

# Wildlife Program – Bi-weekly Report

Sept. 16 to Sept. 30, 2019

## **DIVERSITY DIVISION**

### *HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:*

#### 1) **Managing Wildlife Populations**

**White-nose Syndrome/Bat Monitoring:** WDFW Biologists Tobin, Anderson, and Smith and volunteers Falxa, Salzer, and Noe, are radio tracking little brown bats (*Myotis lucifugus*) in the North Bend area to locate fall and winter roosts. Locating these roosts will allow WDFW to assess strategies to curtail the spread of the deadly bat disease, white-nose syndrome in Washington.



*Mist net set up over pond to capture bats for radio telemetry project (left). Little brown bat radio tagged (right).*

#### 2) **Providing Recreation Opportunities**

Nothing for this reporting period.

#### 3) **Providing Conflict Prevention and Education**

Nothing for this reporting period.

#### 4) **Conserving Natural Landscapes**

Nothing for this reporting period.

#### 5) **Providing Education and Outreach**

Nothing for this reporting period.

6) **Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Nothing for this reporting period.

7) **Other**

Nothing for this reporting period.

**GAME DIVISION**

*HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:*

1) **Managing Wildlife Populations**

Elk Specialist Garrison traveled to Spokane to meet with Wildlife Veterinarian Mansfield and USDA and WSU researchers to process and sample elk hoof disease samples. For the past four years, WDFW has asked hunters in southwest Washington to submit the hooves from their elk harvest. WDFW uses the hooves to inform hoof disease prevalence estimation, and WSU and USDA collaborators use the opportunity to sample hooves for separate analyses.

Elk Specialist Garrison reviewed available data and relevant literature to evaluate factors influencing population dynamics of the Blue Mountains elk herd. This population is currently below objective and exhibiting poor calf recruitment, which may be impacted by bottom-up and top-down factors in independent and interactive ways.

Elk Specialist Garrison finalized elk abundance, age/sex ratio, and harvest estimate figures for the WDFW 2019 game species status and trend report. These reports summarize important information about game species in Washington, available on WDFW's [website](#). WDFW will finalize the 2019 report in December.

Deer Specialist Hansen finalized an order for 100 GPS collars that will be deployed on adult mule deer does in Kittitas and Chelan counties this winter as part of a study investigating mule deer movement patterns in migratory herds along the east slope of the Cascade Mountains.

2) **Providing Recreation Opportunities**

Nothing for this reporting period.

3) **Providing Conflict Prevention and Education**

Nothing for this reporting period.

4) **Conserving Natural Landscapes**

Nothing for this reporting period.

## 5) **Providing Education and Outreach**

Elk Specialist Garrison met with Public Affairs staff members to develop outreach stories for use on WDFW's [blog](#) and [Facebook](#) page. Potential stories include hoof disease research, annual survey work, and elk captures.

Elk Specialist Garrison interacted with several sportspersons and members of the public on both the phone and in-person. Topics discussed include harvest elk outlook, hoof disease, nutrient deficiencies in elk, tribal hunting, and general management of elk in Washington.

## 6) **Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Nothing for this reporting period.

## 7) **Other**

Deer and Elk Section Manager Hoenes and Elk Specialist Garrison notified WDFW personnel of funding opportunities available through the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Project Advisory Committee (RMEF PAC). RMEF generates funding for these awards through fundraising at their state banquet events. RMEF awards grants to projects that benefit elk through habitat enhancement (e.g., noxious weed control, prescribed burns), management (e.g., translocation, elk friendly fence), or research.

## **HUNTER EDUCATION**

### *HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:*

#### 1) **Managing Wildlife Populations**

Nothing for this reporting period.

#### 2) **Providing Recreation Opportunities**

Region 4 Coordinator Dazey assisted a blind student with getting into a hunter education class in Black Diamond, and assisted a student with finding a class that would help him in Spanish. Dazey also met with a representative from Washington Waterfowl Association and discussed opportunities to collaborate and make available hunting opportunities for new hunters.

#### 3) **Providing Conflict Prevention and Education**

A new wildlife conflict specialist has been hired in Region 5, replacing the former conflict specialist who retired in May. Coordinator Elliott met the new specialist and is beginning to work with him to build a good working partnership.

#### 4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Nothing for this reporting period.

#### 5) Providing Education and Outreach

Region 4 Coordinator Dazey attended and evaluated classes in Mill Creek, Arlington, Nooksack Reservation, Custer, Hanagen, Muckleshoot Reservation, and Friday Harbor. Coordinator Dazey also delivered supplies to two chief instructors for their classes.

The class held at Arlington was a standard class and a women oriented class at the same site in different classrooms. Both classes were well attended. The women oriented class is taught by an all-female teaching team and has a female enforcement officer presenting the enforcement portion. This shows the women attending that WDFW does have a diverse work force and quality positions for women in our work force.



*Open class with Instructor Eason*



*Unload check and cross a fence*



*Instructors Crain and Peterson demonstrate the proper way to hand off a firearm after ensuring it is unloaded*



*Sergeant Maurstad presents to the women oriented class*

Coordinator Dazey visited two classes offered for tribal hunters. The Stillaguamish tribal team and the Nooksack wildlife enforcement officer taught the one at the Nooksack. The Muckleshoot wildlife team and wildlife enforcement officer taught the class at the Muckleshoot.

Region 5 Coordinator Elliott processed paperwork for three instructor applicants to become formally certified - two in Vancouver and one in Cathlamet. She is also working with a number of other applicants to get them certified by the end of the year if possible.

Coordinator Elliott has been reaching out to instructors who have not taught in 2019 and is working to get them connected with classes. She worked with another instructor to organize an online Field Skills Evaluation class, which will offer student opportunity in October and will be at a location that is central to the region and has not been served since February. Additionally, the with the exception of the chief instructor, all helping put on this class will be either applicants who need to assist with a class as their final certification component or will be instructors who need to teach to remain certified.

Coordinator Montgomery and Coordinator Dazey continued working National Hunting and Fishing Day (NHFD). We had several new conservation partners, WSDA, Pierce Conservation District, and R3 snag tree program among others. The response from both partners, participants, and their parents was amazing, and every attendee found something new to see or do.

Coordinator Montgomery made class visits to in Pierce County, one was a new facility that was not what was promised and we will not be holding any more classes there. The chief instructor has found another venue that has lots of cooperation from the store. Other classes were in Eatonville and Elma.

**National Hunting and Fishing Day:** On Sept. 28, WDFW held its fifth annual National Hunting and Fishing Day celebration. The Tacoma Sportsman’s Club in Puyallup hosted this year’s event. Field Coordinator Montgomery and Volunteer Program Manager Redmond spearheaded this year’s celebration with assistance from Program Specialist Thorson. This year over 600 youth attended the event with their parent(s) and/or guardian(s). Youth were able to shoot department owned firearms and archery equipment, catch and keep a rainbow trout, track casting, seed balls, a mock turkey hunt, Washington State Trappers Association fur display, knapping display, and other great conservation activities. Participants received a swag bag with safety gear as well as a rod and reel combo donated by Safari Club International. Over 200 volunteers worked the event, including hunter education instructors, master hunters, Tacoma Sportsmen’s Club members, partner organizations, and nearly every WDFW program.





6) **Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Nothing for this reporting period.

7) **Other**

Nothing for this reporting period.



## **LANDS DIVISION**

### ***HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:***

#### **1) Managing Wildlife Populations**

Nothing for this reporting period.

#### **2) Providing Recreation Opportunities**

**Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge Hunting Sign Posting:** The weed control crew assisted Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge personnel remove old hunting signs and post new signs prior to a youth hunt. The weather was abysmal, but they got the job done. WDFW staff members who also assisted were Michele Tirhi and Emily Butler.

#### **3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education**

Nothing for this reporting period.

#### **4) Conserving Natural Landscapes**

**Scatter Creek Wildlife Area Planning:** The Restoration Sub-planning Team Meeting occurred on September 17. The team is in the process of developing a restoration plan for the new wildlife area plan; it will be an appendix in the final plan. Each unit will have a specific section in the plan. The goal is to have a draft plan for team review in October.

**Skagit Wildlife Area Planning:** The Skagit Wildlife Area planning team met on Sept. 24 for a full day planning meeting. We had 18 WDFW staff members attend the Skagit planning meeting. Topics included waterfowl planning, focal species selection, natural area preserves, Goat Island, and next steps. The goal is to have a draft plan by the early 2020. The next full planning meeting will occur in December. The team also met on the Sept. 25 to discuss restoration. The goal is to develop a framework for restoration on the wildlife area, which will include monitoring, adaptive management, improved communication, and building in recreation values.

**2019 Fall Burn Units:** Dozers were used to in the Stemilt Basin to prepare fire lines for future prescribed operations. Even though slash is still green and the timber harvest has just been completed, heavy equipment was still on site to provide line preparation for future prescribed burning. This saves time and money as hand crews only need to freshen up the fire lines at a later date.



**2019 Fall Burn Units:** Preparation for new burn units continues on recently harvested timber units.

Weather conditions during the second half of September have been variable. Precipitation is above average for eastern Washington while temperatures have been below average. All of this combined decreases the opportunity to burn and meet objectives. It takes several days of drying time to allow a unit to come back into prescription. The cooler days slow this process. Fire staff monitor the weather all across eastern Washington daily to help make determinations on what sites are in prescription. Crews also take weather and fuel readings on burn sites to confirm both current and predicted observations.

Below is a table of anticipated burn sites designated for fall 2019 burning:

Where	Name	Wildlife Area	Acres
Naches	UB 501 &502	Oak Creek	130
Kettle Falls	Trout	Sherman	500
E of New Port	Rustlers	Rustlers	400
SW of Clarkston	Grouse Flats	Grouse Flats- Blues	300
Wenatchee/ Malaga	North Fork	Colockum	500

**Field Springs State Park:** WDFW Forester Ashiglar continued assisting State Parks Forester Cass with setting up the Field Springs State Park forest restoration project. They painted leave trees and are over halfway complete. She also spent a day assisting Parks with hiring a new project forester who will be assisting with the Field Springs project as well as projects in the Spokane area.

