

# Wildlife Program

Week of August 27-September 2, 2012

## **SCIENCE DIVISION**

**Wildlife Area Ecological Integrity Monitoring:** Mike Schroeder provided a draft protocol for Ecological Integrity Assessments at the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area to Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Natural Heritage ecologists Rex Crawford and Joe Rocchio. The purpose of this step was to gather comments about the categories and cutoffs. Mike traveled to the Sinlahekin last week to try out citizen science protocols and to do some fieldwork setting up photo points. Jeff Foisy has begun gathering data layers to use in the Level I analysis we are prototyping in the Kittitas Valley.

**Western Governors' Association (WGA) Crucial Habitat Initiative:** John Pierce attended WGA crucial habitat workshop last week to discuss methods for "rolling up" multiple data Geographic/Game Information System (GIS) layers into a crucial habitat score that would be mapped across the west. Three models were presented and discussed. During September and October each state will review the GIS layers important for their state and apply the different roll-up methods to help evaluate which methods work best. Each state is expected to produce their first draft crucial habitat map by November 1, 2012. Final crucial habitat maps won't be due until summer-fall 2013.

## **WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION**

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE***

**Fisher** – Biologist Lewis completed revisions to the Cascades fisher reintroduction proposal. He sent the proposal to Cascades National Park Biologist Bob Kunz and is working with Bob on developing a separate National Park Service (NPS) funding proposal for a Cascades reintroduction. Lewis continues analysis of resource selection data with GIS analyst Marc McCalmon. He is completing the data analysis and the first draft of the chapter on post-release movements of fishers for the final report.

**Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Information Products** – Wildlife Diversity Division staff worked with Science Division staff to further draft species narratives with spatially referenced distribution illustrations to meet a September 10 deadline for preparing internal review drafts. These narratives are a key component of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) product delivery to support the South Puget Sound Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan in preparation by Thurston County with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) funding passed through WDFW.

**Spotted Owl Habitat Experiments** – Natural Resource Scientist Joe Buchanan participated in a stakeholder field trip to sites identified as candidates for thinning experiments to facilitate

recruitment of Spotted Owl habitat in the eastern Cascade Range. This pilot project is authorized under a provision in Washington's Forest Practices Rules.

## **WILDLIFE OUTREACH DIVISION**

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

**Wildlife Rehabilitation:** Two new Wildlife Rehabilitation permits were issued to rehabilitators at Sarvey Wildlife Care Center. Both of them also passed the Raptor Rehabilitation Exam, enabling them to also treat raptors for rehabilitation.

The Wildlife Rehabilitation Washington Administrative Code (WAC) revision is on schedule. Tricia Thompson reviewed the outreach letter produced by Administrative Regulations Analyst Joanna Eide. This letter will go out to interested stakeholders asking for review. The goal of the Wildlife Rehabilitation WAC revision is to update the language and group topics for a more understandable flow. There are also details being added that will clarify wildlife rehabilitation rules, making wildlife rehabilitation easier to practice. Thompson is reviewing Joanna Eide's version of the WAC rewrite.

**Falconry:** Two non-resident falconers from Oregon requested raptor capture permits from Washington State. After checking on those falconers with the Oregon permit biologist, Tricia Thompson wrote letters of permission for those two falconers to capture sharp-shinned hawks for falconry.

The last day that a wild peregrine fledgling can be taken in 2012 was Friday, August 31. There was one more successful trapping event before the season closed, which makes a total of five out of the 10 permitted wild peregrines this year.

### ***GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES***

[Hunting Prospects](#) for all 17 districts were completed, reviewed, and posted on the agency website. New for this year are summaries of the 2011 hunting seasons for big game, waterfowl, and upland birds.

A news release was issued describing the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pittman Robertson Act, highlighting the first land purchases that became the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area.

