Wildlife Program – Bi-weekly Report

August 16 to August 31, 2020

DIVERSITY DIVISION

Nothing for this installment.

SCIENCE DIVISION

Nothing for this installment.

HUNTER EDUCATION

Nothing for this installment.

LANDS DIVISION

Nothing for this installment.

GAME DIVISION

Nothing for this installment.

REGION 1

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Deer Herd Composition Surveys: Biologists Atamian and Lowe conducted road-based deer surveys in GMUs 124 and 127 to count and classify does, fawns, and bucks prior to hunting season. Sex and age ratios from these surveys are one of the metrics used to monitor populations. Surveys will be repeated in September.

Two white-tailed deer bucks in GMU 124

Forest Grouse: Biologist Lowe replaced the old signs on forest grouse collection barrels with new signs that were printed to include images of a wing and tail. Both are needed to identify the sex of ruffed grouse, a widely harvested species, and tails have rarely been submitted by hunters. Biologist Lowe set up barrels at three locations in Spokane County ahead of the September 1 season opener (Thompson Creek, Inland Northwest Wildlife Council, and the regional office). This is the fifth year WDFW is asking hunters across the state to submit these samples to help us obtain species, age, and sex data on harvested birds.

Forest grouse sample collection barrel at Inland Empire Paper access gate in GMU 124

Bighorn Sheep: Gavin Cotterill continued working on sightability models for bighorn sheep. These will be added to a shiny app that runs mark-resight models for bighorn sheep ground surveys. He also continued to monitor bighorn sheep lamb survival in the Asotin Creek herd. District Biologist Wik captured two bighorn ewes from the Tucannon herd this week to place collars on them. One ewe received a GPS/satellite collar, replacing her nonworking GPS/satellite collar. The other ewe received a very high frequency (VHF) collar.

An immobilized bighorn ewe is lying in the alfalfa near this group

W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area Bighorn Sheep: Kari Dingman located the bighorn sheep and submitted the locations through Survey123. Kari and Tom Jensen assisted District Biologist Paul Wik with darting and collaring ewes.

Bighorn ewe that was darted and her non-working telemetry collar replaced with a working collar

Natural Resource Worker Jensen with a bighorn ewe that was darted and fitted with a telemetry collar

Deer Surveys: Biologists Wik and Vekasy continued conducting deer surveys throughout the district for August buck ratios. The cooling weather has been much appreciated. Antler sizes on both deer and elk are noticeably larger than average, probably due to excellent forage conditions this spring and early summer, which has also been reflected in local crop harvests.

Monarch Surveys: Biologist Atamian completed the second survey of the Twin Lakes site where monarch breeding was documented in 2016. There was no monarch activity noted at the historic site nor at four other milkweed patches checked in the area. Milkweed is almost completely done flowering and most of the patches are being taken over by common teasel.

Left: the one flowering milkweed plant observed during the survey. Right: a patch of milkweed being taken over by common teasel (the tall brown club-like plant).

Grizzly Bear Monitoring: Wildlife Biologist Turnock assisted Kalispell biologists with the deployment of hair corrals in the Selkirk recovery region.

Livestock Depredation Investigation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist O'Connor assisted in the depredation investigation of an injured calf in Stevens County at a local cattle producer's private residence. The calf displayed injuries consistent with recently confirmed wolf depredations from the same area near the Cedar Lake pasture. The calf's injuries were determined to have occurred five to seven days prior to the investigation. The investigation concluded that this was a Confirmed Wolf Depredation within the Leadpoint pack territory. New hire O'Connor wrote the final livestock depredation report for this investigation.

2) <u>Providing Recreation Opportunities</u>

Hunting Access: Natural Resource Technician Fish worked on Hunting access contracts and posting in District 1. Fish spoke with landowners in District 1 about WDFW hunting access programs, worked on mapping recently enrolled hunting access properties, and talked to three fall turkey hunters about possible hunting opportunities in the district. Biologist Baarstad worked on Hunt by Reservation schedules for District 1, responded to several calls from hunters seeking early fall hunting opportunities, and updated hunting access contracts. Baarstad contacted a Ferry

County landowner interested in enrolling approximately 200 acres in the Hunting by Written Permission program.

New Employee Onboarding: Access Manager Daniel Dziekan welcomed a new temporary seasonal employee, who will be working with him through November. Natural Resource Worker Uriah Meeks will be traveling to water access sites with Dziekan to help with routine maintenance activities, as this year has seen a large increase in users, requiring more litter removal and restroom cleaning. Natural Resource Worker Meeks will also be assisting with catch-up on deferred maintenance resulting from the state land closure in spring, as well as minor improvements and beautification.

Meeks brushing out the driveway at Fan Lake

Badger Lake Fire: The Badger Lake Fire broke out early this week south of Spokane, in the vicinity of Badger Lake Water Access Site. Fire crew members requested Access Manager Dziekan post “Badger Lake Closed” signs, due to constant interference from members of the public. Folks were driving through the active wildlife boundary to launch their boats at the Badger Lake Access Site, which was being used for fire crew staging. Dziekan fabricated signs and placed them the next day. Fire crews finished mop-up late in the week, and Dziekan and Natural Resource Worker Meeks removed the signs and inspected the access site. They found limited damage. There was some burned vegetation at the entry off Badger Lake Road, but none at the launch area. One pine tree was heavily burned at its base and will likely need to be cut down.

Left: Badger Lake Access Site entry. Right: fire-damaged ponderosa pine.

Road Improvement: Pend Oreille County Road Department completed their permitted use of WDFW's gravel source on the West Branch LeClerc Creek Wildlife Area (WLA), for road improvement work on the West Branch LeClerc Creek Road. Road improvement provides better access for users of the WLA as well as residents in the vicinity. County staff members improved the pit site post-work and an approved restoration seed mix was applied, the pit was re-sloped for increased soil stability and boulders were added to discourage hill climbers from tearing up the slopes.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Fawn Caught in Fence: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman responded to a call about a fawn that had its leg caught in a chain-link fence and could not free itself. Westerman along with the help from a neighbor was able to remove the fawn. There were no broken bones but there was significant tissue damage. The deer was released on sight and will hopefully make a full recovery.

Nuisance Moose: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman along with Spurbeck responded to a call about a moose and her two calves hanging around causing damage. Westerman and Spurbeck were able to harass the moose off the property and talked to the owner about removing attractants. Westerman swung by the same house the next day after a survey and the moose were not there.

Grape Vineyard Deer Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Kolb met with a Walla Walla County vineyard manager to discuss on-going deer and bird damage. Although the nearly 400-acre vineyard employs significant non-lethal abatement measures (e.g., double row electric fences, kestrel boxes, reduction of cover between crop rows) damage issues are still occurring. Damage permits were issued early in the budding season and utilized. In addition to current measures, Kolb loaned a Zon Gun, distributed cracker shells, and issued two damage permits to mitigate current conflict issues.

Report of Injured Livestock: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Kolb and Officer Sabo investigated a report by a Columbia County producer of injured livestock on private pasture. The 5,500-acre private pasture was reconnoitered with the herd manager, but no injured livestock was located; however, wolf activity, to include vocalizations, was noted in parts of the pasture. Later in the week, Wildlife Conflict Specialists Wade and Kolb brought supplies from the Clarkston Office (fox lights and stakes) and offered sound recommendations from experience on large pasture non-lethal measure employment strategies. During the fox light installation, the herd manager pointed out a calf to Kolb that appeared to have scabbing/scaring near the groin area, but the calf was unable to be caught to investigate further. Additionally, one adult wolf was observed at 75 yards on the pasture, and vocalizations commenced for approximately five minutes immediately after the sighting. Kolb will continue to work with the herd manager to identify additional opportunities to increase the effectiveness of non-lethal abatement measures. The producer has entered into a data-sharing agreement to assist with directing high demand/low-density non-lethal measures.

