. The report has been distributed by the FAA to U.S. and foreign airports.



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Personnel Announcements

The past few months have brought several personnel changes across the country. I would first like to congratulate Dave Nelson on his retirement from WS. After over 30 years of public service with three different agencies, Dave Nelson will retire from his position as Assistant Regional Director for the eastern region in November 2007. Dave began his career in 1977 as a District Field Assistant and also served as District Supervisor, Wisconsin State Director, and Minnesota State Director. Please join me in wishing Dave the best in his retirement.

Ken Gruver has been selected as the new Assistant State Director in the Washington WS program. Ken began his WS career in 1991 in Texas and later worked for the NWRC conducting bird and other research in Alaska, Washington, and several other states. He moved to Washington in 1999 as a District Supervisor and then to Colorado in 2002 in the same capacity until his recent move back to Washington. We wish Ken the best in his new position.

Dr. Bruce Kimball, Research Chemist with the NWRC, has been assigned to a duty station at the Monell Chemical Senses Center. The NWRC and the Monell Chemical Senses Center have a long history of working together and Bruce's move will allow NWRC to capitalize on the chemosensory expertise available at Monell. Congratulations to Bruce on his new assignment.

Let us know what you think of the WS Stakeholder Update by sending your comments, suggestions and feedback to WS_Stakeholders_Update@aphis.usda.gov. You may also request to add or remove a name from this update at the same address.