**Stemilt Restoration Thinning:** The logging crew has completed cutting and should finish all work in the coming two to three weeks. Foresters Ruggirello and Pfeifle continued conducting compliance visits on the project, ensuring that work continues smoothly and meets WDFW standards. These compliance visits take on increased importance as the project moves toward its conclusion and the foresters guide the logging crew through essential wrap up roadwork and abandonment.

**Wenas Forest Restoration:** Forester Mize has continued efforts on timber marking on the Wenas Forest Restoration Project. Forester Mize spent one day with WDFW archeologists surveying existing and proposed new roads for cultural significance.

**Killbrew Lake Unit of the Skagit Wildlife Area:** Forester Ashiglar walked the Killbrew Lake Unit of the Skagit Wildlife Area to look at potential forest management needs. Thinning some of the smaller trees would be useful here, especially in the flat area to the east of the lake. Symptoms of root disease were also present in one small area. However, due to the small acreage of non-riparian forest and island location, logistics would likely make any treatments difficult. Team Lead Tveten reached out to Washington State Parks, which has 5,000 acres of forested nearby, to explore the possibility of a joint project in the future. Forester Ashiglar also attended the Skagit Wildlife Area planning meeting while in the area.



*The eastern half of the Killbrew Lake Unit of the Skagit Wildlife Area is now densely stocked with even-aged Douglas fir*

**Grazing Program Review:** Drafted sample text for WDFW grazing rule and policy. This was discussed and revised in response to input from and Section Manager Dahmer and Division Manager Wilkerson, who sent it to the Attorney General's (AG) office for review. Also, distributed a doodle poll for the review team's in-person meeting in November, then made the arrangements and sent the calendar invite. Judging from responses, the Skype meeting and the in-person meeting both look to be well attended, at least at this point.

**Methow Wildlife Area:** Provided assessment and riparian observations from the Big Buck Unit to Manager Troyer.

**Klickitat Wildlife Area:** Joined Manager Van Leuven to inspect conditions and the potential for range improvements and/or protective infrastructure on the just-acquired acreage that was added to the Simcoe Unit. Grazing permit(s) may need to be amended accordingly. We also made observations of conditions on the existing grazing permits on the unit as part of a routine evaluation.

**Teanaway Community Forest:** Conducted the latest in-season grazing monitoring on the Forest. Woody forage utilization has tended to increase in September, and this year was no exception. The final monitoring event and annual benchmark assessment will occur in mid-October.

**Lands 20/20:** Reviewed and commented on the application being prepared for a potential Chapman Lake access site in Region 1. Provided suggestions and text linking the proposal to various planning documents.

**Knapweed value to elk investigated:** Vegetation Ecologist Merg assisted District Biologist Atamian respond to a telephone call from a local hunter that noticed small piles of spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*) seed heads around elk beds. The hunter thought these might be have regurgitated by the elk and called to ask both whether this was a common occurrence and to inquire why elk might be disgorging knapweed seed heads. Merg found a small handful of scientific papers variously touting knapweed as valuable forage, based on nutrient analyses, or as poor forage because of the concentrations of cnicin, an alkaloid plant-defense against herbivory. Further, Merg found a study that showed cnicin depressed microbial activity in the digestive tract of domestic sheep, presumably reducing the food value of knapweed to the sheep, which like elk, are ruminants. Interestingly, the study also reported that extracting cnicin from stems and leaves reduced the degree to which these plant parts depressed the activity of gut microbes. In contrast, extracting cnicin from knapweed seeds heads did *not* reduce the amount that the seed heads inhibited microbial activity in sheep guts, suggesting that there are additional components in seed heads that also inhibit gut microbes. This raises the possibility that the piles of seed heads observed by the caller were the result of food sorting by the elk.

**Palouse Prairie Pilot Restoration for EWU:** Vegetation Ecologist Merg met with faculty and staff of Eastern Washington University (EWU) to advise the team about how to commence its long-planned restoration on campus in Cheney. The team walked the site and selected a location for the pilot. University grounds personnel will mow the site in the next week, and then we will have the site harrowed. Merg advised the team that it ought to order seed in the next ten days, and plan on being ready to plant it at the end of October. Part of the faculty interest in this project is to study the results, but Merg noted that a study design for the pilot is now overdue. Merg will help to lend WDFW's specialized seeding equipment to EWU for use next month and he began to assemble seed recommendations for the project.

**Sunnyside NAWCA project seed mix and site prep:** Vegetation Ecologist Merg checked in with Wildlife Area Manager Kaelber about a seed mix proposed for a small North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant-funded project on the Sunnyside Wildlife Area. Merg provided feedback on the site prep plan and checked in with the local Ducks Unlimited partner for that project about whether we might get an extension for the upland portion of this project. It seems that we cannot. Merg provided input on the seed mix accordingly.

**Invasive Rose Species Identified:** Vegetation Ecologist Merg helped Ungulate Researcher DeVivo identify rose hips in the rumen of a radio-collared deer that was found dead. The hips were likely from *Rosa canina*, or dog rose, a Eurasian species that in this case was probably an escaped ornamental. Unfortunately, and notwithstanding whatever food value the deer derived from these hips, dog rose is invasive in the Inland Northwest where it sometimes suppresses native plant species and even converts steppe habitats to thorny shrublands.

**Surrogate for Aquatic Pesticide Reviewed:** Vegetation Ecologist Merg reviewed the safety data sheet for a dye that disperses in water like aquatic pesticides, and a containment system for containing movement of dye/pesticide in large bodies of water. Merg is scheduled to apply a small quantity of the dye in an exercise on Lake Roosevelt in October that will simulate applying an aquatic pesticide should a population of invasive mussels ever be detected there. Merg will apply the dye under the aquatic endorsement on his herbicide applicators license.

**Cattail Project:** The crew moved the Marshmaster to the NAWCA site and treated invasive cattail (10.6 ac).

**North Puget *Spartina*:** The crew surveyed and treated *Spartina anglica* at Emrich's (0.025 ac), North Leque (0.01 ac) and the Duck Shack (0.055).

**Wenas Wildlife Area:** The crew prepared for and traveled to eastern Washington to help the Wenas Wildlife Area survey approximately 320 acres and treat 6 acres of weeds at the La Roza Unit.

**Naselle *Phragmites*:** The crew prepared for and treated a small clone of non-native *Phragmites* at WDFW property on the Naselle River. In 2020, tidal inundation will be restored to the site.

**Bell Creek Teasel:** Russ Nunez and Brad Morgan mowed two acres of teasel at the Bell Creek Unit (Sequim) with a tractor and sprayed previously mowed teasel using an ATV.

**Lake Terrell:** Dave Heimer, with Les Holcomb and Brad Evans from the Montesano crew, prepared for and treated 16.4 acres at Lake Terrell for Eurasian watermilfoil.

**Skagit Wildlife Area Restoration Planning:** Dave Heimer attended the Skagit Wildlife Area Planning Team Restoration Discussion at Padilla Bay and gave a short update on cattail control progress.

**Cultural Resources:** Lands archaeologists have been busy with tribal outreach this fall, continuing to build relationships and improve process for the review of co-managed projects and cultural resources stewardship on WDFW lands. Lands archaeologist have also been working hard to develop cross-program relationships by working with CAMP, IT/GIS, Habitat, and Private Lands Program personnel to identify opportunities to create project review efficiencies.

WDFW Lands Division archaeologists have conducted project review and survey work for numerous forest health, environmental restoration, and operations and maintenance projects on the L.T. Murray, Wenas, Colockum, Scotch Creek, W.T. Wooten, Columbia Basin, Oak Creek, Scatter Creek, Big Bend, Swanson Lakes, and Skagit wildlife areas. Our staff members are working collaboratively with the Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management, Bonneville Power Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Recreation and Conservation Office, Department of Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation, Department of Transportation, MidColumbia Fisheries, Yakama Fisheries, and numerous Tribal governments (in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho) to meet WDFW's stewardship and land management goals.

## 5) Providing Education and Outreach

**Willapa Bay Tour:** Russ Nunez operated an airboat, along with Zac Forster (Shellfish Program), for a tour of Willapa Bay. WDFW Commissioner James Anderson, Fish Program, Wildlife Program, and Habitat Program personnel were on the tour and talked about issues such as gill netting, clamming, eelgrass, ghost shrimp, port operations, and *Spartina* eradication.

## 6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

**Hiring of Rx Fire Positions:** The prescribed (Rx) burn team has actively been interviewing to fill positions on both the north and south teams. The new team members will be starting on Oct. 1. They will go directly to burning on active burn sites the following day. Recruitment will continue until positions are filled.

**Cultural Resources:** The cultural resources work group continues to work to develop a comprehensive cultural resources policy for the agency. The work group is also working to develop procedural guides concurrently with the policy development to improve access to the process by the non-heritage profession.

## 7) Other

Nothing for this reporting period.

## **SCIENCE DIVISION**

Nothing for this reporting period.

## **REGION 1**

### 1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Nothing for this reporting period.

### 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

**Wildlife Area Trail Maintenance:** Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Mike Finch bulldozed and smoothed over debris from a recently burned barn on Revere Wildlife Area. The debris had been scattered over a trail on Revere, posing a tripping/cutting/puncturing hazard to hikers, hunters, and hunting dogs.



### 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Nothing for this reporting period.

### 4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Nothing for this reporting period.

### 5) Providing Education and Outreach

**Water Festival:** The annual Water Festival, sponsored by the Lake Roosevelt Forum, brings hundreds of area fourth-graders to Sherman Creek Hatchery each fall. The students rotate through several educational stations, with titles such as “Kids in the Creek.” This year’s event occurred on September 24 and 25. As he has done for over a decade, Sherman Creek Wildlife Area Technician Jerry Christensen presented his “Who’s for Dinner?” program. Several classes of children attended this hands-on discussion of predator/prey relationships.



## 6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this reporting period.

## 7) Other

Nothing for this reporting period.

## **REGION 2**

### *HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:*

#### 1) Managing Wildlife Populations

**Okanogan Lynx Surveys:** Biologist Fitkin pulled the first half of the cameras deployed earlier in the season as part of an ongoing lynx monitoring effort. So far, lynx have been detected in all completed survey polygons and at nine of 12 retrieved cameras. As always, the effort is documenting a variety of other species as well. Unfortunately, most of the remaining cameras are the furthest in the backcountry and the recent mountain snow will make retrieval challenging. Stay tuned for epic wilderness adventure stories. This Washington State University (WSU) led effort will help refine the lynx occupancy model for the Okanogan Lynx Management Zone and assist in developing a long-term monitoring strategy for this species.