Wolf track (Left); FoxLight installation near a livestock water source (Right)

Bear Aware Presentations: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett presented information about black and grizzly bear biology, conflict avoidance, safety, and safe usage of bear spray to participants. Over 60 attendees were provided bear spray for safe recreation. This presentation series has been on-going for the last four years in conjunction with the Washington State University (WSU) Extension Office and Defenders of Wildlife.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Samsill responded to two bear calls throughout the week. One bear call involved an elderly and disabled couple with a black bear getting into their garbage. Samsill attempted to educate the couple about bear awareness and how to properly secure and store garbage. Although the couple insisted that the bear needed to be shot or trapped, Samsill neutralized the situation and explained that WDFW would not euthanize or translocate the bear under these circumstances. The couple agreed to accept a bear-proof garbage container temporarily to mitigate the bear conflict. Samsill prepared a bear-proof container for the couple and will deliver it next week.

The other call involved a woman who has been seeing a young bear around her property regularly and wanted it trapped and translocated. Samsill explained that WDFW does not trap bears as a result of mere bear sightings. Both parties discussed ways in which to prevent future bear conflicts.

4) Conserving Natural Areas

Rattlesnake fire near the Wooten Wildlife Area: Lightning started a fire near the Rattlesnake Trailhead in the Panjab area this week. The fire is currently over 250 acres and burning on United States Forest Service (USFS) lands. USFS brought in a contractor with heavy equipment to repair the approaches to the washed-out bridge at Little Tucannon. The contractor will also begin clearing slides on the road to enable firefighter access. The fire is just creeping in brush and downed trees. The storm that passed through the area started multiple fires in Southeast Washington and Northeast Oregon so USFS fire crews are stretched thin, and more fires are expected to pop up as the warm temperatures continue. Kari Dingman worked with USFS to close Campground 4 to stage heavy equipment in. Kari worked through the weekend assisting USFS with setting up a fire camp at the Wooten HQ buildings. A type 3 incident management team will be assuming control of the fire on Monday.

Rattlesnake Fire

Rattlesnake Fire from Campground #4 on August 21, 2020

W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area Fire Camp: Kari Dingman has been assisting with the logistics of filling Curl Lake to pull water from with the helicopters, setting up the Incident Command Post, public outreach, public meetings, and anything else the fire team needs assistance with.

The Incident Command Post at the W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area Headquarters on August 27, 2020

Wildfire damage on Private Lands: Private Lands Biologist Gaston received a call from a landowner enrolled in the Hunt by Reservation Program. A wildfire had occurred over the previous weekend and burned some of his spring wheat and most of his Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) fields which contained most of his hunting habitat. The landowner would like help to determine how to best rebuild the wildlife habitat in the CRP fields which were burned. Private Lands Biologist Gaston did a quick look over the burned areas and will discuss some ideas with the landowner once harvest is completed. The property will have minimal hunting this year due to few areas being available to hunt which weren't burned.

Boundary sign on Hunt by Reservation Only property in Whitman County after a wildfire had burned part of the field

Property enrolled in Hunt by Reservation Only with most of the field burned by wildfire

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Nothing for this installment.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Access Area Temp-Hire: Biologist Woodall welcomed former intern and new hire Kodie Wight. Kodie was our University of Idaho intern a few years ago and did a great job for us. Woodall and Wight worked together completing the necessary new hire paperwork, policy reviews, introductions, and tour of the work area. She will be filling the temporary access area cleanup assisting Tech Heimgartner. Heimgartner and Wight worked together for the rest of the week with Greg providing the specific training for the position and each access site.

7) Other

Nothing for this installment.

REGION 2

Nothing for this installment.

REGION 3

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

District 8 Assistant Wildlife Biologist Oates did an emergent count for a bat maternity colony near Ellensburg and counted 401 little browns and Yuma myotis.

District 8 Wildlife Biologist Bernatowicz worked with Waterfowl Specialist Wilson on duck banding. So far, only the Moxee site has produced any birds. The total to date is under 150 banded. Typically, we've banded ~500 by September 1. Not as many ducks are around, and they are either not utilizing bait (Sunnyside) or are finding their way out of the traps (Moxee). Biologist Bernatowicz received instruction from Manger Kaelber on using the Marsh Master and re-mowed around the Sunnyside trap. Due to some issues with water levels, vegetation regrew fast in the cell. The vegetation was probably not the entire reason ducks are not utilizing the bait.

Ducks in the trap at 6:39 AM and mostly gone at 7:34 AM

Sunnyside Trap Before and After Mowing

District 8 Wildlife Biologist Bernatowicz surveyed for Monarchs along Highway Interstate-82 near Sunnyside. The site was much drier this year and nectar sources were minimal. Bernatowicz re-surveyed an area in the Ahtanum that was first surveyed one month ago. Plenty of bumblebees found, but low species diversity.

Fairly Dry Historic Monarch Site

Bumble Bee Survey Site

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

The past few years, District 8 has offered either mentored pheasant hunts or show-up and we'll release birds to make more efficient use of birds. WDFW cannot offer mentored hunts this year due to Covid-19 but will ask people to register to hunt Sunnyside and Cottonwoods. Prior to the mentored hunts, few kids showed up to hunt and often couldn't find birds released the evening before. With school sports canceled, there may be a better turn out than in the past. The idea is to adjust the number of birds released to expected participation.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Manager Babik worked with the Capital Asset Management Program (CAMP) crew to place barriers on all the non-green dot roads in the Lego-man and Section 7 acquisitions. These roads continue to see a lot of use and abuse, and several have Road Management and Abandonment Plan (RMAP) concerns. Babik notified the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) of a new user-built road off Manastash that accesses the L.T. Murray and is working with the USFS to address the drive around that accesses Shell Rock road. Both agencies agreed to find solutions to these issues this fall. WDFW officers were notified of all the new barriers.

Equipment and a dwindling pile of boulders help protect habitat

New gate along a non-green dot road

Barriers along a popular non-green dot road where users had filled in the existing tank trap

Manager Babik installed "No Unauthorized Vehicle signs" on some heavily used non-green dot roads off Shell Rock Road

Natural Resource Technician Blore picked up the remnants of a very large party in the Cabin Creek area as well as replaced two emergency restriction signs. Blore found contact information at the party site and turned it over to law enforcement. An adjacent landowner called to express his gratitude.

Makeshift bar in Cabin Creek

The trash from a Cabin Creek party with fresh ash in the fire pit

Abandoned camp along Manastash Creek

Manager Babik cleaned up a camp along Manastash Creek. The camp had been abandoned for several weeks. Feces and toilet paper were left unburied along the creek. Additionally, Babik reported another potentially abandoned camper to law enforcement. Taneum Creek has been a magnet for trash.

Potentially abandoned camper along Taneum Creek

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Wildlife area staff members have been informed of elk crossing the cattle guard on Cowiche Mill Road. A closer investigation confirmed the report. Assistant Manager Berry will continue to collaborate with Conflict Specialist Wetzel on mitigation measures.

Elk activity is high in most crop areas in District 8. Three landowners indicated they wanted to file crop claims in the last two weeks. None have filed to date. Eight elk were taken with WDFW issued landowner permits, mostly in the Park Creek and Umtanum areas. Forty-four damage permits have been issued since August 15.

There have been three cougar incidents involving three dead sheep and one dead beef calf in District 8 in recent weeks. Three or more cougars are suspected to be involved.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Oak Creek Wildlife Area Manager Mackey monitored and continued communications with the seller of the Bear Canyon Parcel prior to closing. WDFW closed the sale on this 100-acre acquisition on August 31.

Oak Creek Forester Hartmann visited future prescribed burn areas in the Oak Creek drainage with South-Central Burn Unit Manager Delozier. Forester Hartmann also flagged pre-commercial thinning units in the Gold Creek drainage and surveyed the 2016 Rock Creek Fire. Ponderosa pine and western larch seedlings planted in severely burned portions of the fire are growing well, natural regeneration was observed, and understory grasses/herbs/shrubs are fully established.


A pre-commercial thinning area at Gold Creek and a high-country traffic jam


Larch seedling planted in 2019 (left) and ponderosa pine planted 2016 (right) in a high-severity patch of the 2016 Rock Creek Fire


Road to Recovery: Natural seedling clump of larch/ponderosa pine/grand fir (left) and new aspen sprouts (right)

Mosaic conditions observed across the fire. Portions of the fire had almost 100% tree survival (left) and others had almost 100% mortality (right). Other areas had a range of conditions. The variation provides unique habitat value to wildlife.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Winegeart released biocontrol on spotted knapweed at the L.T. Murray's Cabin Creek unit. The insects were released at the edge of WDFW property in the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) powerline right-of-way at the top of a steep hill.

