

Wildlife Program – Bi-weekly Report

December 1 to 15, 2020

DIVERSITY DIVISION

Nothing for this installment.

GAME DIVISION

Nothing for this installment.

HUNTER EDUCATION

Nothing for this installment.

LANDS DIVISION

Nothing for this installment.

SCIENCE DIVISION

Nothing for this installment.

REGION 1

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Bighorn Sheep: District Biologist Wik participated in multiple meetings associated with bighorn sheep during the week. The biannual Hells Canyon Initiative meeting was virtually held with the following partners; Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), WAWSF, Oregon Foundation for North American Wild Sheep (ORFNAWS), Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation (IDWSF), Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), Nez Perce Tribe (NPT), and others. This provides updates on work being done in the field, such as the Asotin County Conservation District outreach program, Test and Remove management, and population status. Work also continues reshaping the Conservation District program to meet our goals.

Gavin Cotterill attended a virtual Hells Canyon Initiative meeting where collaborators provided project updates. He also worked through several logistical challenges related to data collection and management, including automating the process of downloading GPS collar data from different collar manufacturers and appending new data into a database. He also began exploratory analyses of GPS data and familiarized himself with some relevant packages in R and recent research literature.

Wik captured a two-year-old ram in the Black Butte herd as part of the Hells Canyon research and monitoring effort. This ram will contribute to the understanding of how the male segment of the population is using habitat as this population recovers from a low of 20 animals, down from almost 300 twenty-five years ago.

Rimfire Turkey Season Meeting: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman along with several other WDFW staff members and people from the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) had a meeting to discuss the proposed addition of rimfire weapons for the fall turkey hunting season. Westerman provided input from the wildlife conflict point of view and answered questions. Headquarters will review the proposal and likely make changes to it as there were concerns raised by the NWTf.

Eagle Collections: Biologist Vekasy received reports of two injured/dead eagles. Biologist Kolb caught an injured golden eagle that was missing part of its wing. A radiograph showed shrapnel at the wound site consistent with a gunshot wound. Fish Program personnel reported a dead eagle on the Tucannon habitat management unit, and the district biologist collected the juvenile bald eagle at the location. The bird had an obvious leg wound and a radiograph showed shrapnel consistent with a gunshot. Information was provided to Enforcement Program and a request for assistance has been drafted for public release.



Kolb with injured golden eagle

Columbia Basin Mule Deer: Biologists Atamian and Lowe finished up surveys in seven ground survey units in Lincoln and Whitman counties. Two units were re-run due to freezing fog/limited visibility and other factors last week. The surveys are also conducted in districts 4, 5, and 7, and used to estimate post-season herd composition (i.e., fawn: doe and buck: doe ratios) for three sub herds across the Columbia Basin.



Freezing fog in southern Whitman County



Group of mule deer laying out in winter wheat field enjoying the sunshine on a clear winter day

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Charley Creek Parking Lot improvements: Access Manager Greg Heimgartner and Wynn Stallcop worked together to install several concrete eco-blocks at a parking area used by the public to access lower Charley Creek. The parking area is along Asotin Creek Road. The blocks will stabilize the slope at the base of the hill keeping debris from rolling into the parking area.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Elk Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman talked to a landowner/farmer who has been dealing with over 70 elk in his winter wheat which is the only green field for miles. The elk have been trampling through and causing damage and he was interested in the damage prevention cooperative agreement program. Westerman mentioned the current muzzleloader season going on and set him up with a local hunter (whom he already knew) to hunt the elk. Westerman sent him information about the program and is waiting to hear back about signing up to address ongoing damage.

Elk Hooves: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman talked to a successful hunter of a damage tag in an area that Washington State University is taking samples for the treponeme-associated hoof disease (TAHD) research project. The hunter has cut, bagged, and labeled the hooves and placed in his freezer. Westerman will coordinate a pickup time next week for the hooves.

Deer Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Kolb met with a Columbia County orchard producer about deer damage. The 150-acre orchard previously had an effective deer fence installed; however, damaging spring flooding tore out approximately 700 meters of fencing along a riparian area bordering the Touchet River. Repairs to the fencing are rolled up in a federal inter-agency funded flood mitigation project and the producer is beholden to an expanded timeline before repairs will be completed. Due to the down fence, the producer lost more than 6,000 seedling and sapling Honeycrisp trees to white-tailed deer damage over the course of 10 months. The producer was entered into a Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement (DPCA) to offer additional abatement resources.