*From top: Canada lynx and moose* – Photos by WSU/WDFW remote camera

**Washington Predator Prey Project:** WDFW Biologist Fitkin followed up on three collared mule deer mortalities over the last month. Two turned out to be a wounding loss and a hunter harvest during the antlerless portion of the early general archery season. Scavengers completely consumed the third carcass and cause of death is unknown. The project is exploring multiple research topics including carnivore/ungulate interactions.



*Radio-marked mule deer carcass* – Photo by S. Fitkin

**Okanogan Reptile Research/Management:** Biologist Fitkin and USFS Biologist Rohrer pit-tagged this year's batch of conflict Northern Pacific rattlesnakes. Local residents who want an alternative to lethal removal bring snakes they've captured near their residences to Biologist Rohrer who houses and feeds them in his terrarium until early fall. At that time, we mark the animals and then release them at their likely native den or at a known den site on public land away from homes. This helps us assess the frequency of conflict recidivism (only one of hundreds released), and aids in restoring populations at known hibernacula on public land that were persecuted in earlier decades.





*From top: Tubing, the grab, processing, pit-tagging, and close-up* – Photos by M. Devivo

**Pygmy Rabbit Future Mobile Breeding Enclosures:** The pygmy recovery team with the assistance of Wells Wildlife Area personnel put on the final additions for two additional mobile breeding enclosures. Each enclosure, one located in Beezley Hills and the other on Chester Butte, will house the main semi-wild breeding population for the upcoming breeding season.



*Natural Resource Worker Williamson and pygmy rabbit interns take a picture break from setting up enclosure panels*

**Pygmy Rabbit Release Effort Monitoring:** The pygmy rabbit crew completed burrow surveys on the Beezley Hills and Burton Draw release areas to determine the distribution and short-term survival of released kits. We documented 52 detections on the release areas (about half were new burrow systems). Genetic samples from these detections are being analyzed to determine if they are kits released this summer or are wild-born from rabbits released the previous year. Results should be coming by the end of the month.

Not included in those totals are kits that resided in the temporary release pens, which will be taken down in the near future. Kit retention within them appears to be better than last year. Flush counts within them indicate 11-17 kits still within the five release pens and at least 22 burrows within them. Genetic samples will be taken prior to breaching them to determine exactly how many and which kits remain.

## **2) Providing Recreation Opportunities**

**Watchable Wildlife:** Up until the recent snowstorm, fall conditions in the high country had been spectacular with wildlife watching opportunities abounding. Subalpine larch color has yet to peak so hopefully it will warm up with renewed access before winter sets in. Look for migrating raptors, waterfowl, and songbirds. Many critters from bears to ground squirrels are rushing to add fat before the long sleep.



*Hoary marmot* – Photo by S. Fitkin

**Hopkins Ferry Boat Launch:** Lands Operations Manager Finger convened a conference call to discuss next steps with regards to the Hopkins Ferry Boat Launch in light of cultural resource survey results. The group decided to scale back the project to the following features/actions: 1) designated parking, 2) a hand launch with a geotextile armor from parking to water's edge, 3) a barrier to vehicle traffic on the approach, 4) removal of irrigation infrastructure on the approach and at the launch site, 5) continue with plan for vault toilet, and 6) regular conditions assessment monitoring which may be coordinated with existing patrols. CAMP will rescope the design, adequate funding is available but CAMP will need to coordinate with Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) on scope change. Consultation with tribes will follow once around 50 percent design is completed.

**Tunk Valley Unit Road Repair Site Visit:** Manager Olson and CAMP Engineer Kuykendall met on site to assess and plan for repairs to the only access road to the Tunk Valley Unit. This road is open seasonally to the public and critical for staff access to manage the area. Surface runoff has caused bank sloughing, and eroding of steep banks threatening the integrity of this road. Kristen was able to help identify needed repairs, start permitting and coordinate with the Yakima construction shop for assistance. Repairs will begin as soon as we receive the required permits.



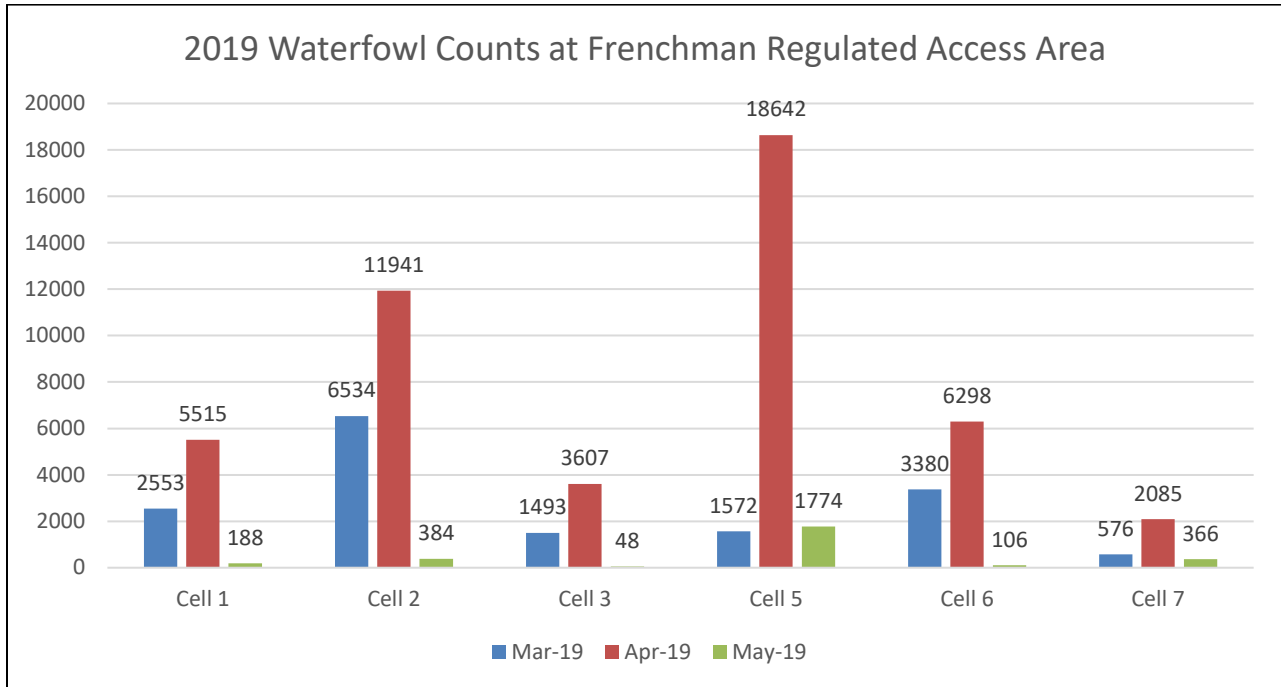
*One of several locations on the Tunk Valley access road needing repairs* – Photo by Olson

**Hunter Access Program:** Private Lands Biologist Braaten met with cooperating landowners and hunters accessing the Private Lands Access Program. Connection to landowners and users is an important part of the program. Building relationships personally and professionally.



*Private Lands Biologist Braaten talking with hunters using a hunting access area in north Grant County*

**Frenchman Regulated Access Area Camera Trap Survey:** Specialist McPherson finished counting pictures taken during 2019 spring migration. This data provides the wildlife area with valuable information on how different moist soil management practices effect bird use and when peak migration occurs. Knowing when peak bird numbers occur on the project permit wildlife area staff members to better manage water levels allowing for valuable wetland habitat to be present for spring migrants.



*Waterfowl counts by camera trap at Frenchman Regulated Access Area* - Graph by C. McPherson

**Boat Ramp Repairs:** CAMP completed repairs to Burke Lake and Barker Canyon boat ramps. Burke Lakes prop wash hole was filled, the ramp was extended to four foot of depth at the end of the plank, and the sides were rapped with railroad ballast. Barker Canyon received a complete ramp replacement. New style plank was installed, along with armor mat along the sides, and end. There was a real need for replacement as the old ramp was to the point of disrepair, and was hardly functional. With the new style plank, and armor mat the ramp should be able to withstand the wind, and ice that tore up the old ramp.



*Burke Lake ramp repairs*



*Barker Canyon ramp replacement*



### 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

**Conflict Prevention and Education:** Specialist Heilhecker met with a landowner interested in learning more about cougars, wolves, and Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements (DPCAs). He has found sign of cougars and wolves on his property in the past and wanted to know how to minimize potential depredations. They toured his property while discussing animal behavior.

Specialist Heilhecker along with a U.S. Forest Service Biologist looked at a gut pile found by a contracted ranger rider. The pile was located along the edge of a forest service road. There were no signs of predation and hunting season was open. Specialist Heilhecker notified the permittee and provided GPS coordinates, a map, and photographs in the interest of transparency. The permittee stated he would check the location the following day.

Specialist Heilhecker met with a landowner to sign a livestock damage prevention cooperative agreement. The agreement is a 50 percent cost-share for fencing materials. The landowner lives within a known wolf territory. He will install predator proof fencing around his livestock pens.

### 4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

**Conservation Planner Training:** Biologist Hughes attended a weeklong training as part of the requirements to become a certified conservation planner. Private lands biologists in eastern Washington serve as technical service providers for landowners enrolled in State Acres for Wildlife (SAFE) programs. The training went into detail on steps needed to develop a conservation plan that meets Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) standards and can be used for cost share provided by NRCS or Farm Service Agency (FSA). Hughes took this training to be able to develop plans for the CRP-SAFE program. In addition to going over nine steps to develop and implement a plan the training went over field assessments for resource concerns, plant diversity survey protocols, and practice situations of how to communicate with landowners in regards to NRCS programs. Hughes is beginning to develop a resource management plan for a landowner and working with a mentor through NRCS to assist in the plan development.

