

Wildlife Program

Week of December 31, 2012 – January 6, 2013

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Gray Wolf Management

District 1: A radio-collared Smackout pack wolf left the eastern Wedge near the Guglielmino Ranch and localized near the Gene Pond Ranch near Barstow in the western Wedge. The wolf was observed by Biologist Shepherd feeding on a bone pile a few 100 yards from the residence. Gene Pond was informed and options such as alarm boxes and hazing devices were discussed, as was removal of future cattle carcasses as the two to three present were now frozen and in a field with deep snow. During subsequent days, we placed fladry and a double strand electrical fence around the newest two of the three carcasses. Another Smackout pack wolf localized a half mile north of John Dawson's, three to four miles north of Colville. Contact was frequent with the Dawson family throughout the week and that wolf is now near the Canadian border.



Officer Parkert placed fladry and electrical fencing around cattle carcasses in response to a radio-collared Smackout pack wolf observed by Biologist Shepherd feeding on a bone pile near the Pond Ranch in the Wedge. The older carcass can be seen in background.



Cattle carcass that was scavenged in the Wedge by a Smackout pack wolf is now surrounded by electrical fence and fladry with Pond Ranch residence in the background (above). Smackout pack wolf track near the Pond Ranch in the Wedge (below).



District 3: District Biologist (DB) Wik was contacted by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) about a collared wolf from the Walla Walla pack spending New Year's Eve and day in Walla Walla County. The animal returned to Oregon within 24 hours.

Deer Survey: DB Wik worked on compiling the survey data from the aerial deer surveys prior to Christmas. Sightability estimates will be generated next week along with a completion report. Assistant District Biologist (ADB) Vekasy worked on entering the road survey data.



Short-eared owls spotted during the aerial deer surveys. Mark Vekasy photo.

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

Helicopter Survey of Moose, Elk, and Bighorn Sheep: District 1 wildlife program staff Jay Shepherd and Dana Base completed three helicopter flying segments on December 30-31 for this winter's survey. These included quadrats within the LeClerc and Kalispel drainages of Game Management Unit (GMU) 113, one quadrat each in GMUs 101 and 117, and the Vulcan Bighorn Sheep range in GMU 101. Only 26 bighorn sheep were observed at Vulcan on December 31, 2012, including 13 rams, nine ewes and four lambs.

Mount Spokane and Hangman Moose Survey: District 2 Biologists Ferguson and Atamian completed the aerial survey of the Mount Spokane and Hangman Moose units. We observed a high number of moose north of Mt. Spokane and in the Tower Mountain areas. Moose numbers south of Mt. Spokane appeared to be in the normal range, while the count in the Mica Peak area was down. More details to come next week once the data has been entered.



A high number of moose were spotted at the Moose Survey areas in Spokane County (above) including these two bulls on Mount Spokane (below). Howard Ferguson photos.





Many moose were bedded down and not getting up (above), but this mature bull with antlers still attached was on the move (below). Howard Ferguson photos.



Other

Weather Conditions: Fog and overcast continued this week with rare exception on Thursday and Friday afternoon. Meanwhile, temperatures dropped 10 degrees Fahrenheit, now with daytime highs in the 20's and overnight lows in the teens within the vicinity of Colville.

REGION 2

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

Wildlife Management

Mule Deer: Biologists Finger and Gregory conducted aerial mule deer surveys over the GMU 290, covering 42 percent of the 273 square mile unit during the flight where over 300 deer were classified. Observations and helicopter routes can be seen in the attached figure. Results of the flight are not yet complete, but early indications suggest the timing may not have been optimal. Buck ratios were down significantly from previous surveys and there were indications that some bucks had dropped antlers. This survey will likely be conducted during the first half of December in the future.



Biologists Finger and Gregory conducted aerial mule deer surveys over GMU 290.

Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee: Biologist Finger continued working on a PowerPoint presentation to carry to the Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee for January 2013. Finger met with Curt Dotson (Grant County Public Utility District), Mike Lesky and Mike Bekwith (Bureau of Reclamation, to discuss Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) proposal to provide forage for terns on adjacent wetlands.



Weekender Opportunities: Both mule and white-tail deer can be found during the day concentrated on low elevation winter ranges. California quail, Chukar and Hungarian Partridge can all be found throughout the Okanogan Valley grouped together in flocks and concentrated on any natural forage or grain source (feedlots or feeders).



Wildlife Areas

Winter Sports Trail: The Lloyd Ranch winter sports trail is in full operation. Much like the popular Big Valley trail, the Lloyd Ranch is open to multiple recreational uses. Thus far we have seen not only Nordic skiers, but also snow shoes, hikers, sledders and fat bike riders.