Cyphocleonus achates biocontrol for spotted knapweed at Cabin Creek

Assistant Manager Winegeart ran a transect assessing Ventenata on the Gress site. There was very little change from the previous year, but the information gathered will be valuable once a restoration plan is initiated on the site.

Restoration site

Sunnyside Wildlife Area Manager Kaelber, Natural Resource Technicians Rogers and Wascisin, and Assistant Manager Ferguson have been busy mowing out overgrown areas in the Rice Paddies and Haystack Ponds wetlands of the Sunnyside Unit. Sections of the wetlands had been heavily overgrown with cattails, reed canary grass, and other vegetation.

Assistant Manager Ferguson, Natural Resource Technician Wascisin, and Manager Kaelber spent several days carrying out repair work on the Snipe's reserve lift pump structure. The galvanized culvert pipe in the lower end of the structure has rotted out to the degree that gravel and soil are entering the structure and getting sucked up by the lift pump. This resulted in costly repair of the pump. Ferguson, Wascisin, and Kaelber bought aluminized steel sheets, cut out sections to fit the pipe, and bolted the sections inside the pipe with solid stainless-steel lag bolts. The new lining extends approximately five feet up the inside of the pipe completely covering the rotted section and another section that is starting to rust. The crew also sealed the floor of the structure with a 2-inch layer of concrete. It is hoped the fix will last at least a few years. The lift pump will be reinstalled and begin pumping water in mid-September.

Repaired section of lift pump structure showing new steel lining over corroded areas

Haystack pond prior to mowing

Haystack pond after mowing

Windmill Phase 3 wetland soil preparation from July

Phase 3 wetland with Buckwheat in bloom and millet during late August

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Nothing this installment.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

The L.T. Murray Wildlife Area shop is getting a major upgrade—running water! Staff members worked with the WLA shop owner to install city water and drainpipe inside the shop. This will make clean up after mixing chemicals much easier and make hand washing in the winter tolerable. The only running water was from an outside frost-free hydrant.

Ditch for water and drainpipe at WLA shop

Water inside the shop!

7) <u>Other</u>

Nothing this installment.

<u>REGION 4</u>

Nothing for this installment.

REGION 5

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Bat Surveys: Biologist Wickhem conducted two late-season maternity colony exit counts with the help of Biologist Stephens and staff members from the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. The first survey took place at a USFS building outside Cougar and counted 216 bats. The second count took place at a private barn in Ridgefield where 151 bats were observed exiting the barn. Acoustic recordings were taken at each site, and the files will be analyzed to determine what species reside in each building. Staff members around the state will continue following up on public reports of bat colonies around the state as a means of documenting maternity colony locations and identifying sites that could be used in the future for white-nose syndrome monitoring. If you know the location of a bat colony or find a sick or dead bat, please report it here.

Forest Service staff members assist with a bat exit-count

Roosting bats in the barn rafters before the survey

Bat Recon Survey: Bat Specialist Tobin and Biologist Stephens conducted a bat survey at a century-old apartment building in Centralia. Tenants of the building have reported seeing several dozen bats exiting the building around dusk. During this survey, only three bats were observed. Surveyors will try to return next year earlier in the summer before the bats disperse. The reporting party had collected a dead bat two days prior and Bat Specialist Tobin was able to identify it as a juvenile big brown bat.

Apartment building in Centralia where bats roost

Search for Western Pond Turtles: Biologist Wickhem followed up on a report of potential western pond turtles in Clark County. Western pond turtles are a state endangered species, and currently, all known populations are closely monitored by WDFW. Two Clark County vegetation management staff members gave Wickhem a tour of the locations where they have been seeing turtles and asked for help with identification. On this visit, the team only observed western painted turtles, which are native and commonly found in freshwater throughout Washington. Thankfully, they did not encounter any red-eared sliders, which are non-native and can outcompete native turtles for food and resources. The Clark County staff members were given tips on how to identify western pond turtles and will be sending WDFW photos of future turtle sightings.

One of many painted turtles seen basking while searching for western pond turtles

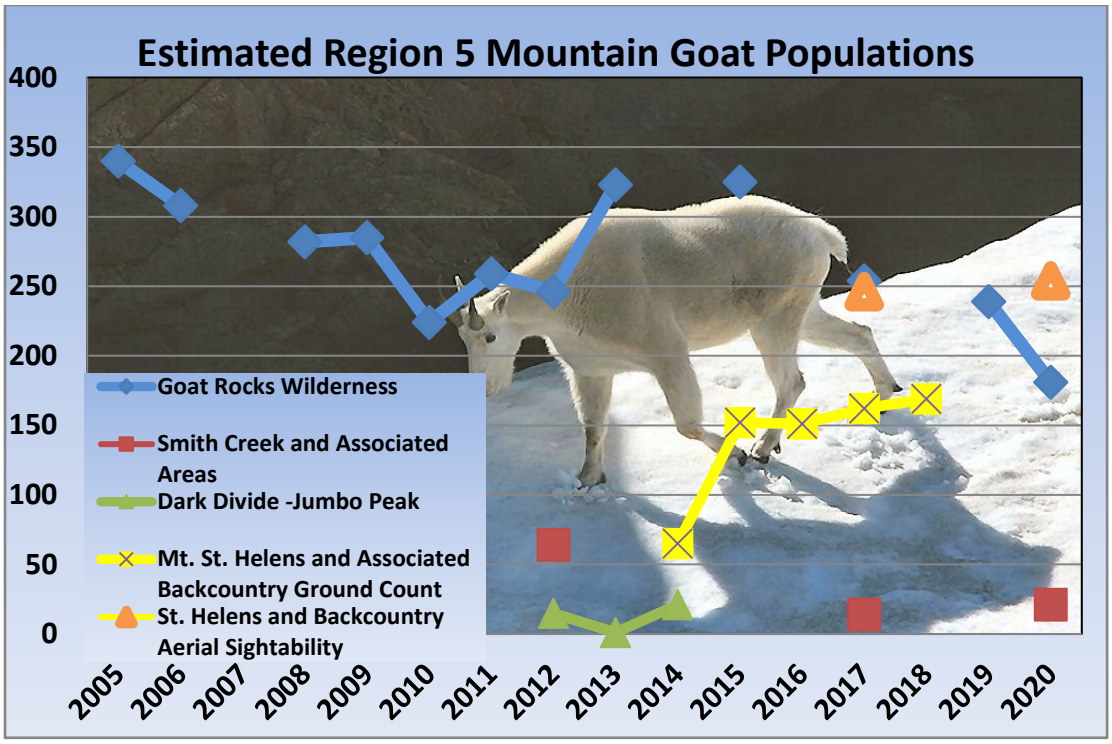
Klickitat County Monarch Butterfly Surveys: This month, Biologist Wickhem conducted five monarch butterfly surveys at known milkweed patches in Klickitat County with the help of Regional Program Manager Jonker and Volunteer Flick. Monarch populations across the western United States have dramatically decreased over the last few years, and WDFW biologists throughout Eastern Washington have been tasked with resurveying known monarch breeding locations to look for adult monarchs and new evidence of breeding (eggs, larvae, or pupae). Despite surveying thousands of milkweed plants, the team was unable to find any monarchs, which echoed the findings of surveys earlier this season. We are hoping our counterparts throughout Eastern Washington had more success this season!

Biologist Wickhem and Volunteer Flick wade through invasive weeds while searching for milkweed

An always-dedicated Volunteer Flick going to great lengths to reach an isolated milkweed patch

Other insects enjoying the flowering narrow-leaved milkweed (Asclepias fascicularis)

Mountain Goat Population Surveys: Biologists Stephens, Wickhem, and Holman conducted mountain goat surveys of the Goat Rocks, Smith Creek, and Mount Saint Helens populations. A total of 423 goats were counted during the two-day survey period. Sightability corrected estimates calculated a total of 254 goats in the Mount Saint Helens and Mount Margaret backcountry population, 181 goats in the Goat Rocks populations, and 21 goats in the Smith Creek units. Region 5 wildlife staff members are grateful for the skilled flying of Pilot Hagerman and the after-hours flight following of customer service specialists, Rainwaters, Koppi, and Smith.