**Quincy Lakes Recreation Tour:** Lands Operations Manager Finger, Wildlife Area Manager Eidson, Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Bechtold, and Lands Planning, Recreation and Outreach Section Manager Sisolak held a tour of the Quincy Lakes Unit with the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area Advisory Council and various stakeholders representing the hunting, fishing, tribal, geologic history, bicycling, hiking, horseback riding, weed control, and economic development interests. The goal of the tour was to get to know one another by sharing values and stories so we'd all be comfortable working together problem solving over winter. The problem solving will involve how to manage and contain the expansion of user-built trails, how to reduce user to user conflict, particularly for differing user groups (e.g. horses and bikes), and how to enhance the users experience. The most encouraging feedback from the tour was that generally speaking, the trails are acceptable as multi-use. There are however locations where line-of-sight is compromised, or steepness of terrain is such that other tools are needed to try to reduce negative interactions. Finger is excited to pull the group together over a couple winter workshops to try to work together on solutions. Meanwhile, Wildlife Area Manager Eidson continues to get

requests for commercial uses, some of which are advertised before we have issued the permit (see below). The popularity of this area appears to be growing almost exponentially and we are hopeful that when we build a recreation management approach in this area that can be adopted into the Wildlife Area Plan, which is scheduled to be completed in 2020.

**ANCIENT LAKES TRAIL RUN**  
Ancient Lake Rd  
QUINCY, WA • 50 MILER, 50K, 25K, 10K

Saturday, Apr 4, 2020

Register +

WEBSITE CALENDAR ENTRANTS DIRECTIONS WATCH SOCIAL

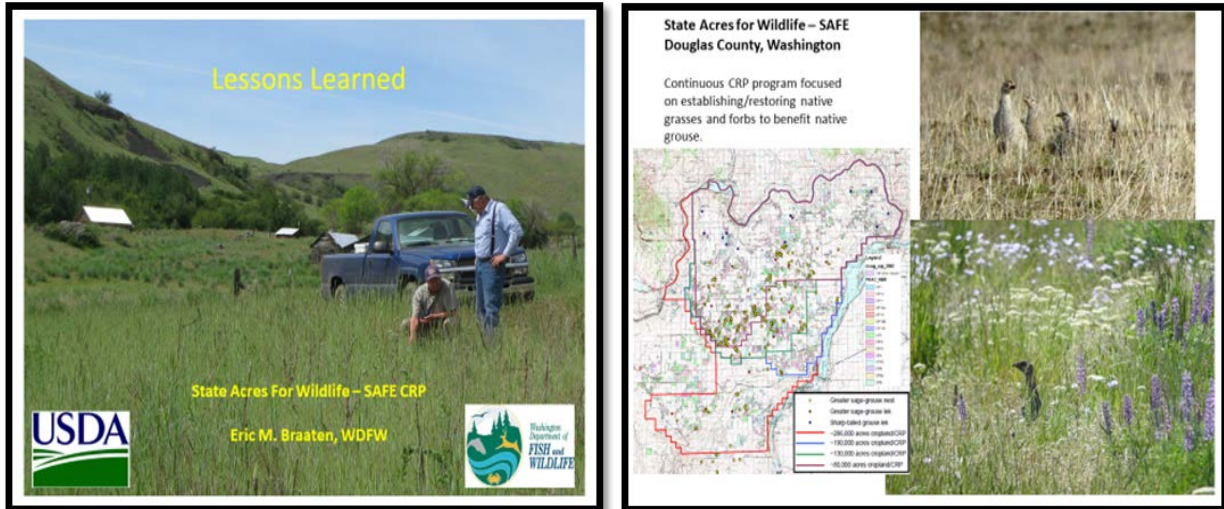
Registration closes: Thu, Apr 2 @ 11:59PM

**Experience the Magic of Ancient Lakes!**

Come experience the magic of the Ancient Lakes in the heart Washington Desert in this unique trail race! These trails are truly spectacular and will allow you to experience the best the desert has to offer, taking you on a journey through canyon-like gorges, along the shores of ancient desert lakes and to the base of cascading waterfalls. You will feel like you are in the desert southwest but with a Washington flare. With a distance for everyone, and the same great support and swag you have come to expect from Run Super Series events, this is an event you won't want to miss at this exciting new venue!

## 5) Providing Education and Outreach

**NRCS Training Assistance:** Private Lands Biologist Braaten provided SAFE CRP PowerPoint presentation and pictures to NRCS district conservationist for an upcoming CRP training for NRCS staff members.



*Slides for NRCS presentation provided by WDFW*

## 6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

**Okanogan Lands Team Safe and Best Workplace Initiative Meeting:** Lands Operations Manager Haug pulled together most the Okanogan lands team to discuss the recommendations of the Safe and Best Workplace initiative. Haug provided an overview of the findings resulting from the workshops, surveys and one-on-one meetings with staff that occurred over the past year or so. The team was receptive to many of the recommendations and the group discussed many issues addressed in the final report. Haug will follow up with the group periodically to keep momentum moving forward.

### **REGION 3**

#### ***HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:***

##### 1) Managing Wildlife Populations

District 8 Wildlife Biologists Moore and Bernatowicz with help from Service Civil International (SCI) volunteers, collected and processed samples from 19 rams harvested in the Yakima River Canyon. This year, 25 permit holders are part of an experiment to see if Yakima River Canyon sheep can be cleared from the bacteria *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (MOVI). All ewe/juvenile ram permit holder have taken juvenile rams. All needed to be pinned, along with adult rams. There were 32 total sheep permits in Region 3 in September. There are another 49 permits for October through mid-December. This year is the most opportunity for sheep hunting ever provided in Washington State.

In addition to sheep, Moore and Bernatowicz each checked one mountain goat harvested locally.

Bernatowicz responded to a radio-collared deer mortality that is part on an ongoing study in cooperation with the Muckleshoot Tribe. The deer was killed by a cougar, which is by far the most common cause of adult doe mortality in the study area.

District 4 Wildlife Biologist Fidorra met with landowners interested in installing ferruginous hawk nesting platforms on their property. Sites in Benton and Franklin counties were identified based on proximity of historic nest sites, disturbance, remaining habitat, and lack of existing nest structures (cliffs or outcrops). Eight to ten platforms will be installed as part of a mitigation project this fall. Fidorra also worked with a landowner to salvage sagebrush which was removed for agricultural development to use for prepping the platforms with nest material in order to increase the likeliness of hawk use. Similar work was conducted by WDFW staff members in Walla Walla County.



*Potential location of future ferruginous hawk nesting site on private land in Benton County*

**Healthy Bull Elk Killed in Traffic May Help Researchers Studying Hoof Disease:** District 4 Wildlife Biologist Fidorra and Conflict Specialist Hand collected samples of hooves, organs, and brain for WSU researchers trying to learn more about elk hoof disease needing comparative samples from healthy animals. The samples will be sent along with those taken from a harvested calf earlier this month.



*Conflict Specialist Hand and roadkill elk prior to sample collection*

**Cougar Roadkill in Tri-Cities Attracts Attention:** District 4 Wildlife Biologist Fidorra collected samples from a roadkill cougar reported early in the morning and which went locally viral on social media. Conflict Specialist Hand collected the animal from someone who contacted the department requesting a Salvage Permit (which is only available for deer and elk, not cougars). Fidorra responded to two media requests regarding the incident, as the location reported of the roadkill was in a populated area in Kennewick.



*Roadkill cougar from Kennewick in WDFW custody for standard sampling*

**Elk TAHD Study:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand collected biological samples from two elk for a WSU treponeme-associated hoof disease (TAHD) study. One elk was a legally harvested damage permit animal and the second was an adult bull elk who succumbed from injuries incurred from a vehicle collision. In both cases hooves, kidneys, liver, and fecal samples were obtained and on the adult bull, testicular samples and the head was collected.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Natural Resource Technician Daling surveyed two and a half miles of elk fence through Coleman and Catlin Canyons after a hunter reported the fence cut and wired open. He found no holes but was well prepared to fix anything!



*Natural Resource Technician Daling ready for any fence repair!*

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Manager Babik walked five miles of elk fence with CAMP personnel to assess the potential for replacement. It was decided that the southern five miles, although remote and not perfect, was not in as dire need for full replacement as Oak Creek so the capital replacement money was dedicated to Oak Creek. Manager Babik proposes a future project to build one and a half miles of new elk fence along the southern border in hopes to catch more elk.



*Coleman Canyon – a site that commonly needs some repair*



*Walking the L.T. Murray fence line*

## 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

District 8 Wildlife Biologist Bernatowicz coordinated pheasant deliveries with volunteers from Pheasants Forever, Hunter Education, Volunteer Coordinator Garcia, and Farm Manager White. Initially, there were only 9 and 12 youth signed up for Cottonwoods and Sunnyside, respectively. A few more kids showed up the day of the release, but overall participation was low. This has been a common theme for the September youth seasons. Turnout is much better during school breaks.

**New properties Ready for Hunting Seasons:** Region 3 Private Lands Biologist Hulett worked with landowners to get signatures on the last remaining Hunting Access contracts. These four properties were added to the Private Lands Hunting Opportunities page: #152 Blanton Road, #153 Bauermeister Road, #278 Ridge Road, #298 Donoho Road.

## 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

**Rattlesnake Mountain Hazing:** District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued to monitor elk activity near irrigated tree fruit, vineyards and row crops at lower elevations on Rattlesnake Mountain. Hazing with non-lethal LP gas cannons and pressure from damage permit hunters have assisted landowners with minimizing damage issues.

**Vineyard Deer Damage:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand worked with three large wine grape vineyards in Benton County to minimize browsing damage to ripening clusters of grapes from mule deer. Increasing sugar content in the fruit is a magnet to deer at this time of year, so along with employing non-lethal hazing equipment, hunting pressure with general season and damage permit hunters are being utilized.



#### 4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

**Habitat Project Funded by NRCS:** Region 3 Private Lands Biologist Hulett met with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in Franklin County to discuss an Inadequate Wildlife Habitat EQIP contract that NRCS is funding. Hulett will provide NRCS with technical assistance on the design of the tree and shrub establishment, range planting and wildlife structures.

**Preparation for Fire Protection Project:** Private Lands Biologist Hulett spoke with chemical applicators about pricing and availability for the upcoming Blackrock green strips project. The chemical application will take place this fall once fall plants start to actively grow. If weather permits, a second application will be performed prior to seeding in order to get a cleaner seed bed.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Manager Babik toured Phase 2 of the large wood fiesta in the North Fork Manastash drainage. Babik was pleased with prescription and appearance of the thinned stand and thrilled that partners were able to remove all cut wood from the stand. Babik and Yakama Nation staff members discussed areas for improvement but overall were happy with the restoration across seven and a half miles of the North Fork Manastash Creek.



*Large wood in North Fork Manastash*



*Large wood on the floodplain of North Fork Manastash*



*Thinned stand that was source wood for the large wood fiesta*



*Non-treated stand on the left - treated stand on the right*

## 5) Providing Education and Outreach

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area personnel removed emergency fire restriction signs and posted the new wolf informational flyers at access points. The new wolf signage alerts hunters to the difference between wolves and coyotes.



*Wolf flyers posted on the wildlife area*

## 6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Region 3 Private Lands Biologist Hulett spoke to the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Benton County FSA County Committee about SAFE contracts that are out of compliance and what work was done to help the landowner succeed. Over the last year, Hulett printed out copies of maps, job sheets and conservation plans of operation for the landowner on three different occasions and spoke to the landowner at length about which fields they were required to seed at the time.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Winegeart led 13 volunteers in an effort to remove one mile of old barbed wire from the Whiskey Dick Wildlife Area. The Mule Deer Foundation, Ruffed Grouse Society, and master hunters were represented at the project.



*Motorized wire roller making short work of creating a spool of old barbed wire*



*T-post and old barbed wire on the way to the salvage or recycle pile*

7) **Other**

Nothing for this installment.

## **REGION 4**

### *HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:*

#### **1) Managing Wildlife Populations**

**Grouse Wing Barrels:** Biologists Moore and Hamer built four grouse wing barrels that will be the first ones placed in Region 4. The wing barrels will allow department biologist to better understand forest grouse harvest rate trends and the sex, age, and species of harvested grouse. Biologist Hamer placed one barrel on the Beckler River Road (47.72331, -121.33911) and a second barrel at the Mount Baker – Snoqualmie National Forest Darrington Ranger Station (48.26045, -121.60220). District staff members plan to add additional grouse wing collection sites in future years.



*A new grouse wing collection site on the Beckler River Road near Skykomish, WA*

**Low-elevation Pika Surveys:** Biologist Hamer conducted a low-elevation pika survey at a DNR gravel quarry north of Oso, WA. Pika have commonly been thought to be an obligate resident of sub-alpine and alpine (greater than about 4300 feet) talus slopes, where they inhabit a narrow bioclimatic envelope, limited in their distribution by a low physiological tolerance to heat. However, biologists are discovering pika at low elevation (less than 1500 feet) natural and artificial rocky sites. They have been especially common at gravel quarries in working forestlands. The low elevation pika surveys are being conducted throughout District 13 to better understand the distribution and behavior of low-elevation pika, to describe the site characteristics where low-elevation pika are found, and to collect genetic material for possible future analysis.

## 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Nothing for this reporting period.

## 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

**Elk Tour in Skagit Valley:** Various WDFW staff members met with representatives from different Point Elliott Treaty Tribes, the state legislature, WDFW Commission, Washington Department of Transportation, and county commissioners to conduct a tour of Skagit Valley and discuss elk damage issues. The group learned about the North Cascades elk herd, toured various properties to discuss different measures that are being used to decrease elk-related damage, and heard from several landowners about their experiences and perspective regarding elk in the valley.



*A bull maintains watch on a herd of cow elk (just out of the view) during the elk rut in Skagit Valley - photo by R. Waddell*

## 4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

**Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project:** Construction is well underway and WDFW Wildlife Program and CAMP personnel are working with Strider Construction and Ducks Unlimited to manage the project. The bulk of the work is complete, and the dike is scheduled to be removed sometime between Oct. 14 through 22.



*Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton spent a few hours picking up garbage around Leque Island prior to the scheduled dike removal*

5) **Providing Education and Outreach**

Nothing for this reporting period.

6) **Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Nothing for this reporting period.

7) **Other**

Nothing for this reporting period.

**REGION 5**

1) **Managing Wildlife Populations**

**Columbia River Gorge Pika Surveys:** Biologist Wickhem and volunteers Steider and Flick surveyed six sites throughout the Washington side of the Columbia River Gorge. These surveys are a collaborative effort with Cascades Pika Watch (organized by the Oregon Zoo) and the United States Geological Survey. In other parts of North America, pikas generally only inhabit high elevation talus slopes, where they spend their summers collecting vegetation, and storing it in a “haypile” underneath the rocks. These haypiles are their main food source during the cold winter months. The Columbia River Gorge is one of the only places on the continent where pikas can be found at such low elevations ( under 500 feet). This unique population consumes moss and lichens year-round, and does not rely as heavily on large haypiles to survive. On these surveys, pika occupancy was determined by sightings, hearing calls, or finding sign, including fresh haypiles or pellets (scat). Wickhem and volunteers confirmed pika occupancy at four of the six sites, which is consistent with surveys in previous years.



*Volunteer Flick surveying the talus for pika sign*



*Volunteer Flick with a large haypile*

**Western Gray Squirrel Statewide Survey:** As of the second week of September, the 2019 western gray squirrel survey season is complete for District 9. This year, District Biologists Wickhem and Bergh were assisted by Biologists Bernatowicz, Moore, Burlingame, Linders, and Johnson, and staff members from the Klickitat Wildlife Area and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area to complete 27 total transects. Each transect is made up of 12 PVC tubes with a walnut glued inside and double-sided tape affixed to both entrances of the tube. When a squirrel enters the tube to investigate the walnut, they leave behind hairs on the tape that allow biologists to identify which species of squirrel was inside the tube. Out of 27 transects, 17 were positive for western gray squirrels. This was a vast improvement from last year's surveys, which saw only three positive transects out of 35 completed. Many of the transects this year occurred in more appropriate western gray squirrel habitat, and for whatever reason, were not bothered by bears nearly as often as last year. Both of these reasons likely contributed to a more successful survey season. For more information on the state threatened western gray squirrel, please visit our website at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/species/sciurus-griseus> and thank you to everyone who assisted with surveys this year!





*A transect tube ready for a squirrel*



*Western gray squirrel hair deposited on the double-sided tape*

**Larch Mountain Salamander Survey:** Biologists Holman and Stephens conducted a Larch Mountain salamander survey near Packwood Lake. This effort was to inform a periodic status review of the species. Occupancy surveys have been conducted over the past couple of years in its historic range. The rainy but above freezing temperatures this fall have provided excellent survey conditions.



*Single segment outer hind toe is a distinguishing characteristic of Larch Mountain salamanders from similar salamanders*



*Larch Mountain salamander*

**Mourning Dove Banding:** Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Biologist Stephens initiated mourning dove banding in Woodland. The project continued at the WDFW Region 5 office in Ridgefield where several of the regional staff members have joined in the work including Biologist Holman, Regional Wildlife Program Manager Jonker, Hunter Education Coordinator Elliott, and Customer Service Specialists Koppi and Smith. Special guest Town also joined in for trapping session. This effort is part of a larger nationwide project and is one component to estimating mourning dove abundance. For more information about this program, please visit: <https://www.fws.gov/birds/surveys-and-data/webless-migratory-game-birds/doves-and-pigeons.php>.



*Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald banding doves near Woodland*



*Regional Wildlife Program Manager Jonker with a dove captured at the Region 5 office*



*Customer Service Specialist Koppi with dove captured at the Region 5 office*



*Customer Service Specialist Smith releasing a dove captured at the Region 5 office*



*Hunter Education Coordinator Elliott with a dove*



*Special guest Town learning about birds and wildlife work from Biologist Stephens and Hunter Education Coordinator Elliott*

**Tooth and Tissue Extraction:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen met with a Klickitat County Sheriff's Office deputized houndsman who had killed a cougar the night before as part of the Klickitat County Sheriff's Office predator removal program. Jacobsen pulled a tooth and tissue sample from the cougar as standard protocol. The cougar had been pursued with hounds and killed after it was observed in an agricultural field where livestock were kept.

**Elk Hoof Collection:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen collected several elk hooves from elk harvested in Klickitat County for testing purposes. Thank you to the landowners and hunters for assisting in the collection effort!

## 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

**Hunter Inquiries in Advance of Hunting Seasons:** Regional wildlife biologists fielded many calls and emails from prospective hunters in advance of the ongoing and upcoming seasons. The most common questions relate to trying to find areas with good concentrations of elk but few hunters asked how to access areas for which special hunting permits have been drawn. Hunters are reminded that the hunting prospects located on the WDFW website at: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/locations/prospects> is an excellent reference on how to get started.

**Cowlitz Wildlife Area Kosmos Unit Pheasant Release:** Volunteer Metcalf released 60 pheasants, roosters and hens, the night before the two-day youth season opener (Sept. 21) on the Cowlitz Wildlife Area Kosmos Release Site. Sixty-five year and older or disabled hunters will take to the field on Sept. 23. Hunters are allowed two pheasants a day and they can harvest either sex. Hunting hours on the site begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 4:00 p.m. daily through the season, which ends Dec. 15. Metcalf will release birds every Friday after 4:00 p.m. The birds disperse very well throughout the Kosmos Unit and hunters may need to look beyond the signed release area as the week after the releases progresses.



*Volunteer Chuck Metcalf releasing pheasants*

**Klickitat County Pheasant Release:** Pheasants were released at the three Klickitat County sites in advance of the youth pheasant season, which ran Sept. 21-22. Volunteer Morrison assisted Assistant Biologist Wickhem and Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven in distributing the birds, which were allocated as follows: 42 at the Hatchery Unit, 32 at the Gun Club site, and 16 at the Finn Ridge Road site. The pheasants were lively and looked good, and should provide a good hunt.



*Pheasants on the loose for the youth hunt*

**Feel Free To Hunt:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist/Private Lands Biologist Jacobsen finalized two Feel Free to Hunt access contracts for industrial timber in southwest Washington. One access agreement, Weyerhaeuser Cathlamet, encompasses 6,638 acres in Pacific, Wahkiakum, and Cowlitz counties. The second access agreement, Western Pacific Timber Goldendale, encompasses over 65,000 acres in central Klickitat County. Both access sites are open for all hunting seasons. More information about these sites can be found on WDFW's Private Lands Access page: [https://privatelands.wdfw.wa.gov/private\\_land/](https://privatelands.wdfw.wa.gov/private_land/)

**Access Site Cleanup:** Several Access Sites needed clean up after many tree limbs and leaves were blown onto our sites from the heavy wind and rain. Kress Lake Access had two fallen trees blocking a fishing platform and the path around lake. With the help of the Department of Corrections crew, the entire area was cleaned and the trees were cut and removed.