Geese in Pea Fields: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Kolb responded to a landowner complaint of geese in no-till winter pea fields. The problem pea fields were corn fields earlier this fall, and residual corn seed and cobs remain on the ground as a result of the no-till drill planting method. Although the pea seeds have not sprouted growth above soil yet, once the seedlings do sprout, geese tend to feed on these plants and rip the entire plant from the ground. Hazing techniques were discussed with the producer. Hunting (i.e., lethal control) is not an option due to proximity of the field to occupied dwellings.



Geese feeding in a winter pea field. The pea field is a no-till crop with residual corn seeds on the surface from the previous crop

Reported Possible Depredation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade received a report of a dead cow being found in Garfield County. Wade and Kolb responded to the location and located the carcass in the pasture. Wade observed three golden eagles and at least 20 crows and ravens scavenging on the carcass. The two specialists performed a full sight investigation and necropsy and determined that the cow had died from unknown/non-predator related causes. Wade relayed the information and pictures to the producer, who was unable to be present at the investigation.



Carcass after investigation



Carcass as it was found

Cloverland Elk: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade spent part of a day checking the Cloverland area for signs of elk activity. Wade did not observe any signs of recent elk activity in and around the crops but, was able to locate 150 plus head of elk feeding on the adjacent Smoothing Iron Wildlife Area.



Elk on Smoothing Iron Wildlife Area

Sanitation Efforts in Grizzly Bear Recovery Area: Wildlife biologists Prince and Turnock met with Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett and Enforcement Officer Erickson to discuss and vet various ideas to address garbage attractants in the Selkirk Grizzly Bear Recovery Area. The group will be working with the Pend Oreille County transfer stations to see if any feasible options can be pursued.

4) Conserving Natural Areas

4-O Ranch Wildlife Area Controlled Burning: David Woodall, Wynn Stallcop, and Bob Dice burned approximately 50 acres in the lower Bucannon agricultural fields on December 2.

Wildlife area staff members were unable to timely spray the fields last spring due to COVID stay-at-home orders which allowed uncontrolled growth of exotic weeds and grasses. Our plans to seed these fields were set back almost a year, thanks to COVID, and the burning effort was an attempt to get rid of the trash from last spring.



4-O Ranch Wildlife Area controlled burning

Revere Wetland Restoration: Biologist Atamian took another set of photo monitoring point photos, supplying a set of post-2020 restoration work photos to go with the pre-restoration photos from 2005.



Revere Wetland Restoration Project (2005 image)



Revere Wetland Restoration Project (2020 image) pre-restoration work with heavy equipment



Revere Wetland Restoration Project (2020 image) post-restoration work with heavy equipment

Cameras for Tracking Sharp-tails: Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Mike Finch and Natural Resource Technician Donovan Colvin placed several game cameras on Swanson Lakes, and on nearby U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land with BLM’s approval. They selected riparian areas that could attract sharp-tailed grouse this winter, to help determine which wintering areas to focus on for grouse habitat protection and enhancement.



Colvin mounting a camera



Grove surrounding a seasonal pond

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Nothing for this installment.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Swanson Lakes Office: The post-fire exterior office repairs are nearly complete, with only final touches and debris removal remaining. WDFW Construction Project Manager Chris Alston visited the site with Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Mike Finch this week. Alston signed off for payment to the vendor. Interior soot, dust, and dirt still needs some clean-up, but on-site staff may end up doing that, as funds haven't been allocated for this work. New hard surface flooring will have to wait as well.

7) Other

Landowner Appreciation: Private Lands Biologist Gaston received a letter from an appreciative hunter who explained how Natural Resource Worker Holcomb had helped him find a prime hunting area. The hunter also attached a letter of appreciation to pass along to the landowner which detailed the success of the hunt and their gratitude for being in the Private Lands Access Program.

REGION 2

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Okanogan Mule Deer Surveys: The worsening COVID situation precluded normal aerial surveys this year. Biologists Fitkin and Heinlen, along with help from U.S. Forest Service Biologist Rohrer and Wildlife Area Manager Troyer, attempted to gather similar information with ground surveys. A late start and access challenges limited the number of deer we were able to classify. All the data has not yet been compiled, but no major deviations from typical results have been seen thus far.



