

Featured Incidents of Pet Killings and Human Poisonings Caused by M-44s

Published by Predator Defense, www.predatordefense.org, Sept. 13, 2018

The list below highlights just a few of the documented incidents of people and domestic animals injured or killed by the M-44 cyanide devices used by USDA Wildlife Services. It was compiled from agency documents, news reports, and various other sources. The real M-44 body count is in the thousands, and far exceeds the numbers officially reported by Wildlife Services. See explanatory note on official counts in separate report titled “*USDA Wildlife Services Yearly Summary Statistics of Domestic Dog Killings by M-44s.*”

February 2018: Dennis Slaugh of Vernal, Utah, dies. Slaugh was poisoned by an M-44 in 2003, and his death certificate listed cyanide poisoning from M-44 as a contributing cause (see [death certificate](#)).

March 2017: A dog and a 14-year-old boy triggered an M-44 in Idaho. The boy, along with several emergency personnel, were exposed to cyanide. The boy suffered long-term, adverse health effects. His dog died in front of him. Were it not for wind direction, the boy might also have died. No warning signs were posted.ⁱ

March 2017: Two dogs were killed in Wyoming by an M-44 during a walk with their family.ⁱⁱ

February 2011: An M-44 was placed 918 from a residence without the family's knowledge, killing their dog and violating three EPA use restrictions.^{iii,iv}

February 2010: A dog was killed in Nebraska by an M-44 set by Wildlife Services on the dog owner's rangeland/pasture.^v

April 2010: A dog wearing collar and tags was killed in W. Virginia by an M-44 set on neighboring land. The Wildlife Services agent buried her without notifying the family.^{vi}

January 2008: A dog was killed by an M-44 in N. Dakota.^{vii}

January 2008: A man in Texas was injured by an M-44 placed without his knowledge on grazing land.

February 2008: A beagle was killed by an M-44 in Virginia.^{viii}

February 2008: A dog was killed by an M-44 in New Mexico.^{ix}

April 2008: A dog in N. Dakota was killed by an M-44 set on rangeland/pasture.^x

June 2008: A pit bull was killed in Virginia by an M-44 in a livestock pasture/hayfield.^{xi}

January 2007: A dog was killed by an M-44 in North Dakota.^{xii, L¹, SEP¹}

March 2007: A Border collie was killed by an M-44 in Virginia.^{xiii}

April 2007: A Border collie puppy was killed by an M-44 in Virginia.^{xiv, xv}

May 2007: A worker in Texas accidentally triggered an M-44. The cyanide was ejected into the man's eyes and he subsequently experienced burning and irritated eyes as well as disorientation.^{xvi, xvii}

June 2007: A Great Pyrenees was killed by an M-44 in New Mexico.^{xviii}

January 2006: A Golden retriever was killed by an M-44 in Virginia.^{xix,xx}

February 2006: A Labrador retriever was killed in Utah when she triggered an M-44 set a foot from a road.^{xxi}

April 2006: A young German shepherd was killed when he triggered an M-44 on public land in Utah.^{xxii,xxiii}

March 2005: An Australian Shepherd was killed in New Mexico by an M-44 set by Wildlife Services on rangeland.^{xxiv}

March 2005: A dog was killed in New Mexico by an M-44 set by Wildlife Services on ranch land.^{xxv}

April 2005: A Border collie in New Mexico was killed by an M-44 set on the owner's ranch property.^{xxvi,xxvii}

December 2005: A certified therapy dog who worked with at-risk youth was killed in front of a girl's group by an M-44 set 10 feet from a public road.^{xxviii,xxix}

January 2004: A dog was killed by an M-44 set by Wildlife Services in New Mexico on the ranch of the dog owner's relative.^{xxx}

February 2004: An Irish setter was likely killed by an M-44 in Virginia.^{xxxi}

March 2004: A dog in Idaho was found dead within 200 yards of an M-44 set by Wildlife Services in a nearby sheep pasture.^{xxxii,xxxiii}

March 2004: A German shepherd was killed by an M-44 in New Mexico.^{xxxiv}

May 2003: Dennis Slaugh was poisoned and permanently disabled when he triggered an M-44 on public land in Utah. He was forced to retire from his job.^{xxxv}

January 2002: A rancher in Nebraska was injured by the accidental discharge of an M-44 that had been set by Wildlife Services on his property.^{xxxvi}

February 2002: A dog was killed by an M-44 set by Wildlife Services.^{xxxvii}

February 2002: A Labrador retriever was killed in Virginia by an M-44 set by Wildlife Services on a neighbor's cattle pasture.^{xxxviii}

February 2002: A dog was killed in New Mexico by an M-44 set by Wildlife Services on rangeland/pasture.^{xxxix}

February 2002: A dog triggered an M-44 in Oregon placed on a neighboring ranch by Wildlife Services.^{xl}

February 2002: A dog was killed by an M-44 set by Wildlife Services.^{xli}

February 2002: A dog was killed by an M-44 set by Wildlife Services on the farm of the dog owner's relative.^{xlii}