*Clean up at Kress Lake*



**Vancouver Lake Access:** Access staff members Rhodes and McKinlay repainted the restroom and covered the profanity found at the Vancouver Lake Access site. In addition, with the use of two trucks, winches, and pulleys, staff members were able to set barriers in place to block 4x4 paths that were used to go around the gate.



*Vancouver Lake Access Clean-up*

### **3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education**

**Bear Observation:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and Officer Bolton were contacted by a landowner who observed a bear eating apples from a tree on his neighbor's property. The reporting party was concerned about the bear and requested that WDFW come out and kill it. The situation was discussed with the landowner and it was determined that the bear did not pose a threat to public safety or property, and that the landowner could obtain a bear tag and hunt the bear if he wished during legal hunting hours. Advice was provided on living in bear country.

**Goldendale Deer and Cougar Presentation:** After a rash of recent cougar sightings within the city limits of Goldendale, including an incident where a cougar was observed killing a deer in town, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen, Biologist Bergh, and Captain Wickersham delivered a presentation to the Goldendale City Council on living with wildlife. The presentation focused heavily on urban deer issues in Goldendale, which are likely attracting cougars into urban areas.

The presentation was well received, and council members will be working with WDFW to deter deer from within the city limits.

**Elk Damage:** A landowner with a small fruit orchard contacted Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen concerning elk damage to her fruit trees. The elk are stripping the trees and causing immediate losses to her crops, as well as causing long-term damage to her trees. The landowner has tried several non-lethal deterrents without success. Jacobsen and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey will continue to work with this landowner on her elk issues.

**Depredation on Goats:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and Officer Bolton responded to a residence where two goats were killed and taken from the pasture. Further investigation revealed that the goats were killed by a bear. This depredation occurred within the same area as five other residences who have had pigs killed by a bear. It is believed that these depredations can be attributed to the same bear. A trail camera placed on one of the goat carcasses suggests that the bear in question may be injured. A bear trap was placed at the scene, but the bear was not detected at the residence again.



*Bear caught on trail camera after it depredated on two goats the previous night*

**Sheep Depredation:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by a landowner regarding a depredation on one of her sheep several nights prior. Jacobsen arrived at the scene, as did the Klickitat County Sheriff's Office with a deputized houndsman. The houndsman searched the woods for a cougar but was unable to locate one. Further investigation of the scene by Jacobsen revealed that the depredation was a probable cougar depredation, though the carcass was too heavily decomposed to reveal any clues. It is likely that the cougar killed the sheep within the pen but was unable to drag the carcass over the 6-foot high fence. Sheep wool was found on the top wire of the fence where the cougar tried to get it over. The landowner also observed a cougar near the pens on the night following the depredation. Advice was given on livestock husbandry, night penning, and the implementation of the livestock guardian dogs owned by the landowner.



*Sheep wool on top of a 6-foot high fence where a predator tried to pull the sheep over*

**Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement Renewals:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen renewed several Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements with landowners for commercial agricultural damage by elk across Klickitat County.

**Deer with Arrow:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by a concerned landowner regarding a male deer with an arrow shaft sticking out of the deer's side. A trespassing hunter shot the deer and failed to kill it. The deer regularly comes to the residence and the landowner had observed the arrow in the deer several days in a row. Jacobsen attempted to locate and immobilize the deer, but the deer did not show up on the day that Jacobsen attempted to find it. The following day, the buck showed up without the arrow. Fortunately, the arrow worked its way loose or the deer was able to pull it out!



*Deer with an arrow shaft in its side. The green fletching of the arrow can be seen on the deer's right side* - Photo courtesy of the landowner

**Depredation on Donkey 1:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen, Officer Bolton, Klickitat County Sheriff's Office deputies, and a WDFW-requested houndsman responded to a residence where an adult donkey weighing approximately 220-250 pounds was killed by a predator. Jacobsen investigated the scene and confirmed that the donkey was killed by a cougar and dragged approximately 150 yards into thick cover. The houndsman was able to quickly locate the cougar nearby. The cougar was euthanized at the scene. Jacobsen discussed livestock husbandry with the landowner and offered to help construct a night pen for the landowner to secure her remaining donkeys and llamas. The landowner was leaving on vacation and planned to contact Jacobsen for help constructing the pen when she returned.



*Donkey cached in thick cover by a cougar*

**Depredation on Donkey 2:** Two weeks after Donkey 1 was killed and cached by an adult male cougar (which was subsequently euthanized), the same landowner called to report that another one of her donkeys was likely attacked by a cougar. Officer Bolton arrived at the scene with a houndsman. Officer Bolton discussed the incident with Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen, and it was determined that the injuries to the donkey's hindquarters were consistent with those from a cougar. An adult female cougar was located a short distance away and euthanized. Jacobsen will make an attempt again to get the landowner to construct a night pen for her remaining animals. The property is adjacent to a large tract of the Klickitat Wildlife Area, and this is the third cougar that has been removed from the property for a livestock depredation in less than a year.



*Scratch marks to the hind end of a donkey*

**Depredation on Goat:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by a landowner regarding a depredation on a domestic goat. The goat went missing two days prior, during the middle of the day. Jacobsen arrived at the scene and inspected the barnyard and pasture, offering recommendations on securing the facility to prevent future incidents with cougars. Jacobsen located a cougar track in the pasture where the goats were kept, and followed a likely trail through the underbrush to try and locate the goat carcass for the landowner. A short distance into the brush, Jacobsen located the cougar laying at the base of a tree. After discussing the situation with WDFW Enforcement, it was decided to remove the cougar based on its continued presence in the area, the proximity to the landowner's goats, and the fact that the previous goat was killed in the middle of the day. The subadult male cougar was euthanized at the scene. The landowner continues to work on her goat facility and has now constructed a secure pen for containing her remaining goats at night.



*Goat pen under construction*

**Sheep Enclosure Inspection:** A few weeks prior, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen responded to a depredation on a sheep by a bear near Goldendale. At the time, advice was given on constructing a secure night pen facility for the sheep flock. The landowners promptly took measures to add the recommended structure to the facility, and asked Jacobsen to come out in and inspect it. The pre-existing barn structure was now secured on all four sides and can now serve as an excellent night pen for the sheep. This will help protect the sheep from not just bears but also cougars, coyotes, bobcats, and any other predators.



*Sheep enclosure inspection*

**Sheep Killed by Canine:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen responded to a report of a sheep that was believed to have been killed by a cougar. An inspection and necropsy of the carcass indicated that the sheep had been killed by a canine – either a coyote or domestic dog. The trauma to the sheep and history of issues with coyotes on the farm suggested that a coyote was the most likely culprit. An overly aggressive ewe in the pasture harassed Jacobsen during the investigation, and would have likely harassed the culprit of the depredation as well. The landowners have a livestock guardian dog in training, but it is not yet ready to join and protect the flock. Advice was given on securing the sheep in the meantime until the guardian dog is ready.



*Sheep killed by canine*

**Depredation on Guinea Hen:** A concerned landowner contacted WDFW to report that a predator, possibly a cougar, killed some of her fowl near Goldendale. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen, Officer Bolton, and a Klickitat County Sheriff's Office deputy responded to the scene. One guinea hen was missing, another was found partially consumed, a rooster was slightly injured, and an egg was eaten. Based on the evidence, it appeared that a small carnivore such as a raccoon or skunk was likely responsible. The landowner planned to put up a trail camera to monitor her fowl. Advice was given on how to best secure the livestock at night from predators.



*Partially consumed Guinea hen killed by a small carnivore*

**Goat Site Visit:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen performed a site visit at a residence where a cougar had been observed recently. Advice was given to the landowner on how she could easily convert her existing open facility into a night pen for locking up her goats at night. The landowner was appreciative of the visit.



*Goat pen where a cougar had recently been observed*



**Depredation on Several Sheep:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen responded to a residence in Clark County where a sheep was reported to have been killed by a predator. The depredation was several days old by the time the report was called in. At the scene, the remains of several sheep were strewn about the woods. Artifacts from several missing lambs were also located at the scene. One deceased sheep had been dragged over a fence by a carnivore, but got entangled by the fence. Substantial scavenging had occurred on all the carcasses and it was not possible to determine what predator was responsible. The sheep had been allowed to range in a heavily wooded area without supervision, and the landowner did not know the whereabouts of all of her sheep at the time. The area was an ideal location for a carnivore to prey on livestock, and the livestock were not penned up at night. Due the landowner's inability to care for, feed, or protect her sheep, she is now actively trying to rehome the animals. If a member of the public has a secure facility and is interested in adopting five sheep, please contact the Region 5 office at 360-696-6211.



*Sheep carcass stuck on fence and scavenged*

**Bear Concerns:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen spoke with several different landowners who reported bear sightings in Klickitat County and who had expressed concern over the sightings. Advice was given on bear biology and bear safety information.

**Injured Deer:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen responded to a report of an injured deer in Klickitat County. Due to the extent of its injuries, the deer was euthanized.

**Cougar Concerns:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and Officer Myers met with a concerned landowner in Skamania County regarding potential cougar tracks on his property. The tracks that the landowner had covered and protected from the rain turned out to be canine tracks. Other washed-out tracks on the property may have belonged to a cougar, but it was not possible to confirm their identity. The property was adjacent to a large clear-cut and thick stand of forest – ideal cougar habitat, especially with all of the deer sign around the property. Advice was given on living in cougar habitat.

**Lewis County Landowner Contacts:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and Wildlife Program Manager Jonker introduced new Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey to landowners experiencing elk damage in Lewis County. Many of the landowners are currently operating under Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements that Aubrey will be handling and the visits brought him up to speed on the history and current conflicts taking place throughout the county.

**Potential Bear Depredation in Woodland:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey responded to a bear sighting and potential depredation in the Woodland area. The caller reported that a goat went missing two nights prior to calling, and that the bear had been spotted in a field near the livestock pen twice. Advice was given on livestock husbandry practices that could prevent future conflict, and a trail camera was placed near the livestock pen to monitor for further activity.