The crew with Covid-19 (personal protection equipment) PPE

Mountain Goat Nanny and kid pair in Smith Creek

Flying and Spirit Lake

Mourning Dove Banding: Biologist Stephens began trapping and banding doves this week. WDFW biologists band doves in late summer prior to the start of the hunting season. The band recoveries reported by hunters aid the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in assessing the population of mourning doves. More information on the mourning dove population status can be found here.

Looking at the wing molt allows biologist to age mourning doves as juvenile or adult

Olympic National Park to North Cascades Mountain Goat Translocation: Biologist Holman joined WDFW staff members from Regions 4 and 6 to assist on the mountain goat translocation project. The effort involves capturing non-native goats within Olympic National Park and relocating them to suitable habitat in the North Cascades where they are native but populations are below habitat capacity. The goats are captured by a combination of aerial netting and darting, transported in refrigerated trucks, and then released by flying them into alpine habitat with a helicopter. The logistics of the project are nearly overwhelming but Region 6 District Biologist Murphie and Ungulate Specialist Moore have done a fantastic job of leading the WDFW aspects of the captures, transports, and releases. More broadly the project is a cooperative effort among Olympic National Park, WDFW, the United States Forest Service, and DNR. For more information about the project read here.

(Left) Goat Processing and (Right) flying to release in the Cascades

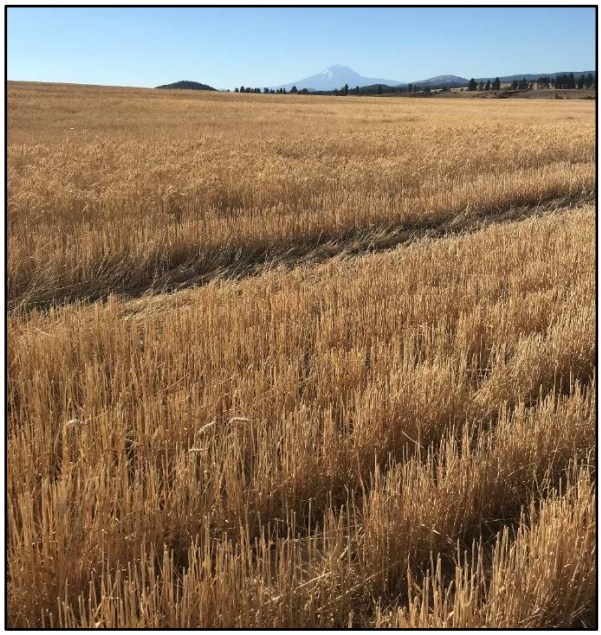
Boxed Goats

Fridge Truck

2) <u>Providing Recreation Opportunities</u>

Wheat Harvest on Pheasant Release Site in Klickitat County: The Goldendale Hatchery Unit is the best known of the pheasant release sites in Klickitat County. WDFW manages the upland areas to favor pheasant hunting opportunities through an agricultural lease on the property. This year, wheat was grown on the fields south of Spring Creek. In accordance with the lease agreement, the farmer left a portion of the wheat standing in the fields to provide food and cover for pheasants.

Wheat Harvest 2020



After Wheat Harvest 2020

Cowlitz Wildlife Area Information Kiosk Installations: Wildlife Area Manager Vanderlip and Tacoma Power Natural Resource Coordinator Russell installed two kiosks on the Wildlife Area. These and other kiosks are being installed in locations where the public accesses the Wildlife Area. The kiosks will provide relevant information such as rules, location maps, and other guidance the public may find helpful during their visit.

Wildlife Area Kiosk Installations on the Kiona Unit

The Kosmos Unit – the "Old Highway Gate"

Increasing Private Land Access in Skamania County: Private Lands Biologist Ferris met with Weyerhaeuser timber company to discuss inclusion of nearly 6,000 new acres of land for the Private Lands Access Program. This represents the first significant addition of public hunting access acres to the program in this County.

Increasing Private Land Access in Cowlitz County: Private Lands Biologist Ferris met with a landowner in the Woodland bottoms area and evaluated the land for inclusion in the Private Lands Access Program. Increasing public access sites in this area this season would encourage renewed hunter interest in upland game bird hunting.

Repairing Damaged Kiosks in Klickitat County: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen assisted Private Lands Biologist Ferris to repair a heavily damaged hunter information kiosk located at a popular Private Lands Access property, Western Pacific Timber (WPT). WPT has over 65,000 acres available for public hunting under the Feel Free to Hunt program managed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife. In addition, Ferris added Private Lands Program signage where needed.

Repaired Private Lands Access information kiosk in Klickitat

Private Lands Biologist Ferris Adding County Program Signage

Promoting Private Lands Access Program: Private Lands Biologist Ferris assisted Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey on two landowner visits in Lewis County. Ferris answered landowner questions and promoted the Private Lands Access Program open enrollment and new payment rate. Ferris encourages hunting as an effective tool for wildlife management.

Langsdorf Landing and Kress Lake Access Sites: Unfortunately, continued graffiti is occurring at Langsdorf Landing where Access staff Rhodes and McKinlay nearly have a daily task of having to paint over. However, Rhodes and McKinlay continue their hard work and were able to still complete some positive painting at Kress Lake Access where some “no parking” spots were needed and some touch up to the ADA spots.

Graffiti at Langsdorf Landing

Kress Lake touch-ups

Region Access Help: A huge thank you to Region 5 Customer Service staff members Smith and Rainwater as well as Regional Director Lee and Administrative Assistant Varley for helping Access staff Rhodes and McKinlay with their access site service routes. The additional hands helped picked up a lot of trash and a few hundred cigarette butts! The help was greatly appreciated. Thank you!

Regional Director Lee helping Access Manager Rhodes

Customer Service staff member Rainwaters picking up trash

Vancouver Lake: Shillapoo Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Assistant Manager Hawk helped access staff members Rhodes and McKinlay load a boat that was left on the Vancouver lakeshore. This was a 1,000-pound load to be hauled to the dump.

Loading an abandoned boat at Vancouver Lake

Access Sites: Access staff members Rhodes and McKinlay continue to see and must address unprecedented use and vandalism of access sites, including excessive trash, graffiti, sunken abandoned boats, and destruction of property. In addition, the vault toilet at Martins Access Sites has been closed due to vandalism that may have compromised the unit. During the evaluation of the unit, it became apparent that large boulders were dropped into the vault toilet which will entail the need for a specialized cleanup effort. The message of taking care of these sites is paramount. Please respect and care for these sites and remember to “pack it in and pack it out.”

Trash, vandalism, and abandoned boat at Barbers and Martin access sites

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Owl Release: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen released a great horned owl at the initial site of capture after it was successfully rehabilitated at the Rowena Wildlife Clinic. The owl had suffered a wing injury a few weeks prior after it was found entangled in a barbed-wire fence.

Rehabilitated owl ready for release

Released owl back at the site of the initial rescue

Deer Capture: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and Officer Whipple responded to a report of a deer with an object lodged in its mouth. The deer was a regular visitor to the reporting party's yard. The deer was in poor condition and appeared unable to eat. Several leaves were sticking out of the deer's mouth, and it did not seem able to swallow. Jacobsen was able to dart the deer and immobilize it. A substantial amount of partially chewed plant material was removed from the deer's cheeks and rest of the mouth area, but no foreign objects were found. It is unknown why the deer appeared to have difficulty swallowing. Jacobsen and Officer Whipple will monitor for additional reports of this deer to see how it is fairing.

Deer with debris lodged in its mouth

Immobilized deer after the plant material was removed – Photo by Reporting Party

Elk Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by a landowner in Klickitat County concerning elk damage to his hay crop. Jacobsen will meet with the landowner next week and enroll him in a Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement (DPCA).

Bobcat Concerns: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen met with a landowner in Skamania County who had several concerns regarding bobcats that had been visiting the property over the past year. A bobcat tried catching one of the landowner's cats (unsuccessfully) and had recently killed a chicken. Advice was given.