The fat bike phenomenon is relatively new to the Methow, but appears to be gaining steam. In essence, these are mountain bikes with four inch or wider tires that run at very low pressure, typically six pounds per square inch or less. This allows them to move along the snow without digging in; they simply float on the top. Local bike shop owners Joe and Julie Brown tell us that it is one of the fastest growing segments of the bike industry.





Trail development and maintenance is entirely a volunteer effort. The only resource provided by WDFW has been the snowmobile used for pulling the trail groomer.

This being the first year for the trail, it is taking the public a little time to discover this new opportunity and it's many virtues including being close to Winthrop (approximately three miles from town) and requiring nothing more than a Discover Pass, multiple use, interesting terrain and really nice views. Methow staff is working on ways to further promote public use of this trail system. That said the few comments we are getting from users are glowing. This trail is making a significant improvement to the overall public recreational opportunities in the Methow Valley.

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Bighorn Sheep: Wildlife Biologists Bernatowicz and Moore, with help from other regional staff, spent most of the week setting up the Cleman Mountain trap and trapping bighorn sheep for veterinary sampling. Twelve ewes were sampled and one was fitted with a GPS collar. Additional samples will be collected from bighorns in the Yakima River Canyon later this month, as a follow-up to the recent disease outbreak.



Bighorn sheep capture operation at the Cleman Mountain feed site.

I-90 Elk: In recent weeks, eight elk have been hit on I-90 near Vantage. A fairly large group of elk was just north of the interstate and some were occasionally crossing and bedding in the median area. Department of Transportation (DOT) and Washington State Patrol (WSP) expressed concerns for highway safety. After Deer and Elk Conflict Specialist Novack visited the area, a decision was made to try to move the elk via helicopter. Officer Scherzinger, Kittitas County Sheriff, and WSP were on hand for traffic control. Yakima Training Center (YTC) was contacted to make sure there wouldn't be any conflict with any military aircraft. Biologist Moore flew with the vendor and found 350 elk near I-90. The elk were pushed north across the Old Vantage Highway where another 650 elk were encountered. The estimated 1000 elk were moved into the next drainage, which is a little over a mile from the interstate.

Other

Winter Conditions: Weather was cold this past week with lows in the teen's and 20's and highs below freezing. Scattered snow occurred all week with some new accumulation. Temperatures this coming week are expected to warm up with highs near 40 and lows in the 20's. There is a chance of rain or snow. There is good snow cover over most of the area and feed site counts have stabilized. Elk are in good condition.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Northern Puget Sound Lesser Snow Goose Study: Biologist Danilson conducted two aerial survey photo counts of snow geese between Port Susan Bay and the Fraser River delta in British Columbia. Aerial photographs from these flights are used to develop final estimates of the entire Northern Puget Sound population and estimate annual juvenile recruitment.

Aerial photos from the first flight were taken by Dr. Sean Boyd of Environment Canada and encompassed the areas he has surveyed for over 20 years. The second flight followed transects established this fall, which are much more comprehensive. The objective of these paired flights is to evaluate whether a more comprehensive survey effort, which encompasses potential snow goose habitat outside of historic areas, provides a better estimate of this population. A total of 15 different flocks were observed on Thursday and 12 different flocks were observed on Saturday. While final estimates from the photo counts are not yet available, snow goose numbers appear to be similar, albeit slightly lower than the 2011-2012 estimate of 70,000.

Snow geese continue to be wide scattered throughout Skagit and North Snohomish counties and there are substantially higher numbers in Washington than British Columbia presently. The largest flocks continue to be found on and around Fir Island, North Padilla Bay inland, Port Susan Bay, and near the town of Snohomish.



Snow geese have become an urban nuisance as they feed in parks, school yards and ball fields in Richmond, British Columbia.



There are substantially higher numbers of snow geese in Washington than British Columbia presently. Displayed is a snow geese field near Snohomish.

Swan Mortality and Morbidity Project: Technician Anderson continued to respond to hotline calls reporting dead, sick and injured swans. Anderson collected dead swans from Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom counties and surveyed known roost sites and feeding areas (latest tally in table below). The number of calls from people reporting dead, sick or injured swans has increased over the past couple weeks. Citizens who see dead, sick or injured swans are reminded to report these to the WDFW swan and nutria hotline at (360) 466-4345 ext. 266.

