Wildlife Management at Wallops Flight Facility (WFF)
The WS program in Virginia helps residents, industries, organizations and governments resolve conflicts with wildlife that affect agriculture, human health and safety, other natural resources, public infrastructure, and private property.

Biologists are trained to manage wildlife conflicts with effective, selective, and humane strategies that value the integrity of the wildlife resource and the resources protected.
Entered into an inter-agency agreement in 1999 for the protection of human health and safety and aviation safety. A Wildlife Hazard Assessment (WHA) was begun in 2000 to document birds and mammals inhabiting the airfield and surrounding area. Required by NASA under NPR 7900.3C WHA also evaluated wildlife strike potential with aircraft and provided recommendations to mitigate the presence of hazardous wildlife for the protection of aviation safety. Since the initial WHA completion in 2001, a monitoring report is completed yearly providing updated information for the WHA.
Protecting Aviation Safety – Why is this important?!

Nationally, between 1990 – 2009, 99,411 wildlife strikes with aircraft have been reported.*

- These strikes have resulted in:
  - 424,936 hours of aircraft downtime
  - $374.9 million in monetary losses
  - 55 aircraft destroyed or deemed damaged beyond repair
  - Human fatalities and injuries

* Wildlife Strikes to Civil Aircraft in the United States 1990 -2009
Protecting Aviation Safety

14% of bird strikes and 61% of mammal strikes with aircraft have resulted in damage to the aircraft.*

72% of all reported strikes occur between ground level and 500 feet.*

Actions to reduce the risks of wildlife strikes have been implemented by the FAA, USDA, and by airports throughout the country

- Visit: http://wildlife.faa.gov for more information on wildlife strikes

* Wildlife Strikes to Civil Aircraft in the United States 1990 - 2009
Wildlife Services:
Maintains a Wildlife Hazard Management Plan
  - This defines management activities and responsibilities of personnel involved

Updates the Wildlife Hazard Assessment
  - Completed yearly
  - Includes two monthly bird surveys. Each survey includes a sunrise, mid-day, and sunset survey
  - Monthly spotlight surveys to monitor mammals
Protecting Aviation Safety - Reducing the Risk at WFF

Habitat Management – remove food, water and cover

- Goal is to make the airfield and surrounding areas as least attractive to wildlife as possible!
Protecting Aviation Safety - Reducing the Risk at WFF

Active harassment and dispersal during flight operations

- Propane cannons, pyrotechnics, vehicles, sirens/horns, etc.
- Lethal removal, when necessary, to reinforce harassment
Protecting Aviation Safety - Reducing the Risk at WFF

Zero tolerance for white-tailed deer on the airfield
○ 84% of strikes with white-tailed deer cause damage
Best way to keep deer out is through exclusion; WFF’s perimeter is completely fenced.
Protecting Aviation Safety - Reducing the Risk at WFF

Mammal damage management
- Raccoon, Red Fox, Opossum, and Feral Cat

Reduce mammalian strike risk
Reduce damage to airfield infrastructure caused by mammals denning and digging.
Added benefit of reducing possible contact with facility employees and potential disease transmission.
Reporting wildlife strikes with aircraft:

- Identify species that threaten aviation safety
- Prioritize management plans
- Provide an understanding of species behavior to prevent future strikes
- Identify trends of threatening wildlife that use the airport environment
WS maintains appropriate federal and state control permits for wildlife damage.
Protecting Threatened and Endangered Shorebirds

Predator management is conducted to protect sensitive shorebird nesting areas along Wallops Island beach. Nesting shorebirds of interest are: American Oystercatcher, Piping Plover (federal & state threatened), and Wilson’s Plover (state endangered).
Protecting Threatened and Endangered Shorebirds

Predator management also benefits several sea turtle species and terrapins known to nest on Wallops Island beach.
Resident Canada Goose Management on Wallops Island

Goal: maintain a population of resident Canada geese and the damage they create to an acceptable level.

Reasoning:
- Aviation safety
- Excessive droppings on launch pads & outside buildings create unsanitary working conditions
- Damage to island ecosystem through excessive grazing, nutrient loading, & trampling
- Potential disease transmission to employees through droppings
- Increasing population numbers
White-tailed Deer Management on Wallops Island

Goal: develop a long-term management program to maintain the population at an acceptable level.

Reasoning:
- Hunting not allowed on Wallops Island Facility since 2001 leading to an increase in population numbers
- Damage to island ecosystem through excessive grazing
- Concerns of disease transmission from ticks /parasites carried by deer
- Increased deer/vehicle collisions
- Help maintain a healthy herd by removing sick and/or wounded deer
WS also assists base wide with calls about wildlife damage: everything from raccoons and starlings to snakes, squirrels, and just about anything else that wiggles, crawls, or flies.
Further Information

Contact:

NASA/GSFC/Wallops Flight Facility
USDA-APHIS- Wildlife Services
Building A-1, Room 301
Wallops Island, VA 23337
(757) 824-1254 or -1306

Or contact the WS VA State Office at:
PO Box 130 Moseley, VA 23120
(804) 739-7739
http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage