

2009 Concho County Outcome Summary



Wildlife Damage Management Michael A. Palmer, CEA-Ag Concho County

Relevance: Predator Management is an issue identified by rural and urban residents in Texas. It is an ever increasing concern to livestock and wildlife producers in Concho County where predator numbers continue to increase, particularly coyotes and bobcats. Diminishing sheep and goat populations have increased the burden of predator management on fewer producers. The Concho Wildlife Conservation Association (CWCA) has the responsibility of funding the local trapping program through Texas AgriLife Extension Wildlife Services. Over the past few years, the contributions made by producers and landowners, has diminished. The Concho County Commissioners Court has agreed to fund an additional \$26,400 for a second county trapper, but indicated that the CWCA will have to increase participation from livestock and wildlife producers. Many livestock and wildlife producers are unaware of the program or don't fully comprehend its benefits. Without assistance in supporting Wildlife Services, predator control and management may be discontinued in the future.

Response: The Concho County Agriculture Committee developed a plan to address the concerns of landowners, agriculture producers and the Concho County Commissioners Court. The following events and activities were conducted in 2009.

- Livestock Wildlife Damage Survey Committee – met with Texas Wildlife Services, representatives of Texas AgriLife Extension Service, & County Extension Agents from Runnels, Mills, Tom Green, Coleman, Lampasas, and Fischer Counties. Developed survey in November 2008 and mailed 717 surveys to Concho landowners and agriculture producers in April 2009.
- Predator Awareness Workshop (38 participants) – April 21, 2009
- Predator Biology & Trapping (Tri-County Wildlife Camp) (42 participants) – July 30, 2009
- Predator Management Survey Results Report (Runnels County Cotton Tour) (106 participants) – September 29, 2009
- Predator Management Survey Results Interpretation (Commissioners Court & Concho Wildlife Conservation Association) – October 13, 2009
- Predator Management Workshop (43 participants) – October 27, 2009
- Texas Wildlife Services Program & Predator Management Exhibit (400 participants) – November 7, 2009



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Results: Evaluation instruments (retrospective post) were provided to participants at the Predator Awareness Workshop (April 2009) and the Predator Management Workshop (October 2009) to determine the impact of educational programming in Wildlife Damage Management.

Results from Predator Awareness Workshop – April 2009 (100% Response Rate)

Level of Understanding:

TOPIC	Before	After	% Change
Coyote Biology	2.14	3.25	51.9
Fox Biology	1.96	2.96	51.0
Feral Hog Biology	2.14	3.21	50.0
Interpreting Physical Evidence of Predation	2.14	3.11	45.3
Predators as Disease Vectors	2.30	3.26	41.7
Preventing Illicit Use of Pesticides in Predator Control	2.30	3.26	41.7
Appreciating Predators	2.32	3.25	40.1
Predator Control and Wildlife Management	2.44	3.37	38.1
Ethics for Predator Management	2.37	3.15	32.9
Wildlife Services Overview	2.44	3.33	36.5

ADOPTION

Practices Related To:	Percent Who Have Already Adopted	Percent Who Probably or Definitely Will Adopt
Foothold Traps and Snares	21.43	53.57
M-44's and LPC's	7.14	35.71
Aerial Gunning and Calling	17.86	35.71
Non-Lethal Approaches	21.43	32.14

Economic Benefit of Program:

5 of 41 participants indicated and expected economic benefit from the program. Those who responded expected an average economic benefit of \$2,200, with the range of responses being from a low of \$500 to a high of \$7,500 per operation.

Results from Predator Management Workshop – October 2009 (49% Response Rate)

- 7 of 21 respondents indicated and expected economic benefit from the program. Those who responded expected an average economic benefit of \$1,507, with the range of responses being from a low of \$100 to a high of \$5,000 per operation
- 78% increase in understanding of “Economic Impact of Predation”
- 74% increase in understanding of “Texas Wildlife Services Overview”
- 59% increase in understanding of “Lethal Predator Management Techniques”
- 56% increase in understanding of “Interpreting Physical Evidence of Predation”
- 54% increase in understanding of “Non-Lethal Predator Management”

Livestock Wildlife Damage Survey: Economic impact of Predator Losses

102 of 717 (14.2%) respondents completed a predator management survey in April 2009. The results of that survey are summarized in Table 1. These results indicate a total loss from predators and wildlife damage to crops to be estimated at \$2,216,951 in 2008. These losses include predation of sheep, goats, and cattle as well as estimated costs for controlling predators using lethal and non-lethal control techniques. Also added to the chart are crop losses due to deer and feral hog damage.

Table 1. Estimated Total Losses in 2008 for Concho County from survey respondents.

Livestock Losses	Sheep	Goats	Cattle	Total Livestock Loss	Non-Lethal	Lethal	Total Control Cost	Total Predator Impact
Predators	\$495,056	\$237,854	\$18,105	\$751,015	\$215,393	\$161,840	\$377,234	\$1,128,249
Crop Losses	Wheat		Cotton		Grain Sorghum		Total Crop Losses	
	Acres	\$ Loss	Acres	\$ Loss	Acres	\$ Loss		
Deer	3,123	\$411,986	1,957	\$507,431	950	\$85,918	\$1,005,335	
Hogs	412	\$54,351	84	\$21,780	80	\$7,235	\$83,367	
						Total Losses		\$2,216,951

Acknowledgements: Special thanks goes to Dr. Bill Thompson, Dr. Frank Craddock, Southern Rolling Plains Cotton Growers Association, Sheep & Goat Commodity Board for their efforts in preparing and distributing the Livestock Wildlife Damage Survey.