	Skagit	Snohomish	Whatcom	Sumas	TOTAL
Powerline suspect	19	4	23	2	48
Pb suspect	13		8		21
Unknown or Trauma*	8		10	1	19
Feather Pile	1		2	1	4
TOTAL	41	4	43	4	92

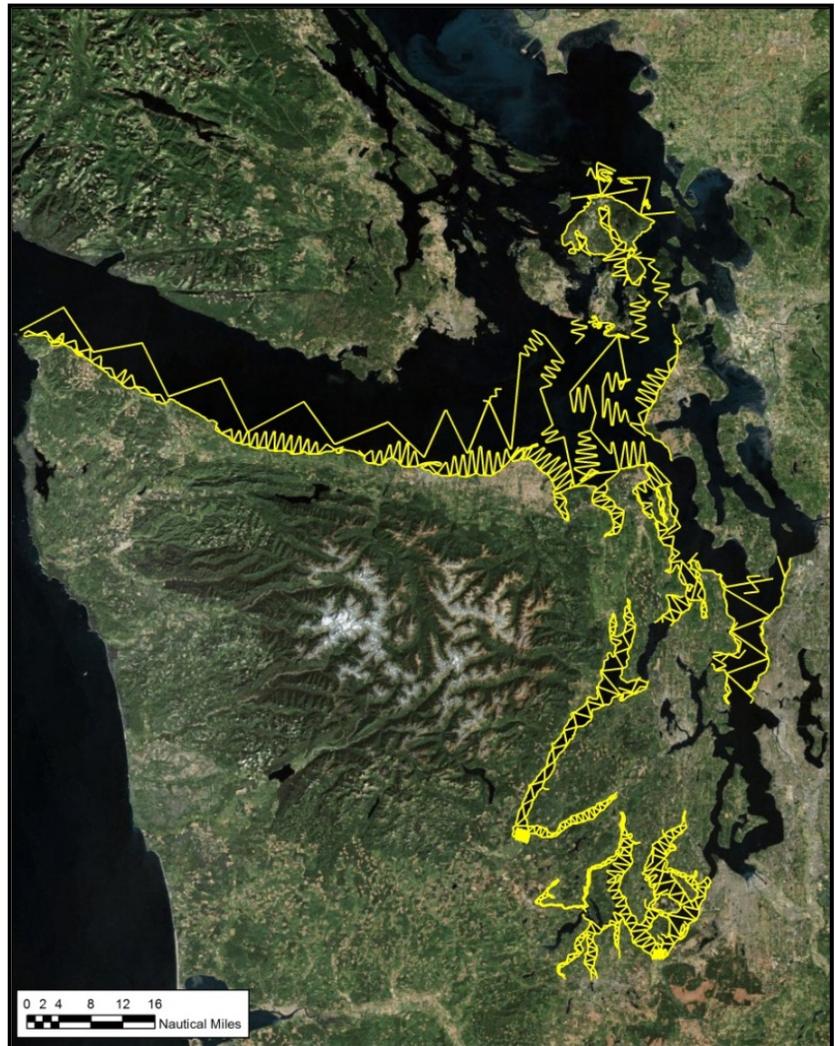
Biologist DeBruyn collared and banded two adult trumpeter swans that were rehabilitated by Northwest Wildlife after being picked up by Technician Anderson last year. The swans have recovered nicely and seemed to have formed a pair bond in captivity. They were later released at Lake Terrell.

Winter Marine Waterfowl Aerial Surveys: After a break for the holidays, Marine Bird Specialist Evenson along with Assistant District Biologists Cyra and Murphie completed another week of annual winter marine waterfowl surveys. This week the weather allowed three days of surveys allowing us to complete nearly 50 percent of the survey routes to date, including most of the large open water areas.

The yellow lines on the map indicate survey transect lines flown to date. Time on the ground was used to transcribe data from days flown earlier.

These annual surveys are used to determine trends in marine waterfowl species – both game and diversity species; and results are used to help inform the Pacific Flyway in season setting for sea ducks.

Maps, data and species information from the nearly 20 years of annual surveys can be found at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/mapping/psamp/>



Yellow lines indicate survey transect lines flown to date during winter marine waterfowl aerial surveys.

Private Lands/Access

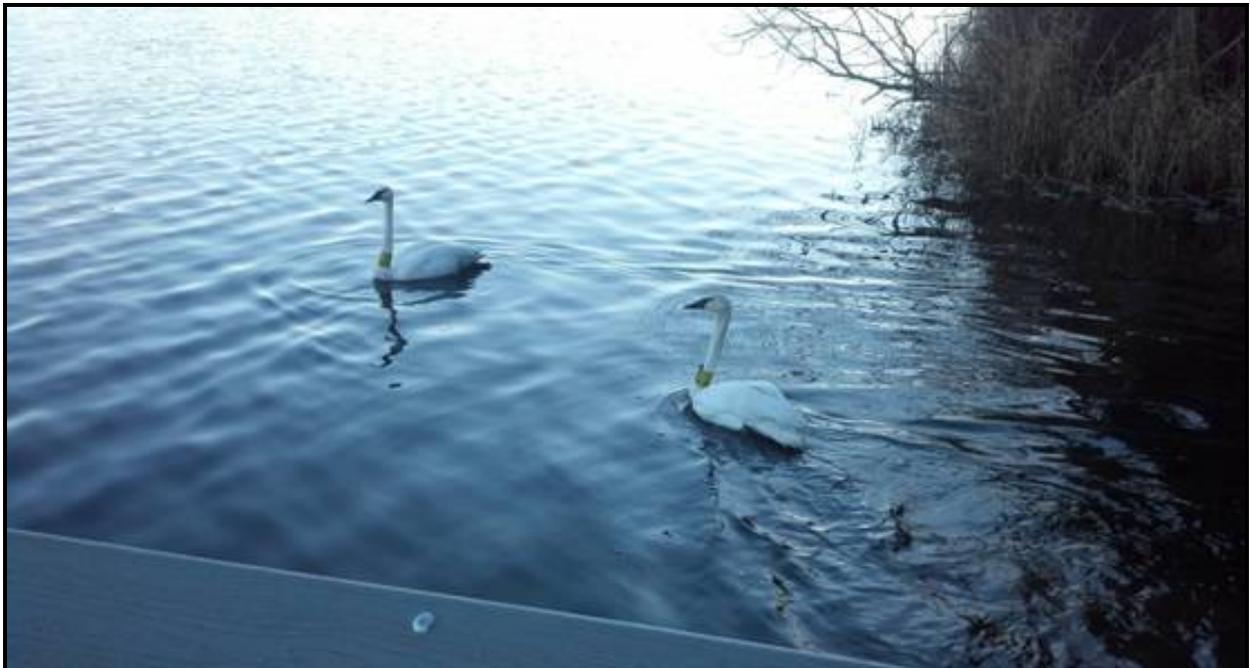
Lesser Snow Goose Project and Swan Carcass Collection: Private lands staff continued efforts assisting with the capture, measurement and banding/collaring efforts associated with the lesser snow geese project. Technician Otto assisted Technician Anderson with swan capture and collection.

Wildlife Areas

Lake Terrell Swan Release: Workers from the Northwest Wildlife Rehabilitation Center released two rehabilitated swans at Lake Terrell. One was a power line strike that had injured a wing and the other one was found extremely weak and undernourished.



Workers from the Northwest Wildlife Rehabilitation Center released two rehabilitated swans at Lake Terrell.



Island Unit: Skagit Wildlife Area staff met with retired Manger John Garrett to discuss Island Unit infrastructure history and management. The focus was to inventory the drainage infrastructure. Other items discussed were past crop rotations and the lessons that were learned from various experiments on the Unit over the past decade.



Water conditions on the Island Unit of the Skagit Wildlife Area.

Skagit Wildlife Area Units: Natural Resources Specialist Greg Meis and Natural Resources Technician Curran Cosgrove toured all the lower river units to check access conditions, public use, and hunting conditions. Sunny conditions during the last week increased wildlife viewing activities on all sites. The snow geese have been utilizing the Fir Island Farm Reserve and eagle activity in the Skagit Delta has increased recently providing good viewing opportunity.



Snow geese have been utilizing the Snow Goose Reserve on the Skagit Wildlife Area.

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

Wildlife Management

Woodland Park Zoo and WDFW Citizen Amphibian Monitoring Planning: Biologist Anderson provided updates to the field guide that citizens will use in the upcoming 2013 season. Anderson added “confusing others” such as freshwater bryozoan colonies and mollusk egg packets. Training will be held this weekend and information is available online at <http://www.zoo.org/backyardhabitat>

Aerial Brant Survey: Biologist DeBruyn accompanied Mike Davison on a survey of Brant habitat in Skagit and Whatcom counties in order to assess the population level and to determine if there are enough Brant in Skagit County to justify a hunting season. The Western High Arctic Brant population that winters almost exclusively in Padilla Bay was deemed healthy enough to implement the scheduled harvest.

Fidalgo Bay	0
Padilla Bay	5,705
Samish Bay	3,255
Nooksack Delta/Portage	85
Lummi Bay	1,960
Birch Bay	210
Drayton Harbor	135
Totals	11,350

Brant counted on aerial survey conducted on January 2, 2013. Numbers in red apply towards minimum of 6,000 Brant needed to proceed with scheduled hunting season in Skagit County.

Private Lands/Access

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Region 4 private lands staff continued scheduled surveys of hunt units and attended to unit repairs as needed. Calm, sunny weather limited hunter use and success in the units.

GMU 418 Elk Hunting Access: Technician Deyo surveyed access roads and monitored public use within the GMU. All elk tag holders are finished with their hunts with a few tags going unfilled. Deyo noted low snow levels as well as multiple small groups of elk within the timberlands.



Multiple elk leave the logging road as Technician Deyo surveys GMU 418.

Snow Goose Quality Program: Region 4 private lands staff monitored and noted hunter use in units. Multiple large flocks of geese provided opportunity for hunters within and around quality hunt fields.

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

Wildlife Management

Assistance to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – eagle and migratory bird management: Biologist Anderson assisted USFWS and Mercer Island staff with eagle management needs. WDFW no longer manages the habitat around eagle nests. WDFW documents new eagle nests and updates status of known nests.

Public reports of nests are greatly appreciated. Information regarding eagle management is available at http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/bald_eagle/

Biologist Anderson was contacted by USFWS, Division of Migratory Birds, regarding Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and conflicts with Nuisance Wildlife Control Officers (NWCO). Anderson relayed he had no reports of inappropriate activity in regards to MBTA and NWCO; but that his understanding was NWCO permits do not apply to MBTA situations. Anderson provided appropriate contacts in Enforcement regarding the NWCO program.

Information regarding the WDFW NWCO program and related permit system can be found here: http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/nuisance/damage_control.html

Woodland Park Zoo Urban Carnivore Investigations: Biologist Anderson provided information to Woodland Park Zoo School and Community Engagement staff regarding efforts of 6th grade classes in Issaquah to examine carnivore use in their area. One of the classes is particularly interested in dangerous wildlife reports that WDFW receives for their area and in particular specific communities. WDFW tracks dangerous wildlife incidents to the city area, but not local communities as that is overall a level of information unnecessary for our management purposes.

Anderson directed Woodland Park Zoo staff to the WDFW Dangerous Wildlife Incident Report website for related information, available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/dangerous/reports/>

Wildlife Areas

Signage Improvements: Manager Rotton is coordinating with Watershed Steward Bob Warinner to create improved posters and signs for the Wildlife Area sign boards. Updated sign materials were recently placed at the Headquarters' and DeBay Slough Units.

Leque Island: Restoration Projects Coordinator Brokaw met with Manager Link to discuss a strategy for fitting the Leque Island land use decision into the WDFW Restoration Pathway. The Pathway is a framework of actions and decisions for potential projects on WDFW lands that involves collaboration between various internal Programs and local stakeholders. The first step in the planning process for Leque Island is an internal meeting between representatives of each of the Programs that will be scheduled for late January.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Wildlife Management

New staff: Manager Link continued to provide orientation for Brian Boehm, the new Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager, and Loren Brokaw, the new Restoration Projects Coordinator. Biologist Anderson completed examination of applicants for the Biologist 2 position in District 12. Anderson is working on setting an interview panel up and contacting potential candidates for interview.

Biologist Anderson initiated discussion with University of Washington (UW) Professor John Marzluff regarding potential development of a collaborative student monitoring and study effort of the UW heron colony. Marzluff is currently on sabbatical. Anderson has a pilot field protocol

that may be used as a baseline for WDFW data needs. Anderson has suggested working with Marzluff to flesh out further behavioral and related heron ecology studies that would be more for the purpose of UW students gaining field study experience and examining long term trends in campus heron use. This would likely be for students taking ornithology coursework. Anderson will be in discussion with Marzluff as he has time during his sabbatical period. Anderson has suggested student efforts could possibly initiate during 2014 ornithology coursework.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Black-tailed Deer Research Project: A fawn mortality search associated with the Region 5 portion of the black-tailed deer research project was conducted. Study does and their associated young are being monitored by a combination of remote (satellite) and field (VHF) methods. The does are located in two study clusters concentrated within the Washougal (568) and Coweeman (550) Game Management Units. To date, in the Washougal cluster of five remaining does, four fawns remain alive.

Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area Elk Survey: Biologists Miller and Bergh conducted the monthly winter survey of elk on the Wildlife Area. A total of 58 elk were observed on the valley floor, which was essentially free of snow.

No evidence of carcasses was observed and all elk seen looked to be in fair condition. During the survey temperatures were just below freezing, sky was clear, and winds were strong. Snow level was approximately 2,000 feet.



Biologists Miller and Bergh conducted the monthly winter survey of elk on the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area (above and left).

Western Gray Squirrel: Biologists Anderson assisted Habitat Biologist Fornes and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) National Scenic Area with a review of the Coyote Wall planned recreation development in the Columbia River Gorge. A western gray squirrel nest was located on the property as part of the development review process. A final plan was agreed upon with the USFS to protect the nest site as well as the surrounding habitat. Additional protective measures will be taken during construction to protect habitat associated with a variety of species including the California Mountain Kingsnake.

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

Wildlife Management

Southwest Washington Management Area 2A and 2B Goose Hunt: The Southwest Washington Area 2A goose hunting season continues to be open in all zones. Technicians have identified 995 geese through 474 hunter harvests from November 10, 2012, through January 2, 2013. Harvest rates were approximately 2.10 geese per hunter and eight dusks were harvested during this period.

There is less than one month remaining in the regular season. However, hunters interested in participating can refer to pages 16, 20 and 21 of the migratory waterfowl pamphlet for further details regarding requirements for participation. As a reminder for those planning on participating, Management Area 2A hunts take place on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The season remains open on those days until January 27 unless zone closures occur due to an over-harvest of dusks.

Private Lands/Access

Hunter Assistance: Technician White left messages with hunters with Elk tags for Special Permit hunt 2721 occurring the first two weeks of January in the Trout Lake Valley, offering assistance in contacting private landowners. In talking with local farmers, White found that all three hunters with tags in hunt 2720 were successful. Technician White assisted two master hunters with permits for Trout Lake Elk Area 5062 by providing some local names to contact for hunting permission.

St. Helens Land Access Program: Biologist Stephens continued to work with Weyerhaeuser and volunteers to facilitate weekday motorized hunting access to the St. Helens Tree Farm for the special elk permit hunts in the Margaret, Toutle, Coweeman and Winston GMUs. Hunters who have January special permits for these areas are strongly encouraged to visit Weyerhaeuser's access website www.wy.com/accesswa for the latest information on what roads are open for motorized and non-motorized access.

Olequa Creek Access Site: A large cottonwood has leaned dangerously into the lower parking area and developed a crack down the trunk. The area was busy even though fishing hasn't been exceptionally good. The parking area was cleared and the tree was dropped, sectioned, and

winch out of the parking area. There were several retired loggers fishing at the site to give plenty of advice on how to drop the tree.



Other

District 10 and Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area Winter Conditions

Past Weather: December temperatures were average and precipitation was above average for the month. Weather was mostly dry and cold the past week in the Mount St. Helens vicinity. Most areas above 2,000 feet are snow covered.

Short-Term Forecast: The 6-10 day forecast is for below normal temperatures and normal precipitation and the 8-14 day forecast is for below normal temperatures and below normal precipitation.

Long-Term Forecast: The January forecast model is for below normal temperatures and an equal chance for above average, below average, or normal precipitation. The three month forecast model shows an equal chance for above average, below average, or normal temperatures and precipitation.

Habitat: Forage is available at lower elevations, while most areas above 2,000 feet currently have snow cover. The valley floor on the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area is essentially snow free.

Snow Depths: Very little precipitation fell this past week. A trace of snow fell at sea level in the Longview and Vancouver areas on December 31. See table below for detailed information.

Animal Concentrations: No unusual concentrations of elk noted to date. On January 3, 2013, a total of 58 elk were present on the Mudflow Unit monitoring area.

Animal Condition: No reports of animals in poor condition that can be attributed to winter conditions. Animals observed to date appear to be in good condition.

Mortality: None to report.

Public Contacts: None to report related to winter conditions.

The public is reminded that the Mudflow Unit of the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area lying east of a line defined by Hoffstadt Creek, The North Fork Toutle and Deer Creek is closed to public access through April 30 to minimize disturbance and associated energy demands on elk wintering there.

District 9 Winter Conditions

Past Weather: There was no measurable precipitation this week as cold east winds from the Columbia Basin kept marine weather systems from the South Cascades and eastern Klickitat County.

Winter Severity: The Klickitat Wildlife Area is mostly free of snow and warming weather for the weekend should improve habitat conditions. The eastern portions of Klickitat County now have snow down to 500 feet elevation, but accumulation is minimal.

Habitat: Habitat is generally open below 1,500 feet with normal snowpack for this time of year above 2,000 feet in the south Cascades. In the lower reaches of the Rock Creek drainage of eastern Klickitat County there are three to four inches of crusty snow.

Animal Concentrations: Deer have been seen in small concentrations at lower elevation in eastern Klickitat County. In the Rock Creek drainage deer numbers are reported to be below normal. Large numbers of elk are starting to concentrate in the south Cascades and a large herd (>100) were seen in the Trout Lake Valley.

Animal Condition: Deer and elk appear to be in very good condition and no winter stress/mortality has been reported.

Mortality: None reported this week

Public Contacts: One injured elk was reported in the White Salmon River Valley, but it appears it was hit by an automobile. Follow-up was conducted by the local biologist and wildlife agent, but the elk was not located. Another report came in of a fawn that was on a porch in the Carson area. The resident was concerned and asked for recommendations. We told them to wait and see

if the doe returned and to call back if the animal continued to stay at the residence. The person never called back.