#### 4) Conserving Natural Areas

**Klickitat Wildlife Area Simcoe Mountains Unit Boundary Marking:** Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Steveson and Assistant District Biologist Wickhem marked a total of four miles of property boundaries delineating Deer Area 5382 in east Klickitat County. The new boundaries reflect changes resulting from the most recent land purchase. The boundaries were marked with fluorescent flagging and signs to assist the public in avoiding trespassing on adjacent private property. This effort will also help maintain good relations with neighboring property owners. The goal is to have the property lines marked in advance of the modern firearm season for deer, which starts Oct. 12. Concurrent with this work, a new map of the Simcoe Mountains Unit is being developed for public distribution.



*Posting Simcoe Phase 5 boundary*

#### 5) Providing Education and Outreach

**Klickitat Wildlife Area Advisory Committee Tour:** The citizen advisory group came together for a tour of the Simcoe Mountains Unit this week. The property that makes up this unit of the wildlife area was purchased after the 2016 Klickitat Wildlife Area Management Plan was

drafted. Many of the group members were unfamiliar with the new property, so in order to gain a better understanding of the area, wildlife area personnel conducted a tour of the major habitats and key features found on the Simcoe Mountains Unit. The route passed through both grazing permit areas, two timber harvest units, open areas having dry rocky ground, a verdant draw with large conifer trees, mixed pine/oak woodlands, shrub-steppe, and an area that burned in 2013. The route included newly acquired property which includes a new access point for the public from Box Canyon Road.



*Klickitat Wildlife Area Advisory Committee Tour*

#### **6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Nothing for this reporting period.

#### **7) Other**

**Klickitat Wildlife Area Soda Springs Unit Woodpeckers:** Mid-September is a good time to view woodpeckers on the Soda Springs Unit because these birds can be concentrated in a small area during that time. White-headed woodpeckers, downy woodpeckers, and flickers were observed at the wildlife area headquarters on Sept. 20. In addition, Lewis' woodpeckers are forming flocks and may be seen in oak and oak-pine woodlands as they forage for insects by catching them in the air.

**New Region 5 District 10 Wildlife Conflict Specialist:** Thayne Aubrey joined the Region 5 Wildlife Program team as the new Wildlife Conflict Specialist in District 10 (Wahkiakum, Cowlitz, and Lewis counties). Thayne comes to us with great experience as a landowner specialist with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources focusing primarily on ungulate damage to agriculture. He is also in the final editing stages of his Master's Degree in Wildlife Biology from Utah State University. His project focused on the response of sensitive species (Columbian

sharp-tailed grouse, grasshopper sparrow, and short-eared owl) to the construction of a new landfill. Thayne was born and raised in Utah, obtained his B.S. degree from Utah State University, and also worked for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. He enjoys spending time outdoors fishing, hunting, or just enjoying nature.

**REGION 6**

*HERE’S WHAT WE’VE BEEN UP TO:*

**1) Managing Wildlife Populations**

**Grouse Wing Collections- Southern Olympic Peninsula:** Four wing barrels were placed prior to the opening weekend (Sept. 1), of the grouse hunting season. The same locations were used as in previous years throughout the southern Olympic Peninsula. In total, of 85 wings have been collected so far.

Collection period	George Adams	Mill 5	Cougar Smith	Quinault Ridge	Total
September 1-6	0	5	9	2	16
September 7-11	0	0	6	3	9
September 12-16	3	6	9	2	20
September 17-23	4	4	3	4	15
September 24- 30	6	6	5	8	25
Totals	13	21	32	19	85

***Table 1: The number of grouse wing and tails collected from four collection barrels, (through Sept. 30)***

This year a new sign instructing hunters to collect the tails of harvested grouse was used. This is especially critical for determining the sex of ruffed grouse. Barrels will be in place into the first part of December.

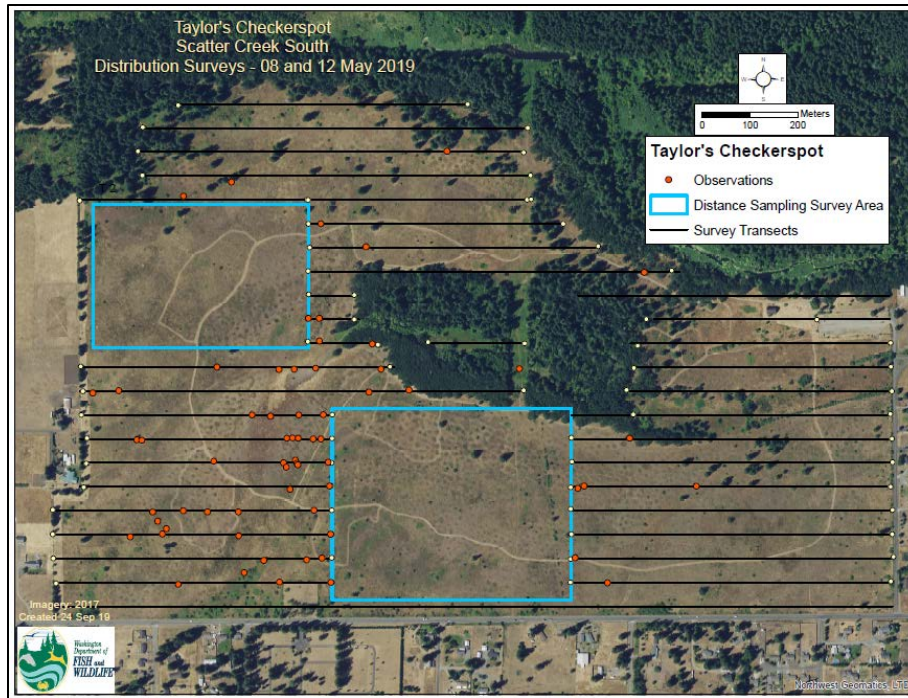
**Grouse Wing Barrels- Northern Olympic Peninsula:** Grouse wing barrels were installed at two locations in the district back on Aug. 31. One barrel is located in Clallam County (5.5 miles southwest of Sequim) at the junction of Slab Camp Road and Lost Mountain Road. The other barrel is located on U.S. Forest Service land west of Lake Crescent at the junction of the Cooper Ranch Road and USFS Road 29. Return visits were conducted to each barrel on Sept. 9 in order to install new signs that also requested submission of tails from grouse harvested by hunters. Biologist Ament ended up replacing the plywood for each sign since they were too small for the new signs. Seven wings were collected at the new Cooper Ranch barrel on the first check. The barrel was vandalized prior to the next check on Sept. 19. The entire stand and barrel were pushed over in a ditch and a dead mangled crow was found in the barrel. Some locations for another barrel in eastern Clallam/Jefferson counties were explored. Biologist Ament will be contacting USFS personnel to requested approval for setting up another barrel.

<b>District 16 Grouse Wing Barrel Collections</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Slab Camp Road</b>	<b>Cooper Ranch Road</b>	<b>District 16 Total</b>
	Set-up Aug. 31	-	-	-
	Sept 1 to Sept 9	0	7	7
	To Sept 19	0	0	0
	To Sept 26	No check	0	0
	<b>Total Collected</b>	0	7	7



*New sign with tail collection information at the Lost Mountain grouse barrel*

**Mapping Distribution of Taylor’s Checkerspots:** Biologist Randolph processed and spatially joined the 2019 distance sampling survey data to GIS polyline layers to illustrate the abundance and distribution of butterflies detected at six survey sites in the south Puget Sound. This year we detected over 16,400 butterflies over the course of forty surveys, almost 500 more than in 2018. Maps were developed for each site to help land managers know where butterflies are concentrated to help inform enhancement efforts. She also began compiling occupancy data collected from Scatter Creek Wildlife Area, South Unit, where transects were placed at a 50m spacing throughout the prairie, and a data point collected wherever a checkerspot is observed. These observations are mapped out to document areas of dispersal and may reveal potential colonization sites outside of our standard survey areas. Encounter rates were calculated to provide a comparison metric to other survey sites.



**New Bat Colony:** Biologist Ament conducted several site visits to a property near Forks to document and monitor a new bat colony during the past month. Happy Valley Bats received a call from landowner Sean Neuhauser from Forks who reported that he had a colony of 1,000 to 2,000 bats living in a greenhouse on his property. He conveyed that he was planning to tear down the greenhouse in the next week and build a new structure in the same location. Biologist Ament contacted Sean and scheduled a site visit. During this visit she counted at least 302 bats between siding boards of the greenhouse. There were likely many more bats roosting that were not visible in the siding and the roof. She also documented roosting bats in the roof of a pump house and in the roof and siding of Sean's residence. He appreciates the bats and has known the bats were present since he bought the property five years ago. However, he was very anxious to remove the siding and roof of the green house as soon as possible. He was advised that the bat numbers should be decreasing as the bats move to hibernate for the winter. Ryan Ollerman from the Fish Program joined Biologist Ament for another site visit to the property. A total of 236 bats were counted at the greenhouse. They again confirmed the presence of roosting bats at the residence and pumphouse. They also found evidence of bats roosting in a nother structure on the property. An echo meter was used to record bat vocalizations on the property and an SM2 recorder was set up near the greenhouse. The highest number of bats detected were Yuma myotis or CA myotis but at least five other species were recorded. Files are being provided to White-nose Syndrome (WNS) Specialist Tobin to identify the exact species present. Sean has kindly held off with his demolish project. Biologist's Ament and Ollerman returned on September 26 and counted 118 bats at the greenhouse. They did some more recording with the echo meter and removed the SM2 recorder. They conducted an exit count at Sean's residence and observed 129 bats, of which 101 bats flew out from siding boards located under one window. Before leaving, they installed a large bat box on a tall structure located in front of Sean's residence. Future monitoring of this new bat colony will continue. Biologist Ament has initiated efforts to have a bat condo constructed and installed on the property this winter.



