

# Wildlife Program

Week of June 11-17, 2012

## **WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION**

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

**Prairie and Oak Woodland Conservation:** WDFW and partners in Washington and Oregon secured a \$1 million State Wildlife Competitive Grant to conserve species of greatest conservation need in the Prairie/Oak ecosystem. Various projects are funded for species of greatest conservation need, including Mazama pocket gopher, Western bluebird, Oregon vesper sparrow, prairie butterflies and rare plants. The focus of projects is surveys, habitat enhancement and restoration.

**Natural Heritage Program:** Resource Scientist Elizabeth Rodrick represented WDFW at a quarterly meeting of the Natural Heritage Advisory Council. The WNHP has secured enough funding to support staff through the end of this biennium. Almost half of their annual budget of \$700,000 comes from grants and contracts. Expansion proposals were discussed for Trout Lake NAP in Skamania County and Kennedy Creek NAP in Mason County.

**Habitat Connectivity Project:** Project manager Joanne Schuett-Hames met with Elizabeth, Rocky, and Greg Schirato to debrief on last week's WHCWG Full Group meeting. All think the Columbia Plateau connectivity results are impressive and that we should begin implementation as soon as possible. There is concern about using acquisition as an implementation tool, but we discussed other techniques that we can focus on including working with Habitat Program to develop and promote landowner best management practices, work with PHS Biologists to help counties incorporate connectivity into comprehensive land use plans, work with Don Larsen and Private Lands Bios to help landowners with incentives and restoration grants in key connectivity linkage zones, etc.

Currently the connectivity analysis is being implemented by WDFW biologists working on shrub-steppe habitat acquisitions, sage and sharp-tailed grouse, jack rabbits, ground squirrels, and mule deer.

Joanne also worked with Brian Cosentino and John Talmadge to develop map for the WWRP slide shows that highlight the importance of connectivity conservation for each proposed acquisition project. This is a stepping-stone to incorporating connectivity into the WWRP selection process.

She is working with partners on the FY12 GNLCC contract which has a \$46k shortfall for the Columbia Plateau Phase II (i.e., of our 166k request, we are allocated 120k). This involved discussions with individuals who would receive part of the funding including: Howard Ferguson, Mike Atamian, Woody Myers, and Mike Schroeder. In all cases, WDFW biologists say the identified grant work is a high priority to help implement connectivity for the rabbits, grouse, and mule deer. Howard mentioned that the connectivity project is among the most important in the Diversity Division.

## **WILDLIFE OUTREACH DIVISION**

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

**Scientific Collections Permits:** Tricia Thompson reviewed and compiled comments for six SCP applications and sent in the approval for permitting, and reviewed three more scientific collection permit applications and sent out to the appropriate Biologists for evaluation.

**Wildlife Rehabilitation:** Tricia Thompson discussed the expansion of a licensed rehabilitation facility in Vancouver and the Regulations for sub-permittees at that facility, and is working with another person interested in becoming a wildlife rehabilitator in the Thurston Co./Pierce Co. area.

**Falconry:** Tricia Thompson facilitated the transfer of a peregrine eyas rescued from the ground in Tacoma and taken to Sarvey Wildlife Care Center, to a Master Falconer with a 2012 Eyas Take Permit. Apparently the bird is extraordinary. A second peregrine eyas bumped from the scrape on the former Washington Mutual building in Seattle is also at Sarvey. Tricia sent out an email to the rest of the Eyas-take Permittees and so far two have contacted Sarvey regarding this second bird.

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

**WildWatchcams:** The cam season is upon us and viewers throughout the cyber world are visiting the WDFW Wildwatchcams to capture a glimpse of *Wild Washington*.

**Sealcam: Springtime is pupping season for harbor seals.** Most harbor seal pups are born at protected haul-out sites, also called rookeries. During this time the seal haul-out will become a place of tremendous activity and life and death drama. **Be aware that at times the scenes may be very graphic; however** our cameras give critical information to our biologists to monitor the productivity and health of the harbor seals.

**Up to 50% of the pups born will not survive the first year of life.** Contributing factors

leading to pup mortality are; complicating conditions associated with fetal development or premature birth; first time mothers uncertain about mothering a pup; predation by opportunistic bald eagles, herons, coyotes, gulls, ravens; infection; dehydration; or starvation.

*Photo - courtesy of Dyanna Lambourn.*



**Heroncam:** Great blue heron chicks continue to get increased publicity as the heroncam is a featured link on the King 5 homepage and of course is the city bird of Seattle-  
<http://www.king5.com/ztest/Heron-Cam-147068735.html>



Photo: Kiwanis heronry, Courtesy WDFW

**Ospreycam:** A trio of nestlings this year for the Gig Harbor ospreys. There seems to be no food problems to date, although sibling interaction can be very intense on certain days.



Photo: Gig Harbor Ospreys, Courtesy WDFW

**Salmoncam:** New rainbow trout or salmon have recently been added to the holding pool at the Issaquah Fish Hatchery and congregate at the camera area for frequent feedings. They will continue their residence in the holding pool until late August when the trapping of returning salmon will be initiated.