Snow Depths:

MOUNT SAINT HELENS ELK HERD

2012/2013 WINTER CONDITIONS - SNO-PARK SNOW DEPTH,

NRCS SNOTEL DATA, AND SNOWPACK

From web

pages: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/activity/giffordpinchot/recreation/wintersports/?recid=31178&actid=91>

http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/cgi-bin/sno_narr3_pl

<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/snotel/Washington/washington.html>

SNOWPARKS:						
Name	Elevation	12/07/2012	12/14/2012	12/21/2012	12/28/2012	01/04/2013
TRAIL OF TWO FORESTS	2,200'	No report	Trace of new snow	2ft of snow	More than 2ft of snow	No new report
MARBLE MT	2,700'	No new report	5" new snow	4ft of snow	More than 4ft of snow	No new report
WAKEPISH	2,800'	No snow	5" new snow	42" of snow at the sno-park	More than 42" of snow	Sno-park inaccessible due to heavy snow

SNOWTEL STATIONS:

Name	Elevation	Stats	12/1-12/7	12/8-12/14	12/15-12/21	12/22-12/28	12/29-1/4
JUNE LAKE	3,340'	Avg Snow Depth (inches)	12.3	26.8	68.8	103.3	101.6
		Min Temp (F)	30.9	27.5	25.7	27.5	18.7
		Max Temp	43.9	37.8	35.2	34.5	35.1

(F)

**Avg Temp
(F)**

36.6

32.7

29.9

31.1

27

**Year to date
precipitation
(inches)**

68

72

82.9

84.6

85.9

Name	Elevation	Stats	12/1-12/7	12/8-12/14	12/15- 12/21	12/22-12/28	12/29-1/4
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SPIRIT LAKE	3,520'	Avg Snow Depth (inches)	1.1	9.6	19.1	27.8	26.1
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**Min Temp
(F)**

31.5

19

19

22.3

20.3

**Max Temp
(F)**

48.4

41.9

44.4

35.6

41.7

**Avg Temp
(F)**

37.9

32.7

30.2

31.6

29.2

**Year to date
precipitation
(inches)**

34.4

37.6

42.2

45.2

45.6

Name	Elevation	Stats	12/1-12/7	12/8-12/14	12/15- 12/21	12/22-12/28	12/29-1/4
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PEPPER CREEK	2,140'	Avg Snow Depth (inches)	0	0.17	14.7	24	24.6
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**Min Temp
(F)**

32.4

30.4

30

30.4

21.6

**Max Temp
(F)**

48

43.2

36.9

36.9

39

**Avg Temp
(F)**

40.2

35.4

33

33.8

28

**Year to date
precipitation
(inches)**

22.2

23.7

29.9

31

31.3

Name	Elevation	Stats	12/1-12/7	12/8-12/14	12/15-12/21	12/22-12/28	12/29-1/4
SHEEP CANYON	3,990'	Avg Snow Depth (inches)	12.6	25.7	61.3	96.3	93.6
		Min Temp (F)	29.1	21.9	23.4	25.5	20.5
		Max Temp (F)	42.6	36.5	33.8	33.6	39.9
		Avg Temp (F)	35	30.7	28.2	30.2	28.4
		Year to date precipitation (inches)	60.4	63.8	69.6	77.3	81.7

Name	Elevation	Stats	12/1-12/7	12/8-12/14	12/15-12/21	12/22-12/28	12/29-1/4
CALAMITY	2500'	Avg Snow Depth (inches)	0	0	13	22	18.7
		Min Temp (F)	33.8	32.5	29.1	31.3	23.7
		Max Temp (F)	47.7	41.2	40.3	36.3	36.1
		Avg Temp (F)	40.2	35.6	32.8	33.4	29.1
		Year to date precipitation (inches)	42.1	44.5	52.2	54.6	54.8

Snowpack % of Avg Snow Water Equivalent	12/07/2012	12/14/2012	12/21/2012	12/28/2012	01/04/2013
JUNE LAKE	no data	no data	180%	134%	no data
SPIRIT LAKE	no data	200%	410%	134%	447%
SHEEP CANYON	86%	91%	151%	165%	170%

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Black-tailed Deer: Biologist Michaelis continued to monitor radio-collared black-tail deer in Capitol Forest. Currently, Michaelis is monitoring six deer (three does, two fawns, and one yearling). No mortalities were reported this week. The single yearling appears to have dropped its collar and Michaelis plans to retrieve the collar this week. Biologist Loafman conducted a ground check of all remaining deer on January 2 and reported live signals for all deer.

Sea Otter: Biologist McMillan filmed a single sea otter floating inside Port Angeles Harbor. Sea otters are rarely observed this far into the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Canada Goose Surveys: Biologists Michaelis and Sundstrom completed their bi-weekly surveys of migratory Canada goose species. Surveys are being completed as part of a regional effort to determine seasonal distribution patterns for Canada geese populations that winter in southwest Washington and northwest Oregon. Although the primary focus is cackling and dusky Canada geese, information is also collected for a variety of other species of Canada geese including lesser, Taverner's, western, and Vancouver. Biologist Michaelis observed 2,829 cackling Canada geese, 29 resident dusky Canada geese (aka wuskies), and 62 dusky Canada geese. One of the cacklers and two of the "wuskies" were collared. Biologist Sundstrom observed 1,998 cacklers, 1,132 dusky Canada geese, 713 western Canada geese, and 1,063 geese that could not be classified to species. Sundstrom also observed 1,093 geese that were either taverner or lesser Canada geese. Of all the geese Sundstrom observed only one cackler and five duskies were collared.