*Structures on Sean Neuhauser's property near Forks which contain roosting bats*

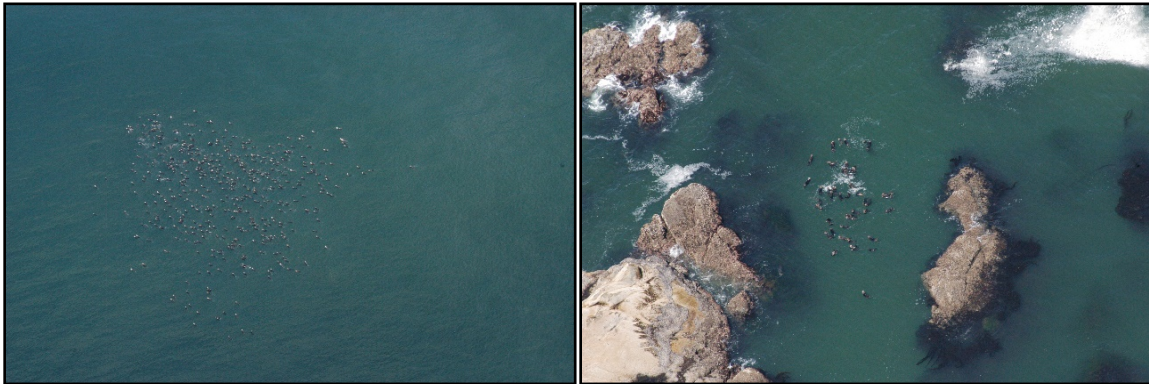


*Bats documented roosting between siding boards of greenhouse*

**Bat Recon Visit:** On September 9, Biologist Ament conducted a site visit to a property near Forks. The owners had contacted Biologist McMillan back in July to report bat activity in the roof of their residence. The landowners explained that they wanted to exclude the bats from the roof and installed a bat box on another structure on the property. The owner reported that he had replaced a small portion of the roof late in August. He reported that 20 bats flew out and he then installed materials to prevent the bats from returning to the roof location. Biologist Ament did not observe any guano or bats at the residence. She did find one bat roosting between the bat house and the house (not in the bat house). She recommended that the bat house be installed higher on the building and gave the nice couple informational hand-outs on bats and white-nose syndrome (WNS).

**Sea Otter Photo Counts:** Biologist Ament met with Marine Mammal Biologist Jeffries, USFWS Biologist Lynch, and Olympic National Marine Sanctuary Biologist Waddell to review sea otter count totals. This season, aerial and ground counting of sea otters was conducted June 24 through 27. Biologist Ament participated as an observer and data collector on each flight. After the surveys, each biologist used the ImageJ computer program to count sea otters on photos taken during the count. Biologist Ament spent time the previous week downloading and reviewing the photos. Usually each biologist conducts separate counts and provides an Excel spreadsheet. This year there was one flight day during the week that had exceptional weather for

aerial and ground observations. It was determined that teaming up and all counting together would be the most efficient use of time. All photos of sea otter groups, including adults and pups, were counted by the group. The official final numbers are being tabulated and will be available before the end of the year. The largest group counted had 497 sea otters. It appears that the numbers of sea otters along the Washington coast has continued to increase. The population estimate for sea otters along the Washington coast for 2019 is 2785. The population estimate during the last survey in 2017 was 2058. The distribution of sea otters continues to shift more towards the south with approximately 84 percent of the population located south of La Push.



*Groups of sea otters observed during June 25, 2019 aerial survey* - Photos by Steve Jeffries

**Purple Martin Box Removal:** Biologist Ament maintains good communications with the local Audubon volunteers who monitor and maintain nesting boxes for the purple martin colony located at the tideflats at Three Crabs, north of Sequim. This is the first season the martins used boxes that were installed on three new metal structures installed by the North Olympic Salmon Coalition to replace old pilings at the site. Volunteer Wiersma reported all boxes came down without any problems. Beautiful morning, no wind and almost clear skies. The crew went out to the tide flats about 6:35 a.m. and had the boxes down and on the carts by 6:55a/m. The boxes will be cleaned out and a few will get some maintenance adjustments on them over the winter. A new system with a retractable painter's pole worked fine, much easier than the fixed length pole. Wiersma reports: *“All in all a modestly successful breeding year. Of the 22 boxes we had up, we're sure of successful nests in 18 of them”*. He also felt confident reporting that three of the four onshore boxes on WDFW land were successful at producing some chicks. The group conducts three checks of the nest boxes during the nesting season. They use an endoscope to take photos. All of the 2019 purple martin monitoring data will be summarized and provided to WDFW data systems staff members.





*Purple martin chicks in nest box (July) - Photo by Dow Lambert*



*Crew removing the boxes for winter - Photo by Laura Davis*

**Injured Deer Fawn:** The regional office took a call on Sept. 11 about an injured deer fawn in Sequim. No Enforcement Program staff members or conflict specialists were available to respond. Biologist Ament contacted the reporting party and responded. The homeowner had found the older deer fawn around 9:30 a.m. in her yard. It was unable to get up and she thinks it had been at the same location since the previous day. Biologist Ament was able to walk up to the deer as it laid on its side on the ground where vegetation was removed. The fawn could move its legs but was unable to stand. There were no obvious injuries except to the right eye that had been rubbing in the dirt. The deer was too large for a dog crate. Biologist Ament hobbled the fawn with a leather belt and made a mask from a towel for its face. She transported the 55 pound fawn

in her truck to the Center Valley Animal Rescue. Director Sara Penhallegon determined that the fawn had head trauma and also an ulcerated retina in the right eye. She started IV fluids and treatment for the eye injury. The next day the fawn was apparently eating and was actually up in a sternal position. Unfortunately, after five days the fawn was unable to stand or regain normal function and was euthanized.



*Deer fawn ready for transport*

**2) Providing Recreation Opportunities**

Nothing for this reporting period.

**3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education**

Nothing for this reporting period.

**4) Conserving Natural Landscapes**

**Olympic, Willapa Hills Wildlife Areas Annual Maintenance:** *(Editor's note: It's been a rough year for the staff members here, but they found time to provide a bit of poetry to tell their story.)*

The Olympic crew is down by two, but they're getting done all they can do.

The Olympic fields are mowed and John's River too, equipment still running, computers are too.

New seedings are growing, Lynn fields and Wynoochee Mitigation, unit number two,

Producing forage for elk and sheet water too.

They've mowed hundreds of acres with lots more to do.

Now fighting King tides and early rain too, down in Chinook, four wheel drive, never two.

They hope to be done in November, day number two, 'cause elk season's coming and they want to hunt too.



*Chehalis mowing*



*Chinook mowing*

**Lands 20-20:** Biologist Novack developed and submitted a lands 20-20 proposal for WDFW acquisitions within the Chehalis River Basin in Region 6. The proposal would add lands to the Davis Creek Unit of the Scatter Creek Wildlife Area.

**West Rocky Prairie Wildlife Area Restoration:** Under the direction of South Puget Sound Wildlife Area Manager Lowery, Biologists Cook, Tveten and Gill have been collaborating with crews from DNR to brush cut the perimeter of ten proposed burn units ranging in size from two

to nine acres. On Sept. 25, crews from Center for Natural Lands Management and WDFW combined forces again to implement a successful prescribed fire on each burn unit. Fire fighters broke up into well-coordinated teams: flames are ignited by perimeter and interior crews, while holding teams follow up with water to contain flames. Biologist Gill and Randolph patrolled for smoke to minimize impacts to neighbors. Over 37 acres of the wildlife area received this critical restoration treatment designed to reduce exotic invasive vegetation (e.g. Scotch broom) and enhance native prairie habitat. Plans are being developed to augment the next phases of restoration treatments.



*Wildlife Area Manager Lowery and Biologists Cook and Tveten combine forces to set fire and extinguish flames*



*Within minutes of starting the fire, the flames die back once fuels are consumed*

## 5) Providing Education and Outreach

**Washington Outdoor Women’s (WOW) Workshop:** Biologist Ament participated in the WOW Workshop at the Lazy F Camp near Ellensburg Sept. 13 through 15, 2019. This was the 22 year for the workshop and the first time it had been held at this camp location. Over 130 women from Washington and a few other states attended the event, 65 percent of whom were new to WOW. Biologist Ament began serving as an instructor at the workshop in 1998. There

was lovely weather for the weekend with only a light rain on Sunday morning. Biologist Ament taught Wildlife ID and Awareness. Port Gamble Tribe Biologist Godbolt offered to assist again at WOW this year. She was a tremendous help with unloading/loading trailer, setting-up/taking down both the display booth and the wildlife trail. The wildlife trail had 24 stations where participants had to identify what wildlife species had been present. Fresh samples (scat and hair) were obtained from various species for use on the trail. A dead road killed weasel, sharp shinned hawk (died from window strike), and a few dead bats collected for WNS were also used creatively on the trail. The trail was thoroughly enjoyed by the students in her class and several women expressed their appreciation for the effort devoted to establishing the realistic outdoor experience. An unplanned highlight during the trail hike was when the group encountered a large rattlesnake that was in the grass by Station 20 (with cougar scat and hair). Numerous other participants and the WOW staff members expressed their sincere appreciation for the display that Biologist Ament brought to the workshop. The weekend workshop is a tremendous amount of work, but Biologist Ament finds it greatly rewarding to help women learn and appreciate the diverse wildlife species of the state. It was wonderful to have ten women from WDFW present at WOW this year (most ever)!



*WDFW Display for all WOW participants to enjoy*



*Students search for evidence of a black bear at Station 16 (scat, hair and clawed at stump)*



*Students express their excitement when they locate the weasel at Station 7*



*The rattlesnake that was NOT planted along the wildlife trail near Station 20*

**Dungeness River Festival:** Biologist Ament participated in the Dungeness River Festival on Sept. 27. She was very pleased to have assistance from Fish Program staff members Larry Bennett and Ryan Ollerman. Larry assisted with working at the booth all day and helped with take down. Ryan helped with take down and was willing to help transport display items to and from the center. Over 1000 middle school students from Sequim and Chimacum, along with private and home school students, attended the festival. The general public was also welcome to attend. The students had to ask a question about the river health and each had to have a booklet initialized at each booth. Rachel Blomker from Public Affairs kindly provided endangered species wildlife cards, bat stickers, carabineers, and pens that that were distributed. As usual, the mounted cougar from the regional office was quite the attention getter at the booth. Pelts and other items from the Region 6 outreach trunk were enjoyed by the students. The wildlife track boards with rubber scat and track samples were very popular with the kids. A substantial supply of various agency brochures were available at the booth – hunting/fishing pamphlets, personalize license plate info, and other information. The weather was quite pleasant for the event. All interactions were very positive and many students stated the WDFW had the best booth of all.



*Students at WDFW booth appreciate being able to respectfully touch and handle items*



*Mounted cougar from the Regional Office*



*Team River Festival 2019*