February 2002: A dog in Oregon took 8 hours to die after exposure to an M-44 set on property next door to her home and without her knowledge. During a subsequent investigation WS requested that Oregon authorities "consider the info provided during the investigation be confidential *and not disclosed as public record* [emphasis added]." WS also refused to release a copy of the incident report to the dog's owner.^{xliii,xliv,xlv}

April 2002: A dog was killed by an M-44 set by Wildlife Services on a neighboring farm in Virginia.^{xlvi}

June 2002: A black Angus cow was killed in West Virginia by an M-44 set by Wildlife Services in a pasture.^{xlvii}

November 2002: A woman was injured after trying to remove an M-44 set by Wildlife Services on her neighbor's property.^{xlviii}

May 2001: A dog in Colorado was killed by an M-44 set by Wildlife Services on a neighboring ranch "outside the provisions authorized by state law".^{xlix}

April 2001: A dog in Nebraska was killed by an M-44 set by Wildlife Services on rangeland/pasture.^l

January 2000: A dog in Oregon was killed after triggering an M-44 set 100 yards from the owner's home. The device was one of six that had been planted in a tree farm frequented by local children.^{li,lii,liii}

February 2000: A dog in New Mexico activated an M-44 set on rangeland/pasture by Wildlife Services.^{liv}

March 2000: A dog in Colorado was killed by an M-44 set on private property without the knowledge of the owners. The family, including a three-year-old girl, watched as the dog suffered and died. A state investigation found that Wildlife Services had not only trespassed, but broken a suite of federal rules regulating M-44s.^{lv}

May 2000: A Border collie in West Virginia was killed by an M-44 set by Wildlife Services in a sheep pasture.^{lvi}

September 2000: A county surveyor in Utah discharged an M-44 after mistaking it for a survey marker.^{lvii}

March 1999: A man and his three-year old daughter were walking with their dog on their property in Colorado when it triggered an M-44 and later died. A WS staffer had placed two traps on their land, trespassing and breaking a suite of federal rules.^{lviii}

April 1999: A dog was killed in Virginia when he triggered an M-44 set by Wildlife Services on a neighboring farm. The owner also found another dog's body at the device. A third dog also encountered an M-44 and returned home with red and swollen eyes as well as a swollen mouth and a peculiar odor. The owner himself likely experienced secondary poisoning.^{lix,lx}

August 1999: An individual helping a Wildlife Services employee look for and remove M-44s accidentally fired one of the devices.^{lxi}

September 1999: A hunting dog was killed in Virginia by an M-44 set by Wildlife Services. M-44s were not permitted for use in that state from September 1 to January 7, but the Wildlife Services employee had failed to remove them.^{lxii}

September 1999: A dog was killed in Oregon by an M-44 set by Wildlife Services.^{lxiii}

October 1999: A Wildlife Services employee in Texas accidentally discharged an M-44 as he was setting it. He had to be airlifted to a facility for treatment.^{lxiv}

October 1999: A dog was killed in Utah by an M-44 set by Wildlife Services.^{lxv}

December 1999: Two dogs were killed by M-44s during a hunting trip in New Mexico on state lands.^{lxvi}

December 1999: A citizen in Nebraska accidentally discharged an M-44 as he attempted to move it with a pair of pliers while he was repairing fence wire.^{lxvii}

February 1998: A dog in Utah was killed by an M-44 set by Wildlife Services on BLM land that adjoined the owner's private yard. No one was notified about Wildlife Services' activities.^{lxviii,lix,lxx}

November 1998: A man in Texas, working on private land, was injured when he grabbed what he thought was a rusted metal rod to pull it from the ground and an M-44 exploded in his hand.^{lxxi}

December 1998: A dog was killed in Oregon by an M-44 set by Wildlife Services.^{lxxii}

April 1995: A hunter in Idaho accidentally discharged an M-44 that had been set by Wildlife Services.^{lxxiii}

Fall 1994: A dog in Oregon was walking with its family when it triggered an M-44 set on the property without their knowledge. The owner, not knowing why her dog was in respiratory distress, attempted to help it and suffered secondary cyanide poisoning from inhalation. The dog suffered for 15 minutes before dying.^{lxxiv}

August 1993: Two bow hunters in Utah pulled M-44s set by Wildlife Services.^{lxxv}

April 1990: A dog in New Mexico accompanying a ranch hand triggered an M-44. After attempting mouth-to-mouth resuscitation on the dog, who died within a few minutes, the man quickly experienced loss of breath, a swollen tongue, a fast heart rate, numb lips, and curling fingers on one hand. He was transported to a hospital where he was treated and placed in intensive care.^{lxxvi}

ⁱIdaho State Journal David Ashbury March 16 2017 Pocatello boy watches family dog die after cyanide bomb explodes. http://idahostatejournal.com/news/local/pocatello-boy-watches-family-dog-die-after-cyanide-bomb-explodes/article_d0003a2f-6b7f-5d31-b427-68db03d3b93a.html

ⁱⁱhttp://www.predatordefense.org/features/m44_WY_Amy_dogs.htm

ⁱⁱⁱPredator Defense, http://www.predatordefense.org/m44s_bella.htm

^{iv}Tom Knudson, "Efforts to investigate Wildlife Services' methods continue," The Sacramento Bee, June 25, 2012.

^vUSDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report.

^{vi}Letter from James R. Gardner to Commissioner Gus Douglas, West Virginia State Department of Agriculture, April 21, 2010.

^{vii}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.

^{viii}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.

^{ix}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.

^xUSDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.

^{xi}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.

^{xii}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.

^{xiii}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.

^{xiv}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.

^{xv}USDA-APHIS-WS, Report of Injury or Death of Non-target Animal.

^{xvi}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Human Incident Supplemental Report

^{xvii}Brazoria County Sheriff Incident/Offense Report, 22 May 2007.

^{xviii}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.

^{xix}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report.

^{xx}USDA-APHIS-WS, Report of Injury or Death of Nontarget Animal.

^{xxi}Mike Stark, "Dog died at cyanide trap set in an off-limits area," Associated Press, 01 June, 2008.

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- ^{xxii}Memo from Michael J. Bodenчук, Utah State Director, Wildlife Services to Ms. Barbara Knotz, 21 June 2006.
- ^{xxiii}“Utah couple challenges USDA use of cyanide bombs,” Associated Press, 20 August 2006.
- ^{xxiv}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{xxv}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{xxvi}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{xxvii}USDA Work Task form, 15 April 2005.
- ^{xxviii}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report.
- ^{xxix}Born Free USA, http://www.bornfreeusa.org/database/trapping_incident.php?id=110
- ^{xxx} USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{xxxi}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{xxxii} USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{xxxiii}USDA-APHIS-WS, Report of Injury or Death of Non-target Animal.
- ^{xxxiv}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{xxxv}Christopher Ketcham, “America’s secret war on wildlife,” Men’s Journal, January 2008, p. 49.
- ^{xxxvi}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Human Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{xxxvii} USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{xxxviii} USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{xxxix} USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{xl} USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{xli}USDA-APHIS-WS, Report of Injury or Death of Non-target Animal.
- ^{xlii}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Human Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{xliii}Letter from Danielle Clair to Congressman Peter DeFazio, 18 February 2002.
- ^{xliiv}Letter from Mark Jensen, Oregon Assistant State Director, Wildlife Services, to Dale Mitchell, Assistant Administrator, Oregon Department of Agriculture, 15 April 2002.
- ^{xli v}Letter from Congressman Peter DeFazio to Bill Clay, Deputy Administrator of Wildlife Services, 24 May 2002.
- ^{xli vi}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{xli vii}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{xli viii}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Human Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{xli x}Memo from Craig Coolahan, Colorado State Director, USDA-APHIS-WS to Martin Mendoza, Director, OSS, 16 May 2001.
- ⁱUSDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.
- ⁱⁱUSDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.
- ⁱⁱⁱKeri Watson and Greg Hanscom, “Poison traps kill unintended victims,” High Country News, March 13, 2000.
- ⁱⁱⁱⁱPredator Defense, http://www.predatordefense.org/docs/m44_article_Buddy_Tippetts.pdf
- ^{liv}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report.
- ^{lv}Keri Watson and Greg Hanscom, “Poison traps kill unintended victims,” High Country News, March 13, 2000.
- ^{lvi}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.

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- ^{lvii}Memo from Michael J. Bodenchuk to Michael V. Worthen and Thomas R. Hoffman, 28 September 2000.
- ^{lviii}High Country News 3/1300 Poison traps kill unintended victims <https://www.hcn.org/issues/174/5628>
- ^{lix}Written account from Gary Tucker, 20 May 1999.
- ^{lx}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{lxi}Accident Report signed by Alan May, District Supervisor, 16 August 1999.
- ^{lxii}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{lxiii}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{lxiv}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Human Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{lxv}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{lxvi}Keri Watson and Greg Hanscom, "Poison traps kill unintended victims," High Country News, March 13, 2000.
- ^{lxvii}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Human Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{lxviii}Memo from Nick Sandberg, Bureau of Land Management to Mike Bodenchuck, USDA-APHIS-WS, 19 March 1998.
- ^{lxix}U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management Incident Record, Case No. UT-069-98-03.
- ^{lxx}U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, San Juan Resource Area, Conversation Confirmation Report, 03 March 1998.
- ^{lxxi}Predator Defense, http://www.predatordefense.org/docs/m44_letter_Guerro_DeFazio.pdf
- ^{lxxii}USDA-APHIS-WS, Adverse Effects Incident Information Report and Domestic Animal, Fauna, or Flora Incident Supplemental Report.
- ^{lxxiii}Memo from Dr. Peter L. Joseph, USDA-APHIS-Biotechnology, Biologies, and Environmental Protection to Mr. Robert A. Forrest, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 25 April 1995.
- ^{lxxiv}Predator Defense <http://www.predatordefense.org/testimonials.htm>
- ^{lxxv}Memo from James A. Winnat, Utah State Director, USDA-APHIS-WS to ADC employees, 09 September 1993.
- ^{lxxvi}Memo from Larry J. Killgo, State Director, ADC, Albuquerque, NM to District Supervisor, ADC, Roswell, NM, 01 May 1990.