### ***GOAL 3: USE SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES, DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE***

**Wildlife Outreach Volunteers:** Volunteer Management Coordinator James Chandler continued to develop online guidelines for WDFW staff to post project information for volunteers through CERVIS (Community Event Registration Volunteer Information System). Chandler finalized the online instructions for users of CERVIS on "How to Work in CERVIS" and trained several

agency staff on how to participate as a CERVIS administrator for a group of volunteers. Michael O'Malley and James Chandler also finalized the agency Volunteer Policy for Human Resources review.

**Citizen Science:** Citizen Science coordinator Margaret Tudor met with Catherine Hovanic, Executive Director of the Washington Native Plant Society, to focus members on the Ecological Integrity Monitoring (EIM) Project. Catherine applauded the DFW EIM Project and is recommending the citizen science opportunity to her members statewide. Tudor developed a draft EIM Outreach Plan for the EIM Team review. To date, 20 percent of the EIM data points on Swanson's Lake Wildlife Area have posted photo point data contributed by citizen science volunteers.

Gibilisco continued to work with other WDFW staff on the Ecological Monitoring Assessments being conducted on select wildlife areas. The Sinlahekin Wildlife Area EIM planned for late September has been posted on the WDFW Facebook page and on Cornell University's [Citizen Science Central](#) which serves as a national citizen science portal and offers support for organizers of all initiatives where public participants are involved in scientific research. Several participants have registered or are talking with WDFW staff about the September 29 workshop which will mark the beginning of the second WDFW wildlife area long-term ecological monitoring project.

The screenshot shows a web page titled "Citizen Science Central" with a header image featuring a bird, a deer, a fish, and a hand holding a GPS device. The page layout includes a left sidebar with navigation links: Home, Projects (Project Registry, Finding Projects, Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Ecological Monitoring Project), and Resources (Citizen science, volunteer monitoring... participatory action research... this site supports organizers of all initiatives where public participants are involved in scientific research. More about this...). Below the sidebar is a search bar and a logo for "Citizen Science at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology". The main content area features the project title "Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Ecological Monitoring Project" and a description: "Join the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to help monitor the long-term ecological integrity on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area in North Central Washington (20,000 acres). Training and free access pass provided to the oldest wildlife area protected in Washington." It includes the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife logo and text describing the project's goals and methods. Metadata includes keywords (research, education, ecological monitoring), audience (adults, students), location (Washington State), goals (ongoing education, research, resource management), collaborators (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife), and contacts (Chuck Gibilisco, Wildlife Outreach, Citizen Science Contact, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (360) 902-2364; Margaret Tudor, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (360) 704-0570). The footer contains copyright information for Cornell University and the address: 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, NY 14850.

## **REGION 1**

### **Wolf Management**

#### **District 1**

**Gray Wolf Management:** District Wildlife Biologist Dana Base along with Wildlife Officers Dan Anderson and Don Weatherman responded to a report from the Diamond M Ranch on August 30 of two injured Hereford calves in the Wedge. The two calves, both alive, but injured, were closely examined and photographed with notes taken for reports prepared back at the office. Per assessment protocol, Biologists Base and Shepherd, and Technician Baker participated in a conference call with WDFW staff and others from cooperating agencies discussing the incident. Technician Baker provided support for the officers and biologist responding to a depredation incident in the Wedge.

Biologist Shepherd and Technician Baker met with a local rancher to discuss a cooperative agreement regarding wolf/livestock conflict prevention. Biologist Shepherd and Technician Baker participated in a Wolf Conservation and Management Update with other Region 1 staff.

Biologist Shepherd, Technician Tiffany Baker, and Volunteer Amanda Charron scouted for wolf sign (scat and tracks) and deployed a trail camera in the Salmo pack area. Technician Tiffany Baker and Volunteer Scott Price also scouted for wolf sign (scat and tracks) and deployed a trail camera in the Salmo pack area. Technician Baker programmed Radio-Activated Guard (RAG) system box at Smackout for desired distance, assembled laptop mount for vehicle, and tested real time-tracking via laptop and GPS.



*Tiffany Baker and Volunteer Amanda Charron deployed a trail camera in the Salmo pack area.*

**GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE**

**Wildlife Management**

**Northeast Washington Pre-Season Deer Surveys:** District biological staff completed this year’s deer classification counts for the month of August. Both standardized and traditional transects were accomplished within Game Management Units (GMUs) 101, 105, 108, 111, 113, 117, and 121. Altogether, 19 of 20 standardized deer transects were surveyed which included the six traditional “long-term” transects that have consistently run since 2003. This is the first year that the mean number of white-tailed deer per transect mile surveyed increased since 2006 (see table below) which likely indicates some rebound in the overall white-tail population within Deer Population Management Unit 13. Surveys will continue next month (September), however, on fewer transects than in August, and count results will be compiled and compared with previous years.

**Total Classified White-tailed Deer from August Surveys by Transect within PMU-13, 2003-2012.**

Transect Name :	Length, miles	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Mean*
Flat Creek	17.5	116	123	138	147	117	143	122	117	50	21	119
Douglas	11.0	231	288	198	304	190	177	131	103	92	80	190
Deep Creek	19.8	38	42	48	54	84	79	78	51	23	22	55
Clayton	7.2	95	58	51	83	97	61	48	38	38	82	63
Dunn Mountain	5.3	189	213	192	165	161	106	42	103	117	205	143
Daisy - Maud	12.3	48	43	33	51	45	75	50	50	59	92	50
<b>Total Miles:</b>	<b>73.1</b>											
<b>Total White-tails:</b>		<b>717</b>	<b>767</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>622</b>
<b>Average Total:</b>		<b>120</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>Mean per mile:</b>		<b>9.8</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>8.5</b>

for 2003-2011



*White-tail and mule deer observed in alfalfa fields near Curlew in GMU 101.*

## Wildlife Areas

**Chief Joseph Wildlife Area - Cache Creek Fire Update:** Bio Woodall spent a day riding the burned area of the Wildlife Area (WLA). He found the riparian area and brushy draws a little scorched, but mostly intact. The majority of it was still green. The blackened hillsides will recover nicely with some lush bunchgrasses this fall/winter. He also found one younger cow elk that had succumbed to the fire. The main elk herd has since moved back into the burned area. With an abundant fuel load on the ground, a good burn was long overdue for this area. According to our neighbor who was raised along the creek, the last good burn was in 1988. Overall this fire should prove positive for the landscape. The USFS broke down the Green Spike Camp and moved all operations to the south end of the fire. The camp site was cleaned up and essentially left in as good of shape as they found it, if not better. I was really pleased with how smoothly that operation went and their wanting to make things right, fix anything they may have broke, and leave on a positive note. They really appreciated our assistance on the operation. Everything looked great! Greg Heimgartner spent one day irrigating fields where firefighters parked vehicles and equipment. Greg also hiked up on the hillsides where the fire burned our boundary fences. Greg reported that our fences are heavily damaged in places and will need extensive rebuilding to prevent intrusion from livestock grazing adjacent private property. The fence is not on the property line and the agency may want to consider building a new fence on the property line if that is what it comes to. The type 2 management team is scheduled to leave the fire on September 5 and Dice signed a new delegation of authority at USFS's request for the incoming type 3 management team. So far, this fire has burned over 73,000 acres, most of which is in Oregon. Approximately 5,300 acres of the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area is part of this fire. On Monday, Dice hauled the wildlife area John Deere 450C cat to the Chief Joseph WLA for use in rehabilitating fire lines. The cat was picked up from Rowand Machinery in Lewiston where repairs to the undercarriage were recently completed. Wildlife Area staff will begin rehab next week as time allows.



*View of the burned Chief Joseph Wildlife Area landscape, with Lime Point in the distance.*

**WT Wooten WA – Large Woody Debris:** Work continued on the large woody debris project on the Tucannon River. The sky-crane arrived Monday and began work on Tuesday. They spent Tuesday-Friday airlifting trees from the USFS land and placing them in the Tucannon River between Beaver-Watson Lake and Campground 6. They also placed 24 boulders that weighed approximately 15,000 pounds each and smaller trees for “racking material.” Assistant Area Manager Dingman spent a day and a half flagging the road for the helicopter project. She reopened Campgrounds 5 and 6 and took signs down so the public could camp there Labor Day weekend.



*Sky-crane helicopter lowers large woody debris into the Tucannon River.*

***GOAL 3: USE SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES, DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE***

**Wildlife Areas**

**Sherman Creek Wildlife Area (SCWA) Fish Screen** – Wildlife Area Assistant Manager (WAAM) Daro Palmer received a call from the adjacent orchard operator that we share the fish screen maintenance with. A tensioning sprocket for the drive chain was frozen, keeping the screen from operating. WAAM Palmer and Sherman Creek Hatchery Manager Mitch Combs visited the screen to assess the situation and then contacted Ray Gilmour with Construction and

Maintenance to order parts. The parts will be here next week. In the meantime, the chain tension was relieved enough to allow the screen to keep operating. WAAM Palmer plans to do extensive cleaning and maintenance work on the screen and irrigation canal late this fall after the water diversion is shut down for the season.



### **Private Lands/Access**

Resolving conflict with wildlife in Southeast Washington: Biologist Rasley met with Columbia County farmer Gene Warren at Gene's request. Mr. Warren said "he was going to send an email to Senator Hewitt and the folks in Olympia and Spokane regarding our new DPCA (Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement) program". Gene said "this year was the best year he has seen in over 25 yrs." and "the DP elk permits worked perfect even though his 2 hunters did not harvest an elk. The harassment from the hunters kept the elk out of his crops". Gene also said the new program is working perfect and he thanked me for all the hard work and attention we gave him.

### **REGION 2**

None

### **REGION 3**

None

## **REGION 4**

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

#### **Wildlife Management**

**San Juan Island Species of Greatest Conservation Needs:** District Biologist Milner, Assistant District Biologist Cyra, and Acting Diversity Division Manager Allen visited Waldron Island and North Finger Island in the northern San Juan Islands as part of this summer's surveys for small mammals and reptiles listed as Species of Greatest Conservation Need. The two islands are unusual in the San Juan's for their lack of deer, raccoon, and mouse populations, species that cause great consternation on other islands. It appeared the only terrestrial mammal successfully thriving on Waldron is rats; no sign of the target species of Shaw Island Voles was observed. North Finger Island had no rats, but did have signs of a great amount of vole activity. Snake cover boards were deployed on North Finger Island due to habitat similar to that reported from the Canadian Gulf Islands. The cover boards will be checked later in the fall after the rains have begun.



***District Biologist Milner and Diversity Manager Allen discuss reptile cover board placement with landowner Dr. Charles Wilson (left). A possible Shaw Island Vole spotted on North Finger Island (right).***

**Swan Coordination Conference Call:** Biologists Danilson and DeBruyn participated in a conference call with representatives from WDFW, University of Washington, and the Canadian Wildlife Service. The purpose of the call was to discuss the status of funding and plan activities at Judson Lake intended to address swan mortalities associated with lead consumption. Judson Lake straddles the US-Canadian border in Whatcom County and has been documented and treated as a known source of lead (from waterfowl hunting prior to the lead shot ban). DeBruyn also conducted an on the ground assessment of the status of vegetation currently in the lake.

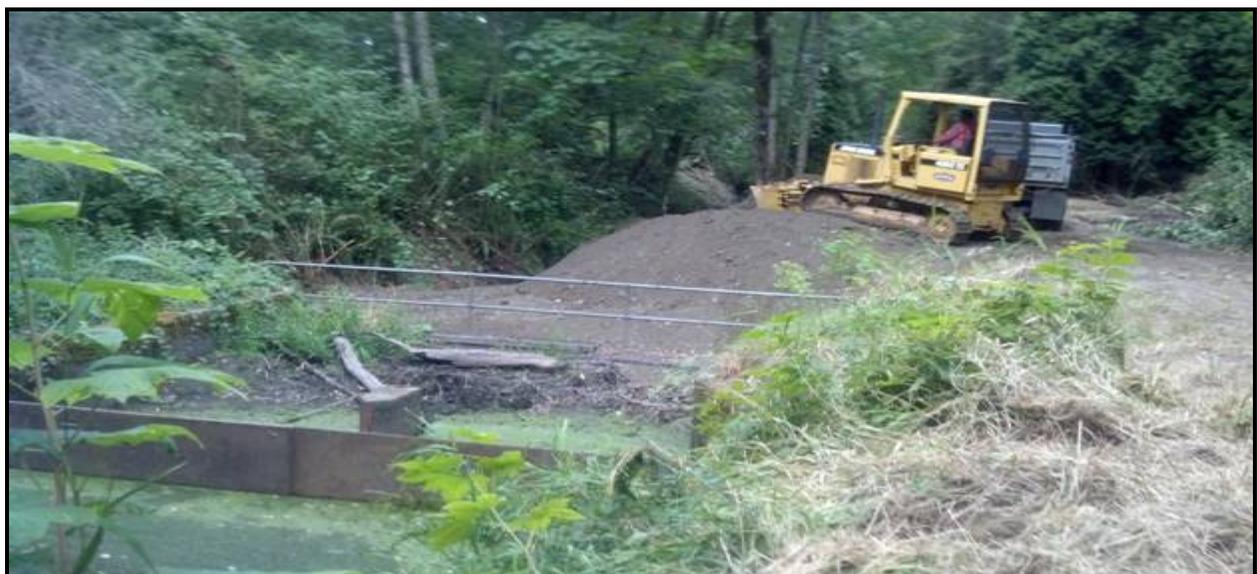
**Oregon Spotted Frog:** Biologist Danilson assisted Senior Research Scientist Marc Hayes in support of the range-wide conservation strategy for Oregon spotted frogs. Danilson worked with Biologist Bohannon to provide information about the quality, limiting factors, and potential threats to the habitat that supports this species in Skagit and Whatcom County. Additional information has been requested from fisheries personnel to complete this task.

**Heron Management Assistance, Seattle:** Biologist Anderson met with Seattle Parks and Recreation staff, as well as Heron Habitat Helpers board members, to discuss ongoing needs with heron and wildlife management in general in Seattle. Anderson has provided assistance regarding language proposed to streamline wildlife consideration across various wildlife critical areas to include not only land-use change instances, but other areas that may affect wildlife and habitat, such as tree consideration and management outside of land-use changes. Seattle is currently examining their tree ordinance. Anderson also clarified changes in the current update to WDFW Priority Habitats and Species Management Recommendations for Great Blue Heron and outlined needs regarding survey and documentation of limiting habitat features in order to meet recommendations outlined in the new management document.

**Citizen Acoustic Bat Monitoring on Lower Snoqualmie Valley Wildlife Management Units (WMU):** Biologist Anderson worked with WDFW volunteers and Bats Northwest (<http://www.batsnorthwest.org>) to complete the third and final summer surveys on Stillwater, Cherry Valley, and Crescent Lake WMU. Bat activity once again noted on all units. Next steps are to examine this pilot bat “bioblitz” survey data with species occurrence software and work to train volunteers to be more comfortable with the analysis software.

### Wildlife Areas

**Lake Terrell Dam Remodeling Project:** Manager Kessler met the contractors working on the dam remodel project and discussed the work schedule for the project. A temporary dam has been placed upstream of the existing dam so work can begin. Fill material is being trucked in and placed in the creek channel downstream of the dam.





