University of Nebraska - Lincoln
DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Proceedings of the Eighth Eastern Wildlife Damage Management Conference (1997)

Eastern Wildlife Damage Control Conferences

10-1-1997

Wildlife-Caused Losses for Catfish Producers in 1996

Alice P. Wywialowski
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Policy and Program Development

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ewdcc8

Part of the Environmental Health and Protection Commons

Wywialowski, Alice P., "Wildlife-Caused Losses for Catfish Producers in 1996" (1997). *Proceedings of the Eighth Eastern Wildlife Damage Management Conference (1997)*. Paper 36.
http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ewdcc8/36

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Eastern Wildlife Damage Control Conferences at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Proceedings of the Eighth Eastern Wildlife Damage Management Conference (1997) by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

WILDLIFE-CAUSED LOSSES FOR CATFISH PRODUCERS IN 1996

ALICE P. WYWIALOWSKI, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Policy and Program Development, Unit 117, 4700 River Road, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238

Abstract: In January 1997, the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) surveyed catfish producers about wildlife-caused losses in 1996, Of the 1,465 catfish producers in 15 states surveyed, 1,008 (68.8%) agreed to complete the survey. Surveys were conducted primarily by telephone, but some producers received mail surveys. The response rated varied among states. The majority of catfish producers were in Mississippi (n=-300), followed by Alabama (n=163), and then Arkansas (n=117). The remaining states each had <100 respondents. Data were analyzed for 6 regions, each with a sample size of >100 respondents. Overall, 69% of catfish producers cited a wildlife-caused loss of catfish. Producers cited losses to wildlife most frequently in Mississippi (81%), followed by states adjoining the Mississippi River and Alabama. Birds were cited most frequently as a cause of the losses and double-crested cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) were cited most frequently (53%) as the primary species causing problems. The next most frequently cited birds were herons (48%) of which 42% were cited as great blue herons (*Ardea herodius*). Egrets (16%) were the third most frequently cited group of birds, followed by pelicans (8%). Muskrats (*Ondatra zibethica*) were the most frequently cited mammal (primarily for damaging roads and dikes). Other species cited by >2% of producers were otters, waterfowl, gulls, turtles, beaver, and raccoon. Other species or wildlife groups were cited by <2% of producers. Of those citing wildlife-caused losses, the main problem was feeding on catfish (96%). Wildlife also caused losses by injuring catfish (58%), disturbing feeding patterns of catfish (34%), and damaging roads and levees (23%). The total estimated cost of losses was $8.4 million, based on a simple sum of cited loss values. Producers spent a substantial amount of effort and money trying to prevent wildlife-caused losses of their catfish. Loss prevention methods most frequently cited were: shooting (57%), vehicle patrols (55%), frightening devices such as flagging or balloons (36%), roost dispersal (14%), modify pond management (10%), and other methods (8%). Producers <1 mile from a bird roost or refuge were more likely to cite losses than those not so located. Producers surveyed estimated that they spent $4.0 million protecting their operations from wildlife-caused losses. More catfish producers (44%) than other types of agricultural producers were familiar with the federal Animal Damage Control (ADC) program. Of producers familiar with ADC, 55% used information provided by ADC in attempting to reduce their losses, 51% had contacted ADC for assistance, and 40% received assistance from ADC in 1996.

Key Words: Animal Damage Control, *Ardea herodius*, catfish, cormorant, damage prevention, egret, heron, *Phalacrocorx auritus*, survey, wildlife-caused loss

Proc. East. Wildl. Damage Manage. Conf. 8:51