Cougar Concerns: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by a jogger who believed he observed a cougar along a trail in Skamania County. Advice on recreating in cougar country was provided. The jogger plans to purchase bear spray to keep with him in the future. Jacobsen was also contacted by a landowner who believed a cougar had killed several of his chickens in Klickitat County. After visiting with the landowner, it was not possible to determine what had happened to the missing chickens. Jacobsen advised the landowner to discontinue the practice of free-ranging his chickens in the woods and underbrush. Advice was given on how to create a suitable and secure enclosure for the chickens.

Bear Concerns: A homeowner contacted Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen to report that a sow and her cub had been frequenting his plum trees on a near-daily basis. The homeowner was concerned about the safety of the children who lived down the street. Jacobsen provided advice on living in bear country and recommended that the homeowner pick up all the dropped fruit, as well as harvest the rest of the fruit from the trees if he wanted to discourage the bears from returning. Information on electric fencing options was also provided.

Trapped Hawk: A warehouse owner contacted Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen regarding a large hawk that was trapped inside the warehouse. Advice was provided on keeping the warehouse doors open and lights off. The hawk is believed to have left the building later that day.

Urban Deer: A concerned homeowner contacted Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen regarding a group of deer that had become accustomed to humans. The homeowner believed a neighbor was feeding the deer and was concerned that the deer were starting to become too comfortable around people. Jacobsen provided advice on hazing the deer and explained the numerous issues associated with having tame deer around houses and humans. The homeowner will be in touch with the homeowners' association president to help Jacobsen share useful information on deer with the neighborhood.

Injured Domestic Pigeon: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen fielded a call regarding a pigeon (rock dove) that was walking around a parking lot. The pigeon was banded and appeared to be a domestic carrier or racing pigeon. Advice was provided on contacting animal control to take possession of the bird and on how to look up the band numbers to locate the possible owner of the bird.

Elk Damage to Oats: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen contacted a landowner in Klickitat County who had been experiencing elk damage to his oat crop. After deploying Jacobsen's portable wildlife hazing device, the landowner also added a strobe light and radio to the setup, which seemed to keep the elk away until the oat could be harvested. However, the landowner has begun to observe elk damage to his second planting of oats and cover crop. The landowner re-deployed the hazing device, which will hopefully keep the elk out of the field.

Elk Damage to Crops and Fences: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen fielded multiple reports of elk damage to crops and fences in Klickitat County. Fencing options and elk hazing options were discussed to help address the issues.

Bear Damage to Cherry Orchard: The manager for a commercial fruit orchard in Klickitat County contacted Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen regarding extensive bear damage to a block of his cherry trees. The manager reported damage to over 160 trees in the block. Jacobsen confirmed that damage to the trees. Even though most of the cherries had already been harvested, the leftover cherries proved to be too attractive for the bears to resist. Several limbs were broken off trees, the bark peeled off from some when the bears climbed the trees, and some trees were completely pushed over in the middle of the block to access the cherries. Advice on public hunting of bears on the adjacent public land was provided. Jacobsen will also work to locate bear hunters interested in filling their tags in that area.

Toppled cherry trees in the orchard where bears had attempted to get to the cherries

Large bear track next to Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen's boot print

Goat Depredations: A landowner in Klickitat County contacted WDFW to report that her goat had been killed by a wild animal sometime during the night. The goat had been staked out in a brushy area and left out overnight. During the middle of the night, the landowner heard a commotion and went out to find the goat dead amongst the brush. When the landowner returned the following morning to remove the carcass, she observed a bear feeding on the goat. The bear took the goat carcass up into the woods, out of sight, and proceeded to consume the rest of the goat. As the report came in several days after the goat depredation occurred, the wildlife conflict specialist was not able to examine the carcass to determine the cause of death. Advice was provided on securing livestock at night in case the landowner decides to acquire more livestock in the future.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen responded to a report of a cougar depredation on a goat in Skamania County. The goat was killed around noon, a short distance away from the landowner's residence. The landowner observed the goat being killed by the cougar but was unable to scare the cougar off before the goat died. A houndsman was deployed and the cougar was located and removed within 50 yards of the goat carcass.

Goat killed by a cougar

General Wildlife Concerns: A worried landowner in Clark County had just moved from the Vancouver area to a more rural area of the county and noticed some suspicious animal scat and beds in her new garden that she believed came from a bear. After examining a photo of the scat, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was able to confirm that the scat came from a deer (it was not in the "pellet" form that most people are used to, but more of a clumped shape). Advice was given on living with wildlife, and Jacobsen provided the landowner with several resources concerning animals that she may encounter around her new residence.

Bobcat Kitten: Officer Myers received a report of a trapped bobcat kitten in Camas. The details were fuzzy, but someone had captured the kitten in their chicken coop, which led to a family dispute and the kitten was given to a friend to "deal with." The friend brought the kitten to WDFW and either didn't know or would not say where the cat was trapped. It was only about five to seven pounds and far too young to survive on its own, so Myers, Biologist Wickhem, and Conflict Specialist Jacobsen devised a plan to get the cat to PAWS Wildlife Rehabilitation Center north of Seattle. Wickhem, with the help of Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey and Enforcement Sergeant Zuchlewski, was able to shuttle the young cat to PAWS. The rehabilitators plan to keep the kitten over the winter and release it back into the wild next spring. Thanks to everyone that helped get this little cutie to the rehabilitation center! If you are experiencing conflicts between wildlife and your domestic animals, please contact your local WDFW office for advice.

Young bobcat kitten on its way to a wildlife rehab center

Bear Sightings: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen fielded bear sightings in Klickitat and Clark counties. In all cases, advice on removing bear attractants was provided to the reporting parting.

Trail Camera Check: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen checked a trail camera that he had installed at a residence where a chicken was killed by a wild animal outside its pen. After nearly a month's worth of images, no wildlife (other than rabbits) were caught on camera.

Cougar Concerns: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen visited a farm where a landowner had shot a young cougar the previous week. The cougar was approaching the calf when the landowner shot and killed it. The landowner had since placed several trail cameras around the property and detected multiple other cougars in the area. Jacobsen discussed night-penning the week-old calf and inspected the landowner's barn area, providing advice on how to reinforce the structure to protect the calf. Other deterrent measures were also discussed.

Landowner's night pen for the calf with hog-panel reinforcement installation in-progress

Stealthy Bobcat: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by a landowner who reported a large bobcat visiting their hobby farm. Jacobsen and Officer Bolton visited the residence a few weeks prior and provided recommendations on the landowner's goat/fowl pen structure and husbandry practice of locking the livestock up at night. Fortunately, the landowner implemented the recommendations and although the bobcat visited the goat/fowl pen on multiple nights since WDFW's initial visit, it was not able to gain access to the animals.

Large bobcat investigating the goat/fowl pen

Bobcat visiting the goat/fowl pen another night, one of the goats can be seen in the lower left of the photo - Photo by the landowner

Dead and Missing Goats: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by a landowner who had lost all three of their goats over the past few weeks. The landowner had already disposed of the carcasses prior to contacting Jacobsen but based on the description of the goat deaths and pictures that the landowner shared of one of the carcasses, Jacobsen determined that the goats were likely killed by a cougar. The landowners had recently sold the house and were in the process of moving out when they contacted Jacobsen. The landowners agreed to provide Jacobsen's contact info to the new future owners (who had mentioned getting goats for their new property).

Partially consumed goat that was likely killed by a cougar - Photo by the landowner

Stuck Deer: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and Officer Nelson were called out to a late-night deer rescue in Klickitat County. The deer was entangled in field fencing that a landowner had used to protect plants in his garden. The deer had stuck its head through one of the fencing squares and, as the fence was not secured to anything, the whole section of fencing came with the deer and entangled her as she struggled to escape. Jacobsen relied on his past deer-wrangling career to physically restrain the deer by pinning it to the ground while Officer Nelson cut the deer free from the fencing. After a few minutes of catching her breath, the doe was able to get up and leave on her own with minor injuries. Hopefully, the doe was able to reunite with her fawn, which was observed in the vicinity during the rescue. Jacobsen will work with the landowner soon to make changes to his landscape fencing to help prevent similar deer entanglement issues.