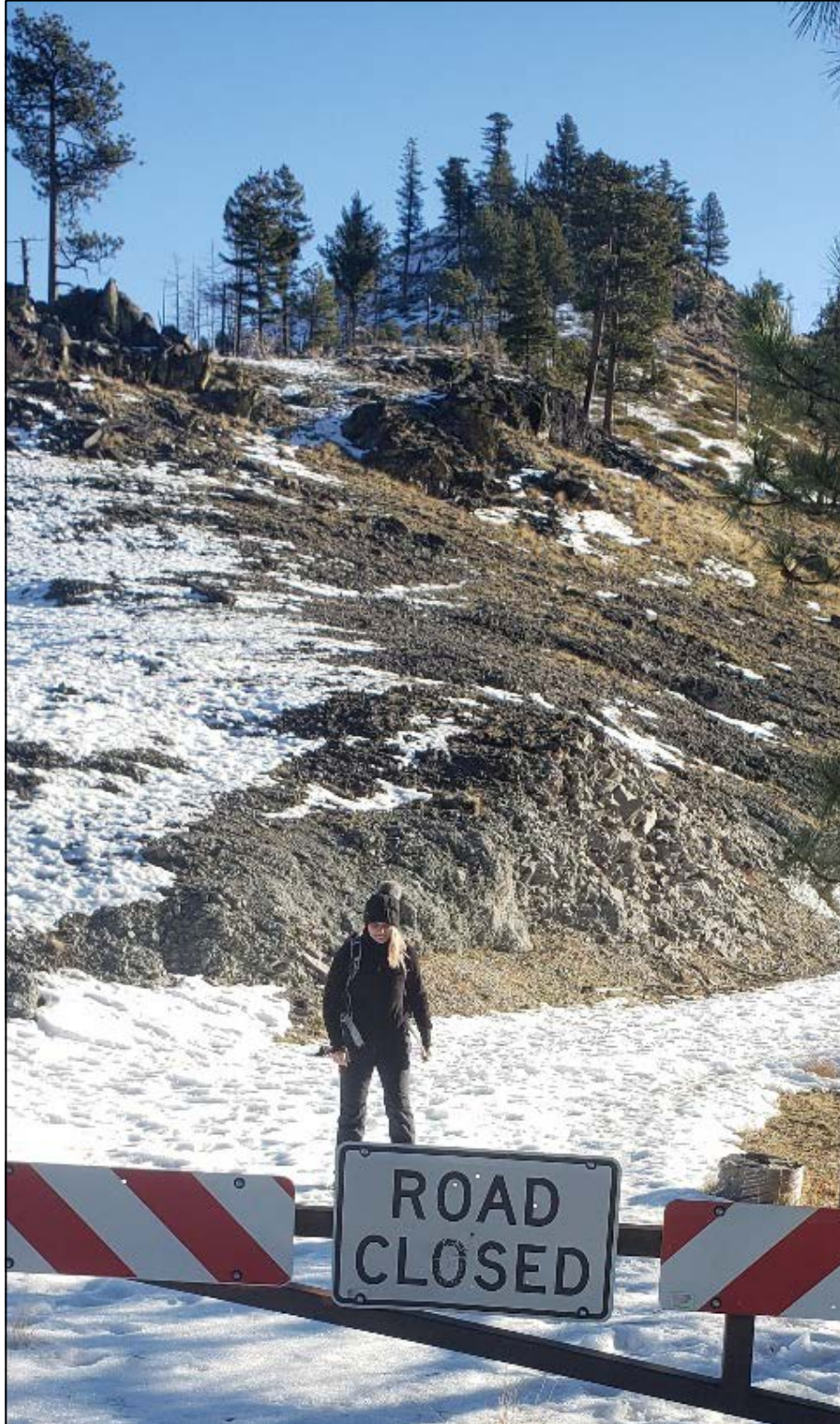
Mule deer on traditional Methow winter range – Photo by S. Fitkin

District 7 Mule Deer: Biologists Comstock and Jeffreys performed winter mule deer road surveys in Douglas County. These surveys are conducted annually across the Columbia Basin Mule Deer Management Zone to provide estimates of fawn: doe and buck: doe ratios. These ratios provide population indices between the scheduled three-to-five-year interval for estimating population abundance. Due to COVID-19 safety considerations, all planned mule deer sightability flights were cancelled in 2020.



Mule deer group in Moses Coulee – Photo by Devon Comstock

Biologists Jeffreys and Comstock recovered a GPS collar from a study animal that was part of the East Slopes Cascades mule deer migration study. Unfortunately, the animal died equidistant from any passable roads, necessitating an approximately 11-mile roundtrip snowshoe trek. The cause of death was undetermined, but there appeared to be some evidence of human intervention, as the head had been cleanly severed from the body and possibly purposely buried in snow. The carcass had been heavily scavenged by coyotes.



Biologist Jeffreys makes her way up the Rattlesnake Road to retrieve a deer mortality – Photo by Devon Comstock



Biologist Comstock removes teeth from the deceased doe. These will be sent in to determine the doe's age – Photo by Emily Jeffreys

Predator-Prey Project: Biologist Fitkin responded to two potential mortalities of radio-collared mule deer. The first turned out to be a false mortality (faulty collar), although the fruitless follow-up was made less bothersome by the scenic location not far from a maintained trail (see Robinson Creek at bottom). The site of the second mortality was in a remote location that could not be accessed safely due to heavy, early snowstorms and will have to be retrieved early next summer.

Cougar Management: Biologist Fitkin assisted grad student Satterfield and Officer Day to encourage a cougar that temporarily took up residence in a woodshed in Twisp to leave town. Once student Satterfield discovered a deer carcass the cat had been feeding on and Biologist Fitkin removed the carcass, the cat quietly moved out of town and back onto USFS property. The adult female cougar is the last cat in the Methow with an active radio collar. As it turns out, it is the cougar that cruised past Biologist Fitkin’s house outside Winthrop the night before traveling to Twisp.



Cougar tracks – Photo by S. Fitkin

Northern Leopard Frogs: Biologist Grabowsky continued working on the northern leopard frog recovery report that is due to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) at the end of the year. At this stage, Grabowsky is coordinating with partners (Washington State University, Oregon Zoo, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, to name a few) to organize accomplishments for the year. Part of this coordination involves attending and contributing to yearly meetings. Biologist Grabowsky attended the American Bullfrog Action Team meeting and Pacific Northwest Northern Leopard Frog Recovery meeting. Fortunately, some projects were only minimally impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, and fieldwork was allowed to continue (almost) normally. WDFW’s partners in British Columbia were able to locate a record number of northern leopard frog egg masses and bullfrog control continued in Idaho.

The story of northern leopard frog recovery looks different than last year due to work restrictions, but vital data was collected and we're hopeful that reintroduction efforts can resume next year and will be even more successful.

2) **Providing Recreation Opportunities**

Nothing for this installment.

3) **Providing Conflict Prevention and Education**

Nothing for this installment.

4) **Conserving Natural Areas**

Nothing for this installment.

5) **Providing Education and Outreach**

Nothing for this installment.

6) **Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Nothing for this installment.

7) **Other**

What was going on 20 years ago?

Pygmy Rabbits Listing: Pygmy rabbits were listed as endangered species by the USFWS on Friday. Field surveys continue. Temporary Biologist Laura Cook found three possible active burrows on the Coyote Canyon site. No active burrows were found on this site this last spring and summer. This is an exciting find because all our captive rabbits have come from Sagebrush Flats and are genetically similar.

Okanogan County Aerial Deer Surveys: Post-season aerial deer surveys in Population Management Unit (PMU) 21 were conducted. We classified almost 4400 mule deer in two days of flying. Increases in flight budgets allowed for five to six hours of productive flying time in both the Okanogan and Methow watersheds. This is about what is needed for a well-distributed survey that generates a reasonable sample size in both watersheds west of the Okanogan River. In the Methow, we classified about 3650 deer and observed ratios of 24 bucks per 100 does and 92 fawns per 100 does; 34 percent of the bucks were greater than three points (mature). On the Okanogan side, we classified about 750 animals yielding ratios of 19:100 and 76:100. 38 percent of the bucks were greater than three points (mature). Overall, the ratios come out to be 24:100:89, with 35 percent of the bucks greater than three points.

Hot Spot Deer Hunt: Significant damage to apple orchards is occurring near Ephrata. Captain Smith is looking into a hot spot hunt to eliminate problem deer.



Robinson Creek Trail bridge and Last Chance Point – Photo by S. Fitkin



Merry Christmas 2020 from the Methow – Photo by S. Fitkin

REGION 3

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

District 8 Wildlife Program staff members continue to monitor both the Quilomene and Clemans bighorn sheep herds for pneumonia. The news from Quilomene is good, as there has been no sign of disease. The most recent flight focused on the north end.

Clemans is in a full-blown pneumonia outbreak with numerous reports of dead bighorns. Oak Creek Wildlife Area Manager Mackey and District 8 Biologist Bernatowicz have focused on retrieving ram heads that are easy to access. Six ram heads have been retrieved, and another four to five are known, but difficult to access. Once winter comes and the bighorns concentrate on the feed site, the extent of the outbreak will be better known.

Late season bighorn permit hunters were contacted and asked to collect samples. Biologist Bernatowicz left a cooler and sampling supplies at Oak Creek Wildlife Area headquarters. Sixteen samples were submitted from 15 hunters. Hunters were asked to initial samples, so the 15 on the permit list are known. Once all samples (including Yakima River Canyon) are collected, Biologist Bernatowicz will send to the lab at Washington State University.

District 8 Wildlife Biologist Oates finished delineating migration corridors and seasonal ranges of GPS-collared mule deer. Across Kittitas and Chelan counties, there are 40 individuals that are migratory (26 in Chelan, 14 in Kittitas) and 47 residents (12 in Chelan, 35 in Kittitas). There's one mixed migrant (headed toward a different winter range during fall migration). The rest of the animals either died or collars failed too early to tell.

District 4 Wildlife Biologist Fidorra was alerted that a local hunter had harvested a chronic wasting disease (CWD) positive deer in Montana. Fidorra contacted the hunter who had already disposed of the animal. Fortunately, the hunter followed the important and necessary steps of bringing only boned out meat back into Washington State and contacted WDFW once he received his test results. It is very important that hunters follow these steps for the safety of cervids in Washington and wait to hear back from WDFW on next steps. In most cases, a WDFW staff member can arrange for pickup and disposal of the meat. Thank you to all the hunters who are doing their part!

Wenas Wildlife Area staff members completed work of propping up over eight miles of the 17.5 miles of elk fence that burned in the Evan's Canyon fire. The Sunnyside skid steer and the Region 3 Lands Program post pounder were used to install metal sucker pipe at key points along burned sections of the fence, propping up the wire and providing a visual barrier that will hopefully keep elk in over the winter. The fence contractor has completed replacement of over three miles of elk fence and has finished propping up another three miles. They expect to have the remaining three miles propped up within the next week and then should have three crews working on a complete rebuild of as much of that remaining six miles as possible before winter shuts them down.



Natural Resources Technician Stultz driving metal sucker pipe along burnt section of the Bull Pasture elk fence

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

The newly improved Sheep Company shooting range on the Wenas Wildlife Area was opened to the public on November 20.

Region 3 Access staff members installed a new reader board and posted signs at the Duportail Access Site's new parking area. The site has been closed while the City of Richland's Duportail Bridge project has been underway but is expected to officially reopen in December upon completion of the construction.



Duportail Access Site - New parking area



Duportail Access Site getting new reader board and signs

Graffiti has been a chronic problem at Buena Pond recently, with staff members having to paint over graffiti every week for the last month.



Graffiti at Buena Pond

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

An orchardist in District 8 filed a damage claim in the Cowiche area. The adjuster and wildlife conflict specialist visited the orchard and found the crop had frozen earlier and was unharvested. The adjuster found no damage. The orchard owner is appealing.

4) Conserving Natural Areas

Wenas Wildlife Area staff members, with the assistance of many Region 3 agency volunteers, seeded areas burned in the 2020 Evans Canyon fire with native grass mixes to stabilize severely burned areas and provide competition for anticipated weeds. With the help of the Regional volunteers, we've completed seeding 120 acres of shrub-steppe habitat and collected sagebrush seed that will be used for reseeding activities later this winter.



Regional staff members seeding on a foggy day near Woodcamp Canyon

Central Valley Helicopters aerially seeded another 750 acres of severely burned drainages and draws on the wildlife area.



Loading seed into the hopper and then flying it on



Helicopter heading up onto Cleman Mountain to seed burned draws

Wildlife area staff members reseeded 40 acres of the McCade fields where a previous attempt had failed.



Natural Resources Technician Kass drill seeding McCade restoration field

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Region 3 Private Lands Biologist Hulett gave a presentation on the Blackrock Pilot Project for the Washington Fire Adaptive Communities Learning Network (WFACLN). Through this project, WDFW help private landowners' places strategic green-strip firebreaks to help deal with risk of large scale and frequent wildfires on the landscape. Presentation were recorded and are accessible through WFACLN website.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this installment.

7) Other

The new vehicle bridge at the Hardy Canyon crossing of Wenas Creek on the Wenas Wildlife Area was installed by the contractor. Now they just need to get it bolted down and backfill the approaches before it's open for use.



Crane installing second half of new vehicle bridge at Hardy Canyon crossing



New bridge in place

REGION 4

Nothing for this installment.

REGION 5

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Dusky Canada Goose Survey: Biologists Stephens and Holman conducted a bimonthly dusky Canada goose survey in Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, and parts of Pacific County. A total of 339 dusky geese were counted, including 14 collared birds, all in Pacific County. These surveys are conducted in cooperation with the USFWS and ODFW to estimate survival rates of dusky Canada geese.



Dusky Canada geese and cackling geese foraging in Pacific County

Dusky Canada Goose Surveys: Biologists Stephens and Holman continued dusky Canada Goose surveys in Cowlitz, Pacific, and Wahkiakum counties. The purpose of the surveys is to count dusky geese observed and read alphanumeric codes on any red-collared duskys. Wildlife managers survey the geese multiple times across their primary wintering grounds and use the data to generate survival estimates. The dusky geese are collared on their breeding grounds in Alaska every other year. Nearly 500 dusky Canada geese along with thousands of cackling, hundreds of Taverner's and lesser as well as dozens western Canada geese were located and recorded.



Dusky Canada geese in Pacific County



Collared dusky Canada goose wintering in Pacific County

December Dusky Goose Survey: Biologist Wickhem conducted one dusky Canada goose survey on the Shillapoo Wildlife Area and Vancouver Lake in Clark County. Dusky geese are a sub-species of Canada goose that spend summers in Alaska and migrate through and/or over-winter in the lower Columbia River. Dusky geese are closed to recreational harvest due to low population levels. The purpose of the surveys is to count dusky geese observed and read alphanumeric codes on any red-collared dusky geese. Wildlife managers survey the geese multiple times across their primary wintering grounds and use the data to generate survival estimates. Approximately 215 dusky geese were observed, the largest one-day dusky count Wickhem has seen in her short time goose surveying. Cackling, Tavener's, and western Canada geese were also observed, along with snow geese and sandhill cranes. Unfortunately, no collared birds were observed during these surveys.



Glassing for geese at an ideal observation spot



Dusky Canada geese

Monthly Winter Elk Count on Mudflow Unit: Biologist Stephens conducted an elk count on the Mudflow Unit of the Mount Saint Helens Wildlife Area. A total of 92 elk were using the area which included 39 cows, 8 calves, and 45 bulls. This survey is conducted monthly from December-April.



Elk on the Mudflow Wildlife Area

Columbian White-tailed Deer Survey: Biologists Stephens and Holman conducted a survey of Columbian white-tailed deer on Puget Island. This survey is conducted three to five times between mid-November and December to generate a minimum count and doe: fawn ratios. The survey produced sighting and classification of 149 deer including 94 does, 30 fawns, and 25 bucks. These observations calculate to age and sex ratios of 27 bucks and 32 fawns per 100 does. The results from each survey effort are compiled, then summarized and sent along to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service where they are pooled with results from additional areas within the Lower Columbia population of Columbian white-tailed deer.



Columbian white-tailed deer on Puget Island

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Access Sites: Access staff members Rhodes and McKinlay continue to be faced with large amounts of trash on access sites; at one site 750 pounds were hauled just from one morning visit. Rhodes and McKinlay were able to help Technician Boyd fall and clean up hazard trees at the North Leidle and Stinson Flats sites. Rhodes and McKinlay continue to backpack blow parking and restroom areas to clear the leaves that seem to never stop falling.



Large amounts of trash on Region 5 access sites



Felling hazard trees on the Klickitat Wildlife Area access sites

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Elk on the Lawn: WDFW was contacted by a landowner who wanted to report elk damage to his lawn on the Clark/Cowlitz County border. The landowner has three acres and was tired of having a handful of elk walk through his green lawn on a regular basis. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen discussed several hazing options with the landowner and asked the landowner if he was interested in allowing public hunting on his property to help address the issue. The landowner was excited about the opportunity for hunters to come out. Jacobsen contacted a couple of muzzleloader hunters who had drawn special permits for antlerless elk, as their permit season was currently open and neither had harvested an elk at that point. The hunters were appreciative of the opportunity as well.

Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen met with several landowners in Klickitat County to renew their Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements for elk and deer damage.

Deer with Arrow: A concerned citizen in the Goldendale area contacted WDFW after observing one of the resident deer in his yard walking around with an arrow stuck in her. After a couple of unsuccessful attempts over the course of a week, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and Officer Whipple were finally able to chemically immobilize the deer with the use of a dart gun. The arrow was successfully removed, and it appeared that the deer would make a complete recovery from her injury. The arrow was not a legal hunting arrow, but rather a practice arrow used for shooting at targets. Shooting at wildlife with such equipment is prohibited and unethical. After leaving the scene, Jacobsen received another report of a deer in the area with a similar-looking arrow lodged in it as well. WDFW Enforcement is looking into the matter.



Deer with a practice arrow lodged in her neck



Jacobsen preparing to remove the arrow from the deer's neck

Elk Damage to Agricultural Crops: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey worked with landowners throughout the district as elk conflicts start to increase heading into the winter months. Hazing supplies and landowner permits were issued, and damage pool hunters were deployed to address issues this past week. Aubrey was also contacted by two landowners who have not previously worked with WDFW about damage concerns. The process to begin Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements (DPCAs) was started with each landowner.

Cougar Sighting: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey spoke with a concerned citizen about a potential cougar in the area. Most of the information was third hand and old, so advice on living in cougar country and preventing conflict was given.

Wolverine Report: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey followed up on a call to Enforcement from a concerned individual who reported a wolverine had chased their cat during the night and may have been living under the deck of their home. The individual made the report approximately a week after the incident, so there was no sign of an animal to be found. While it is unlikely the offending animal was a wolverine, Aubrey left contact info for the individual if the animal is seen again.

4) Conserving Natural Areas

Cowlitz Wildlife Area - Davis Lake Unit Parking Area: Wildlife area staff members constructed a 50x50 parking area at the Davis Lake Unit Allen Barn access site off Davis Lake Road. The parking area will hold approximately four cars and allow them to get safely off Davis Lake Road. Previously, only one car could park on the shoulder between the gate and the guardrail and that location was muddy and rutted up. A kiosk near the walk-in entrance will inform visitors of the rules for the area.



New Davis Lake Unit 50x50 parking area

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**

Nothing for this installment.

2) **Providing Recreation Opportunities**

Hunt Season Package Recommendations: Biologist Tirhi spent considerable time reviewing and providing District 11 hunting recommendations for 2021 and the next three-year seasons. Tirhi and Butler reviewed all District 11 hunt seasons and updated district hunt spreadsheets. Biologist Tirhi finalized discussions with headquarters Private Lands Access Program Manager

Strickland and TransAlta staff members to propose creation of the first western Washington Landowner Hunt Program (LHP) at TransAlta's Centralia Mine. The mine provides both public elk permit and waterfowl hunting opportunity. The LHP applications are not finalized until WDFW Commission approval in Spring 2021.



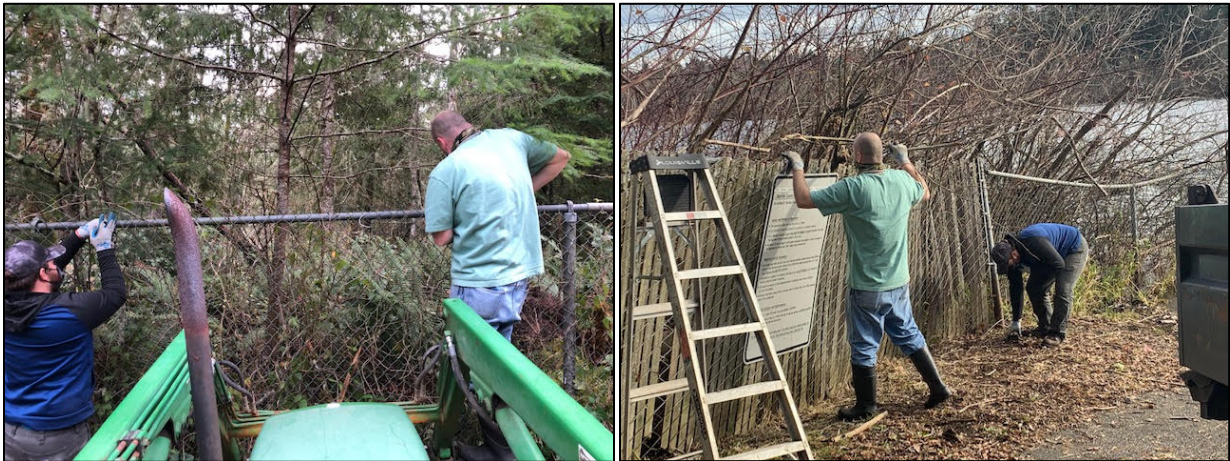
Elk grazing on the Centralia Mine, the location of the first Landowner Hunt Program application in western Washington

Loomis Lake: The water access team, using a dump trailer and tractor, picked up a load of roofing, plywood, and other debris dumped in the woods. While on site, the team cut up fallen trees, fell dead leaner trees, brushed out both sides, and cleaned the entrance road to the lake.





McIntosh Lake Fence Repair: Two trees fell during the last wind event, damaging sections of the property fenceline. The team used reclaimed fencing to make all repairs. Additionally, three sections of fence were repaired from this summers brushfire. Fire crews needed to cut and remove sections to gain access to the burning neighboring forest.



Humptulips River Morely -- Restroom Repair: The restroom recently was recoated with graffiti and all four windows busted out. Additionally, four semi tires and construction debris dumped on site were loaded into a dump trailer and disposed of. Windows were replaced and foul language sanded off. The interior will have to be re-painted when temperatures allow.



Humptulips River Hwy 101 Wind Damage: Recent winds blew trees down on parking areas and roadways in many Counties. This Alder was cut and cleaned up by Reeves, Mettler, and Walker, then returned to the woods where it grew.



Abandoned Vehicles/Trailers: The water access team has been very busy working with Enforcement to clear hulks for removal and disposal and paying for this service. The Satsop river site had a hulk disposed of two weeks prior. At this time, the Humptulips river trailer is still being worked on. Fuller and Double Bridges Hulks have been removed.



Satsop River Double Bridges



Chehalis River Fuller Bridge

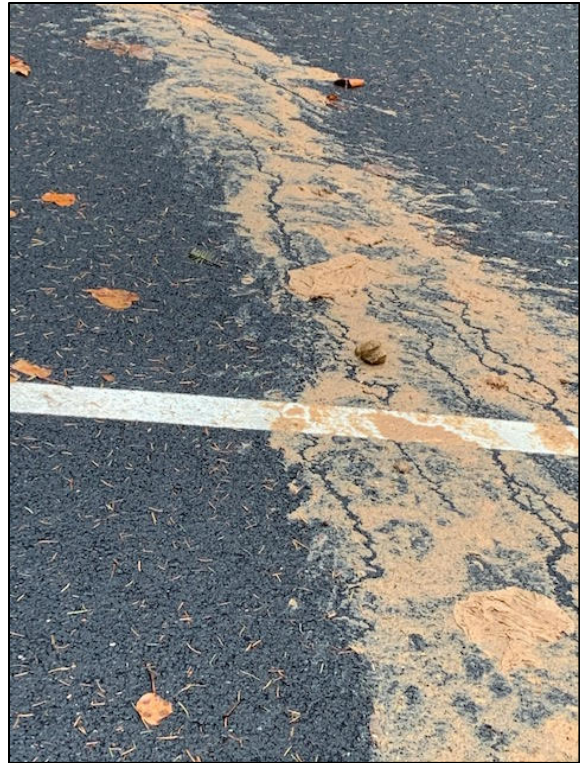


Humptulips River Highway 101

Lake Leland BFP Redevelopment: The re-development of Lake Leland (Jefferson County) is now complete. The project included new piles, fishing float with gang plank, new restrooms, and a re-graded parking area. WDFW owns this property, but Jefferson County will continue to provide the operating and maintenance.



Lawrence Lake: The water access team along with a Capital Asset Management Program (CAMP) construction crew arrived on site to install a large entrance barrier sign. Upon arrival, team member Reeves noticed a large spill circling the new asphalt parking lot, continuing down to the lower tier where the new ramp, boarding float, and launching area is. Jesse noticed a large trailer and vehicle had illegally camped overnight. It was noticed that the trailer had toilet paper hanging from an open black water exhaust pipe. Enforcement was immediately contacted and informed that someone emptied their tank all over the site and is still there! Enforcement showed up and appropriately ticketed the owners. Luckily, only one vehicle and dump trailer drove through the biohazard zone. The asphalt, vehicle, and trailer were cleaned and disinfected, and the barrier sign was then installed.



3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Nothing for this installment.

4) Conserving Natural Areas

Centralia Mine Acquisition: Biologist Tirhi, Region 6 representative on the Centralia Mine Acquisition Technical Team (CMATT), participated in both a team prep meeting followed by a full planning meeting between WDFW, TransAlta (TA, mine owners), and the Office of Surface Mining (OSM) to discuss the details of the mine reclamation plan. As part of a potential acquisition of the mine, WDFW and TA are collaborating to redraft the mine reclamation permit overseen by OSM in order to retain many of the wildlife and wildland appropriate features currently on the mine.

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.