*A temporary dam has been placed upstream of the existing Lake Terrell dam so work can begin on the new dam. Fill material is being trucked in and placed in the creek channel downstream of the dam.*

## ***GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES***

### **Wildlife Management**

**Western Mallard Model Work:** Biologist DeBruyn concluded duck trapping at sites in Whatcom County. DeBruyn trapped and banded 100 mallards and three wood ducks during the course of the trapping (as well as numerous re-traps of previously trapped birds). The primary objective of this project is to provide data on survival for long-term population modeling of western mallard populations.

**Mount Rainier Elk Survey:** Biologist Anderson, along with District Biologist Tirhi and Biologist Schmidt, initiated annual survey of Mount Rainier National Park elk. Part of the survey area was socked in with low hanging clouds. However, the bulk of the north area along the White River was surveyed. A handful of adult and sub-adult bulls were noted. Tirhi and Schmidt introduced the Standard Operating Procedure for annual survey in this area. Surveys are conducted in a joint effort with National Park and tribal entities.

### **Private Lands/Access**

**Whidbey Deer Hunting:** Biologist Roozen and technician Otto made a site visit to Whidbey Camano Land Trust and adjoining private property to continue preparations for upcoming deer hunting season. Roozen and Otto also met with Land Trust staff to go over work already done and work not yet completed to make the acreage ready for public hunting access.

**Hamilton Boat Ramp, Skagit River:** The Capital Access Management Program construction crew finished replacement of the Hamilton boat ramp on the Skagit River. The new ramp has

been angled slightly down stream and is protected from scour by open-cell erosion control mats. Additional work was performed on the Birdsvie boat ramp to provide safe launching at all water levels. Mitigation plantings will follow later this fall.



*Before (left) and after (right) images of the Hamilton boat ramp on the Skagit river.*

### Wildlife Areas

**Pheasant Release Program:** Natural Resource Specialist Greg Meis and Natural Resource Technician Curran Cosgrove worked with Region 4 Private Lands Program Staff , Brandon Roozen and Brad Otto preparing the new pheasant release site that will be coming online this season. It is a DNR property that we have under a temporary use agreement. The parking area is being prepared, a reader board for maps and signs is installed, a foot bridge is installed, and trails are being brushed out. Additional work on trails and signs are in progress and should be completed by the youth hunt weekend of September 22.



*View of the temporary footbridge at the new Bow Hill Road pheasant release site.*

**Samish Unit:** Skagit Wildlife Area staff met with a local Eagle Scout to discuss his duck blind building project on the Samish Unit. The blind is scheduled to be built early in October in time for the General Waterfowl season opening. Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Natural Resource Tech Cosgrove installed safety zone signs on the Samish Unit property, repaired foot bridges, and examined locations for additional mowing for hunting season preparations.

**Whatcom Wildlife Area Pheasant Release:** Manager Kessler updated the pheasant release maps for the three release areas. He also contacted all the previous volunteers. He spoke with Doug Huddle of the Bellingham Herald who put an announcement for more volunteers in the outdoors column of the newspaper. The pheasant release scheduling meeting will be next week.

***GOAL 3: USE SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES, DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE***

**Private Lands/Access**

**GMU 418 Elk Hunting Access:** Biologist Roozen fielded telephone calls from permit holders and attended to some hunter difficulties within the Unit. Roozen toured the GMU to monitor and note hunter activities, road conditions, and logging operations.

***GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE***

**Wildlife Management**

**Rocket Net Training:** Biologist Danilson attended a two-day course provided by the US Fish and Wildlife Service regarding federal laws and regulations on rocket netting. The course included class room review of materials, a written test, and practical hands-on field experience operating rocket nets and net cannons.

**REGION 5**

None

**REGION 6**

None