Trumpeter Swan Project: Volunteers have continued monitoring the swans in the Dungeness Valley and eastern Jefferson County. No swans were reported as sick or dead during the past week. Volunteers reported seeing a total of 119 swans in the Dungeness Valley on January 6. Biologist Ament met with Martha Jordan on January 2 to review the results of the aerial survey conducted on December 18. Ament provided Martha a copy of all photos taken during the survey. Ament also took Martha out in the field to review some of the new locations that swans have been observed this season. Nash's Organic farm crew observed swans harvesting carrots on the field off Anderson Road. Biologist Ament also showed Martha the location where a swan was electrocuted in early December.

Clearwater Cooperative Road Closure: Biologist Harris was informed of Eyes in the Woods volunteers' plans for recovering remote camera equipment. Due to the unusually high amount of snow this year a new challenge has been added. Remote camera team members have reached out to other volunteers and secured the use of four snowmobiles with experienced riders. Volunteers' primary concerns have been focused on safely recovering equipment. They currently plan to attempt recovery of the equipment on January 12. As communication is often the weak link, Biologist Harris was asked to assist in recovery by monitoring the effort with the mobile radio in

his truck, since handhelds and cell phones are sometimes limited in the area. Through experience, the mobile radio will improve communications.

Seabird Surveys: Biologists Murphie, Evenson and Cyra completed three days of surveys during the first week of the New Year as part of the winter sea duck and marine bird aerial surveys of the inner marine waters of Washington.

Wildlife Areas

Scatter Creek and West Rocky Prairie Units: Natural Resource Workers R. and D. VanBlaricom continued mowing operations at the Scatter Creek Unit throughout the week. These projects are funded by a combination of the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) and Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) projects managed by the Diversity Division (Hays).

Manager Guzlas reviewed some of the potential changes to the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) measures related to field trials in coordination with HCP project lead Gorrell. Additions include the process for denying future permits as displayed in the measure below.

Compliance Monitoring: Within three days of the end of a permitted organized field trial event on Scatter Creek, WDFW biologists and the Wildlife Area Manager will survey the field trial site for compliance. In addition, WDFW Wildlife Area staff will conduct periodic monitoring during events for compliance. Non-compliance will result in a one-time formal notification of permit violation and warning of permit suspension in the form of a letter, issued by WDFW to the kennel club represented by the permittee. Additional episodes of non-compliance within five years of formal notification, as described, will result in permit suspension for two years from the date of that violation.

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

Wildlife Management

Canada Goose Check-Stations: Biologists Michaelis and Sundstrom manned the Canada goose check stations in Raymond and Reikkola. Michaelis checked 12 geese from three hunters while Sundstrom checked nine geese from six hunters. None of the geese checked were determined to be dusky Canada geese.

Mid-Winter Waterfowl Surveys – District Biologist McMillan and Biologist Ament communicated last week in preparation for the mid-winter waterfowl surveys proposed for January 7–11. Ament conducted a scouting aerial survey on January 3. She had consulted with Waterfowl Specialist Don Kraege to determine exactly how much funding she would have for a flight. Biologist Ament flew 2.7 hours and was able to cover from Lake Sutherland to Cat Lake, along with a few sites in eastern Jefferson County. Most ponds were not frozen, but definitely fewer ducks than usual were observed during the survey. No new Priority 1 or 2 sites were located during the survey. There was good weather for the survey except for a real choppy area

flying between Sequim and Discovery Bay (both to and from). The survey was useful in order to help prioritize survey efforts this week. A pair of trumpeter swans was located in a new location at a ranch pond below Dan Kelly Ridge.

Audubon Olympic Birding Loop: Wildlife Area staff completed the posting of the eight Audubon Olympic Birding Loop locations located on WDFW properties. An example of one is displayed below.



Lower Dungeness (3 Crabs) Kiosk with Audubon sign.

Private Lands/Access

Remote Cameras System (RCS): Biologist Harris installed and performed maintenance on remote cameras with a large industrial forest landowners contracted security staff. The security staffs for this landowner are being instructed on how to perform routine maintenance on the RCS equipment. This will reduce the amount of time volunteers will have to spend on some maintenance issues, allowing them to focus on other aspects of running the system and to expand the program. Additionally this will allow us to be a little more covert on equipment maintenance.