Deer severely entangled in fencing

Stuck Owl: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen responded to a report of an owl stuck in a fence in Klickitat County. Fortunately for the great-horned owl, some prospective property buyers and their realtor were visiting the vacant property and happened to decide to walk the fenced property boundary when they came across the owl. The owl was on a remote portion of the property that would not have been visible to any passing motorists. With the assistance of the reporting party and the realtor, Jacobsen was able to cut the owl free of the fencing, though a several-inch long section of the barbed-wire fence remained lodged in the owl's wing. Jacobsen transported the owl to Rowena Wildlife Center, where the veterinarian immediately anesthetized the owl for surgery. The vet reported that she was able to remove the fencing from the wing and that the vital flight tendon was intact. The vet believes the owl will be able to make a full recovery.

Great-horned owl stuck in barbed-wire fencing – Photo by reporting party

Great-horned owl safely in the cage - Photo by WDFW

Bear Incident in Skamania County: Private Lands Biologist Ferris assisted at the scene of a vehicular accident involving a black bear on Highway 14. Emergency services were contacted. Police and medical service arrived at the scene. The driver and passenger were not severely injured. The bear was found deceased from the impact and was retrieved from the scene by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

A black bear struck by a vehicle was found deceased at the scene

Elk Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey met with many landowners throughout Lewis and Cowlitz counties that experience elk damage to agriculture. Many DPCAs were renewed for the upcoming year. Aubrey also met with landowners who have not previously had a DPCA with WDFW and spoke with them about their specific issues and laid out some options for the landowners going forward. Aubrey will be working with these landowners to sign DPCAs as well.

Sick Deer: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey followed up on a report of a sick deer initially handled by WDFW Enforcement. The deer had moved on from the area and was not located again.

Injured Hawk: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey was called to an apartment complex for a hawk that was unable to fly. Upon arriving and contacting the reporting party, Aubrey was told the hawk flew over the fence into a thick forest. Aubrey searched the area but was not able to find the hawk.

Injured Deer: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey responded to a report of an injured deer on the shoulder of the roadway in Cowlitz County. Aubrey was unable to locate the injured deer.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Mount Saint Helens Wildlife Area Eagle Island Unit Weed Control: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Assistant Manager Wildermuth spent the better part of two weeks on the Eagle Island Unit treating invasive weeds. The main target weeds were scotch broom and Japanese knotweed. Since the only way to get equipment to the unit is by fording the North Fork Lewis River, staff members used a UTV and tractor to get equipment to the island and commute to the worksites every day. The Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) only allows for a short work window to drive through the river each year during the first 15 days of August, so Hauswald and Wildermuth made the most of the period and worked several longer than normal days. In total, about 80 acres were sprayed for scotch broom and all the known sites for knotweed were treated.

Assistant Manager Wildermuth fording the river hauling equipment and treating scotch broom on the UTV

Klickitat Wildlife Area Grazing Permit Monitoring: Wildlife Area Manager VanLeuven checked on a grazing permit area in the lower Klickitat River Canyon this week. The permit allows for dormant season grazing on the property between July 1 and August 31. Animal trails were barely discernible in the wooded and shrubby areas, and signs of cattle were scant. No cattle were seen; however, a group of 10 very surprised deer were encountered, with one spotted fawn demonstrating great agility in bounding through the downed logs and boulders. This area was burned in a wildfire 10 years ago, and VanLeuven has followed the changes in the vegetation structure as fire-damaged trees have fallen, or died of other causes and then fallen, and poison oak has aggressively recolonized the understory. Most of the mature ponderosa pines are now downed logs. The oaks that were not killed by the fire are doing well and in one woodland, the oaks are growing to unusual heights for this area. The grassy hillside above the trees is crisscrossed by deer trails.

Lower Klickitat River Canyon

Klickitat Wildlife Area Midsummer Check of Important Resources: During fieldwork on the Soda Springs Unit, Manager VanLeuven found that three ponds still contain water, although water levels are low. On the slopes above and below the Leidl Grade segment of the Glenwood Highway, swaths of oak trees are turning brown due to drought stress. These trees are probably growing on poorer soils or in crowded conditions. This phenomenon is common during exceptionally dry summers, but it doesn't usually appear until later in the season. In addition, Manager VanLeuven checked roads for fallen trees, collected litter, and checked to ensure that signs are current. One tree was cut and dragged off the North Break Road. Although only a small quantity of litter was collected, most of it was toilet paper left on the ground and a diaper left by visitors who do not know how to conduct themselves on a WLA.

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Nothing for this installment.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this installment.

7) Other

Nothing for this installment.

REGION 6

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Status and Trends: Biologist Novack developed a draft for the annual status and trends report for deer and elk in the Willapa Hills.

White Nose Syndrome Surveillance (Update): The National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC) provided new guidance on site selection for White Nose Syndrome (WNS) surveillance this year. They designed a sampling approach based on Pd diffusion models generated from past surveillance data and landscapes associated with bat occupancy. The new Three Rivers bat colony site in District 16 near Forks was selected as a sampling site. Capturing and swabbing of bats was planned for this spring at the colony. However, the handling of bats was not approved due to Covid-19 restrictions so plans were modified. Biologist Ament met with WNS Specialist Abby Tobin at the colony location on May 18, 2020. They set up plastic trays and plastic sheets under three known bat roosting locations on the property. They also collected some environmental swabs at two of the roosting locations. They returned at the end of June to collect the guano samples. On August 6, 2020, the NWHC forwarded their diagnostic services report for the testing. The Three Rivers bat colony, consisting of *Myotis lucifugus* and *Myotis yumanesis* tested negative for the fungus that causes WNS.

Plastic tray and sheet set-up to collect guano from bat roosting locations

Bat Colony Exit Counts: Biologist Ament organized several bat exit counts that were conducted within the district during appropriate periods in June and July. The protocol of using two observers per exit was not implemented for the surveys. Restrictions from Covid-19 impacted the ability to use volunteers. Fortunately, a Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) crew working for the Department of Ecology was able to assist with a few of the surveys. They had all required training, conducted Covid-19 attestations each day, and wore required personal protection equipment (PPE). Biologist Ament and Fish Biologist Ryan Ollerman also participated in the surveys. The counts were conducted to monitor the limited number of known bat colonies within Clallam and Jefferson counties. A total of four known bat colonies were surveyed.

1) Three Rivers on June 24, 2020. Only 10 bats were counted. This number was significantly lower than bat numbers observed last fall at the site. The main roost structure was modified by the landowner last winter.

2) Colville Road on July 7, 2020. A total of 77 bats were counted. The number was slightly lower than in the past few years. The landowner is excluding bats from his roof and has had success at having bats move into bat boxes on the residence.

3) Dungeness Fish Hatchery on July 8, 2020. A total of 174 bats were counted. Numbers were slightly lower than most recent two prior counts conducted in July of 2018. This site always presents a challenge because the bats exit from a tremendous number of openings in the roof.

4) Striped Peak Bunker on July 16, 2020. A total of 69 bats were counted. The last time this site was counted was on July 12, 2017, when 165 bats were counted. This site has five distinct exit areas. Unfortunately, vandalism has occurred for the second time at one of the gates installed at a bunker opening. The lower number of bats present may be related to human disturbance or habitat modifications from recent logging activity. The DNR will be contacted to request another repair of the gate and possibly some signage.

Dungeness Fish Hatchery

Striped Peak Bunker – vandalism to gate

North American Bat Monitoring: Our agency is participating in the North American Bat Monitoring Program (NABat) so that we can use the monitoring data to detect changes in bat distributions and trends at broad regional and range-wide extents. The NABat sampling framework is based on a 10-by-10-kilometer finite-grid cell frame that spans across North America. This approach assigns a spatially balanced and randomized ordering of these grid cells. There are multiple approaches in NABat, but the one we will implement this year involves monitoring at stationary points using acoustic detectors. District 16 was assigned a randomly selected grid cell for sampling. Biologist's McMillan and Ament have invested efforts into determining four suitable locations for deploying the detectors within the grid. From May to mid-July they have both spent a tremendous amount of time trying to secure access on state and private lands, along with conducting field trips to explore travel routes and suitable habitat. Challenges have been encountered with securing permission to simply drive across one private timberland ownership. Negotiations for an acceptable Right of Entry Agreement are continuing.

Bog Beetle Searches: Biologists McMillan and Ament were trained in May of 2018 to differentiate *Agonum belleri* (a ground beetle) and *Eanus hatchi* (a click beetle) from other beetles that may be encountered in bog habitats. They learned the survey technique of "treading" upon *Sphagnum* moss surface for Beller's beetles and sweep netting of herbaceous/shrubs/tree branches for Hatch's beetles. Surveys were initiated within the district last season and were resumed again this spring. Unfortunately, both beetle species are most active on sunny days and there was very limited sunny weather once Covid-19 restrictions were lifted for fieldwork. District 16 Biologists had to focus most of the good weather days in the spring on conducting assigned surveys for Taylor's Checkerspot butterflies. Once those surveys were complete, some effort was finally focused on searching for beetles at previously identified bog sites. Prior to heading to the field, much work was done to review maps, determine travel routes, and secure landowner permission. Biologist Ament was able to conduct four excursions in search of bog beetles. She recorded field notes and took photos at each bog. This data will be summarized for submission in the future.

1) Murdock Point Bog was first surveyed on June 3, 2020, but there was unsuitable weather. Biologist Ament returned on June 22, 2020, and had much better weather conditions. *Sphagnum* moss and *Drosera* species (sundew) were located within this bog. A total of five beetles were collected and will be submitted for identification confirmation. A few of these are suspect Beller's beetles. No Hatch beetles were observed at this bog.

View of Murdock Point Bog

Open water site within Murdock Point bog

Sphagnum moss and reeds within the bog and the lovely (insectivorous) sundew plant

2) Siwash Creek Bog was surveyed on June 16, 2020. It was suitable weather but not good quality habitat for bog beetles. The site was logged many years ago. Due to tall sedges, reeds, grasses, and shrubs along the creek, it was very difficult to explore the area. No *Sphagnum* moss was found and no other high-quality bog plants were identified. One beetle was collected but it was likely not a Beller's. No Hatch beetles were observed.

Siwash Creek bog was found not to contain suitable habitat for target beetles

3) Allen's Bay at Lake Ozette was surveyed on July 15, 2020, with Biologist Michealis. The forecast was for sunshine but was cloudy the entire survey. They traveled by boat to Allen's Bay and attempted to access the identified bog from the mouth of the slough, but were unsuccessful due to dense vegetation and deep wet areas. They elected to hike along an unmaintained trail and bushwhack to the bog. There were very thick, dense shrubs (willow and spirea) that were difficult to penetrate. Only a few small patches of dried *Sphagnum* moss were located along the tree edge. No sundew or cranberry was located. Suitable habitat for bog beetles was not present. No Beller's or Hatch's beetles were observed or collected.

View of Lake Ozette from Allen's Bay ***View of bog from mouth of Allen's slough***

Poor bog beetle habitat – no Sphagnum

Biologist Michaelis standing in the bog

Biologist McMillan also conducted a few bog beetle surveys. On June 17, 2020, she explored a few bogs located on Green Crow timber property, and on July 15, 2020, she surveyed a bog located along the Sand Point Trail at Lake Ozette in Olympic National Park.

Bog habitat located on Green Crow Timber property

Cranberry plant blooming at Green Crow bog

View of bog along Sand Point Trail

Sphagnum moss at bog

Mountain Goat Translocation: Biologists McMillan and Ament both participated in the Mountain Goat Translocation Project from July 25 to August 8, 2020. On July 25, 2020, they assisted with transport to get the three refrigeration trucks from Tacoma to Olympic National Park. Biologist Ament drove one truck to Hurricane Ridge the next day to attend an orientation for the project. Biologist McMillan also attended this session. She served as a member of a goat handling team at Hurricane Hill for the duration of the project. Biologist Ament had been a goat handler in 2018 and served as the Safety Officer at the Hamma Hamma operation for the two capture sessions last year. This year she participated in a new role as a team leader for transporting goats to the North Cascades. She made a total of four trips from Hurricane Hill to the Cascades to deliver goats. There were several long days while encountering traffic accidents, I-5 rush hour traffic, and a decrease in ferry boats for travel. The teams often arrived to set-up camp just before dark or after dark. She appreciated meeting some new agency staff members and working with other regional biologists. She was pleased that the weather allowed for most goats to be flown by helicopter to designated release sites.

Biologist Ament assisted with releasing the last four goats from crates on August 8, 2020. There was low cloud cover that morning so the team loaded crates into pick-up trucks and drove over an hour to the release site. The four goats all looked healthy as they fled the crates and disappeared into the mist. Later that day, she worked with Biologist Murphie to return goat crates to the Lakewood Wildlife Area and get the last fridge truck back to Tacoma. An additional 50 mountain goats were transported to the northern Cascade Mountains during this final round of capture. Since September 2018, a total of 325 mountain goats have been translocated. Biologists McMillan and Ament were fortunate to be involved the past three years in this monumental project involving many partners. Biologist Murphie did an excellent job assisting with operations at Hurricane Ridge and organizing goat transport. Ungulate Specialist Moore was exceptional as he stepped into his new role as lead for the collaborative project. He was also involved with goat transport operations and worked with the very commendable Region 4 crew who successfully got the goats to their new homes. See photos below (all taken by S. Ament except for the last two taken by Robert Waddell).


QUIET
AREA


BIO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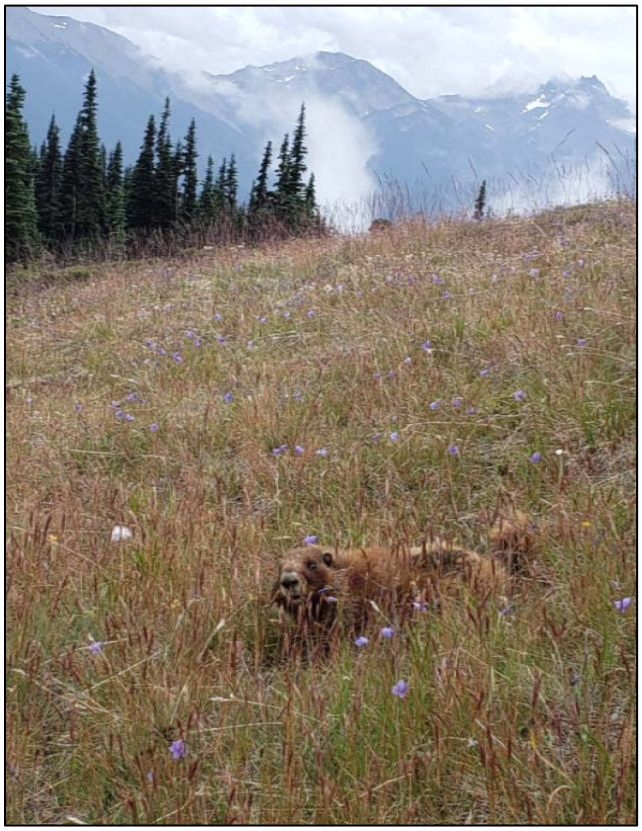
RENTING SO SMART, SO EASY

Olympic Marmot Relocation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Blankenship forwarded on a few reports that a marmot had shown up in Sequim in early August. The first report was that a golden marmot traveled to Sequim in a moving van from California. Staff members from Center Valley Animal Rescue responded to the Sunland Development in Sequim on August 6, 2020, but were unable to locate the marmot. Blankenship received another report on August 10, 2020, and requested assistance from Biologist Ament. She made some inquiries and learned that the marmot was not from California. She obtained a photo and confirmed with Olympic National Park (ONP) Biologist Patti Happe that it was indeed an endemic Olympic marmot. After contacting a new homeowner (from California) at Sunland she learned that the marmot had been unintentionally transported to Sunland by a cabinet worker that was working at her residence. Biologist Ament started her phone conversation off with him by (jokingly) accusing him of illegally smuggling a rare endemic wildlife species into the Sunland Development. After an awkward silence, they both laughed. He reported that he had seen the marmot at his property located southwest of Port Angeles for a week or so. The marmot must have crawled into the undercarriage of his truck and exited at Sunland. Haven Trapping was contacted and successfully captured the marmot on August 11, 2020. They caught the marmot in a salmon net and put the net and precious cargo in a plastic tub that was delivered to Biologist Ament. She consulted with Patti and determined a suitable release site would be Deer Park at ONP. This site is historic Olympic marmot range and the park is trying to re-establish a population there. Park employee Bill Baccus and the Deer Park volunteer ranger assisted with the project to release the marmot. The team hiked into a suitable meadow area and gently turned over the container. They were expecting the marmot to run off to freedom but that was not the case. Unfortunately, the marmot's back leg and tail were severely entangled in the salmon net. Biologist Ament held the marmot as Bill used wire cutters to cut the net. After getting in a few good bites, the little guy was extracted from the net. He was uninjured and appeared to like his new home.

Olympic marmot under shed at Sunland

Cutting marmot from salmon net

Marmot was uninjured and was anxious to be released in the meadow



A suitable new home with stunning views for this endemic marmot

Black Bear Project (Assistance to District 11): District 11 Biologists Tirhi and Butler had requested assistance with a check of their black bear density estimate study sample sites. Biologist Ament was eager to participate to learn more about the project. She joined Biologist Butler and assisted with the collection of hair samples on July 20 and 21, 2020. Biologist Tirhi later reported that samples were collected at approximately 80% of the stations during each of the four checks with some check days approaching 100%. Hair samples that were collected will be sent to a lab for analysis. The weather was very warm during the days that Biologist Ament assisted with the project. She asked many questions and realized that there will be a need to dedicate considerable time to organizing and preparing for this bear study. The project was postponed this season in District 16 due to conflicts with the mountain goat translocation project. Hopefully, the project will move forward in District 16 next summer.

Nice views of Mount Rainier while following Biologist Butler to hair sample stations

Hair samples found on wire barbs are collected by Biologist Butler

Taylor's Checkerspot Larvae Search with Scent Dogs: Biologist McMillan participated in a Taylor's Checkerspot (TC) larvae search in July. She joined USFS Biologist Karen Holtrop and the Rogue Detection Dog Scent Team at a few known TC sites on forest service lands in the Upper Dungeness drainage. The USFS is investigating the use of detections dogs to assist them with conducting TC larvae surveys on their lands.

NABat Monitoring (Update): The previous highlights report included information on the challenges that were encountered with securing permission to simply drive across one private timberland ownership for deploying bat detectors. The Right of Entry Agreement was never finalized. Fortunately, more map review, contacting other timber owners, and getting DNR staff members involved finally led to implementing the project last week. The new Olympic peninsula DNR wildlife biologist Noelle Nordstrom was instrumental in this success. She was able to escort Biologists McMillan and Ament to one station on DNR land and she deployed one detector on a DNR site that required driving on Rayonier ownership. All three biologists set-up the bat detectors on August 26, 2020. Biologist Ament and DNR Biologist Nordstrom picked up the detectors the next day. Biologist Ament will compile all data and submit to WNS Specialist Tobin. The bat detectors will be returned to her this week.

Pond location selected for NABat project

Bat detector deployed at a bog site

Bat Colony Exit Count: Biologist Ament was contacted by the landowner, Bob Davies, from the documented Colville Road bat colony. An exit count was completed at the site on July 7, 2020, and a total of 77 bats were counted. He reported that he had seen a significant increase in bats recently and requested that another count be completed. Another exit count was completed on August 20, 2020. A total of 462 bats were counted exiting several bats boxes and the roof of the residence. A total of 162 bats came out of an older bat box and a whopping 228 bats exited from one of his new design bat boxes. This information will be shared with WNS Specialist Tobin. Hopefully, she can provide some insight into why there was such an increase in bat numbers.

Bat Recon: Biologist Ament had received a report about an old structure on the Hoko-Ozette Road that was housing many bats. While in the area to retrieve bat detectors on August 27, 2020, she conducted an initial investigation. The landowner graciously showed Biologist Ament the structure and discussed the bat activity he has observed for many years. The structure is an old bunkhouse that was from the Hoko Logging Camp back in the 1950s. It was moved to the

property before this landowner moved there 30 years ago. He explained that he observes bats exiting from various places on the roof. He thinks there may be at least 100 bats roosting in the structure. Biologist Ament found several areas of guano in the structure and did observe 25-30 bats in one peak area in the building. She hopes to return in September to conduct an exit count. The reporting party (RP) gave Biologist a dead bat that he had found a few days earlier.

Funky old Hoko Logging Camp bunkhouse that now houses bats

Bats observed in far peak of ceiling

Lots of great roosting sites for bats

Bog Search: Biologists McMillan and Ament were deploying bat detectors for the NABat project on August 26, 2020, and took the opportunity to review a bog located on Green Crow

property off the Hoko-Ozette Road. There were *Sphagnum* moss and cranberry plants located at the site. There was not much open water, just small little pockets of water within the grasses, reeds, and shrubs. There were large older stumps throughout the bog. It was an interesting site but likely not suitable habitat for bog beetles. See the photos below.


Green Crow bog close to sunset and wild cranberry with large fruit

2) <u>Providing Recreation Opportunities</u>

Hunting Prospects: Biologist's McMillan and Ament spent time this past few weeks working on the 2020 Hunting Prospects for District 16. They got a late start on this document due to working on the goat capture earlier in the month. A final version was completed and submitted for review.

Grouse Barrels: Biologist Ament deployed three grouse barrels within the district. Barrels were placed at the same locations as last year. She confirmed with DNR staff members that a gate near one site will not be locked this season. Barrels will be checked for wings/tails every few weeks.


Grouse wing/tail collection barrel placed at the junction of hunt access roads

New Emergency Hire Employees: Two three-month employees were recently added to the water access team, Tyler Mettler and Christopher Salp. The additional help was extremely necessary to keep up with the record crowds using the water access sites. In addition to the extreme usage, litter and illegal dumping are at an all-time high as well. The team is now able to spend some time on vegetation control and vandalism repairs due to the additional team member's assistance. Within the last two weeks of the additional help, it is evident the sites are becoming safer for the public and more esthetically pleasing for use.

Tyler and Christopher working at the Chehalis River Porter Site

Sol Duc River Maxfield: This site is among nine sites in the Forks area that received vegetation control this week to include mowing, weed eating, pole sawing, and some chain saw work along with restroom maintenance and litter control.

A Big Thank You to our Volunteers

Volunteer Work: Volunteer Joe Wilcox (filling hours needed as a master hunter) using his personal vehicle, followed Supervisor Mitchell to five water access sites in Thurston County. Work performed at the sites included vegetation control, cleaning asphalt, litter pick up, and restroom maintenance. Volunteer Barry Halverson provided weekly litter pick up and sign installation at Lawrence Lake in Thurston County.

Humptulips River Morley: Illegal dumping of abandoned Trailers, vehicles, vessels and household debris is at an all-time high. The team is working with WDFW Enforcement and hulk removal companies to remove this 30’ trailer next to the river.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Nothing for this installment.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Elk River Unit: Biologist Novack worked on noxious weed control projects at the Elk River unit. A WCC crew was contracted to conduct Scotch broom removal with emphasis on a regenerating stand of trees where the broom had overtopped the young trees. A few days of effort can make a great difference when a good team is deployed. Removing the Scotch broom competition should boost tree growth by removing the shade and allowing space for the tree limbs to extend outward. Continued efforts are planned through June 2021 as budget allows.

WDFW John's River Wildlife Area - Elk River Unit: Site of Scotch broom removal efforts (right side of road) to release regenerating conifer trees from competition. The left side of the road is an example of the preexisting dense growth of Scotch Broom.

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Nothing for this installment.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

District Team Meeting: Biologist Novack participated in the district team meeting along with multiple representatives from the other Region 6 programs. Novack will organize and facilitate the next meeting in early December, where management of the administrative lands adjacent to the Region 6 office will be a topic.

7) Other

Nothing for this installment.