Photo: Courtesy WDFW SalmonCam



## **REGION 1**

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

**Gray Wolf Management Activities in Northeast Washington:** Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Jay Shepherd met with the Dawson family in Smackout to discuss the range rider program. Information flow was a key topic. Wolves were heard during the meeting. Biologist Shepherd addressed issues such as the satellite phone, ATV training, and other items needed to improve the logistics of the range rider program. Wolf Technician Tiffany Baker and Biologist Shepherd set remote cameras in LeClerc Creek to scout the Diamond Pack for Wolf Biologist Frame.



***Wolf Technician Tiffany Baker setting a remote camera in LeClerc Creek.***

**Common Loon Monitoring:** District Biologist Dana Base carried out a kayak survey for Common Loons at South Skookum, North Skookum, and Yocum Lakes. Just like the 2011 nesting season, no loons were detected at either South or North Skookum Lakes, and only one

Common Loon was present at Yocum Lake with no evidence of successful reproduction this year. Base also communicated with Citizen Scientist Virginia Poleschook to coordinate other loon survey efforts & results.



*Single Common Loon observed on Yocum Lake on June 14, 2012.*

**Lincoln County Prairie Grouse Project:** Weather finally allowed for a radio tracking flight Friday of this week. We've been trying to get one in for the last 2 weeks. Graduate Student Stonehouse and technician McBride flew the study area. They located all the recently lost birds and a couple long term missing animals including 3 of the birds from this year that went missing almost immediately upon release. There are still, however, 7 missing hens from this year's release. To date we have had 12 sage grouse nest (7 hatched, 5 predated) and 7 sharptail nests (5 hatched, 2 predated).



*Grouse nest found by tracker Randall McBride, 6/11/12. Photo by R. McBride*

**Flammulated Owl Surveys:** *Northeast Washington:* District Wildlife Biologist Dana Base continued work on the Flammulated Owl Survey Project with two more surveys accomplished this week, making 5 of 9 surveys completed so far for the season. *Spokane District:* Biologist Ferguson conducted two Flammulated Owl surveys – one at Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge and the other in NE Lincoln County. SUCCESS – Ferguson heard a female Flammulated Owl calling at the NE Lincoln County site – the screaming whinny call usually done by a female. *Blue Mountains.* ADB Vekasy completed 6 of 6 owl survey routes. Four were repeats of previous routes, and 2 were first runs. Lick Creek route was the only one with detections on first run, more points with detections on second run. There was also a single FLOW detections on second runs of Lewis Peak and Godman routes, no detections during first run.

**Bighorn Sheep Disease Research:** District Biologist Wik spent one day at WSU observing the necropsies of 3 bighorn sheep euthanized as part of a disease research trial. These sheep originated from the Asotin herd prior to the current die-off. As part of the trial, 3 each were placed in 2 pens approximately 30 feet apart. One group was exposed to *Mycoplasma ovipneumonia*, while the others were used as a control. The *M. ovi* was able to spread across the gap in the fence causing pneumonia in all of the sheep. These were the 3 remaining sheep from the original 6, all with varying degrees of pneumonia present.

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Birding at Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area (SLWA):** After tracking grouse this week, Dr. Kim Thorburn included an interesting birding story in her report: “The Washington Ornithological Society (WOS) held its annual meeting in Spokane over the weekend (June 9-10). On Saturday, I led a group of birders to SLWA. The weather was uncooperative but we had a great day, including 3 sage grouse-2 females and 1 male. No, I was not carrying the radio receiver although I did see a collar on one. Needless to say, the group was thrilled; it was a lifer for one. And now, WOS had SLWA on the map as a sage grouse site.”

**Private Lands/Access**

**Private lands access provided:** Biologist Earl sat in on a phone conference with Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to fine tune the access program that will take place on the 28,000 acre wind farm in Garfield County. Officer Jim Nelson also attended the meeting so that we could verify some enforcement issues. At the landowner requests, there will still be Feel Free to Hunt (FFTH) and Hunting Only by Written Permission (HOBWP). This will make the area a little unique to some of the access agreements in the state, but will still offer a great benefit to the public.



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

**Wildlife Management**

**Clarkston Moose:** District Biologist Wik, Officer Vance, and Wildlife Area Manager Dice captured a moose in Clarkston late Thursday evening. The moose had become trapped under the bleachers at the local high school, herded there by local police department and had the gate closed behind it. We were able to successfully immobilize the animal and Dice transported it to the North Fork of Asotin Creek and released it. The moose was healthy and running up the creek at a rapid pace when released.

**Wildlife Areas**

**Chief Joseph Wildlife Area – Wildfire:** Bob Dice responded to a report of a wildfire near the mouth of the Grande Ronde Thursday evening. The fire burned 48 acres and was contained on all sides by County Road and the river. Had the fire spread to areas outside the containment, it would have been a large event with much damage. Since the fire was burning outside of DNR and fire district protection areas, nobody responded to fight the fire. The fire was ignited by target shooters shooting tannerite in a parking lot area. Tannerite is increasing in popularity and is available at stores such as Cabela's. Upon impact from a bullet, a container of tannerite will explode providing entertainment to shooters. WDFW may want to consider banning tannerite use on WDFW lands. It has already been blamed for starting several wildfires in SE Idaho on

BLM lands this summer. Officer Brendan Vance is investigating the fire.



Chief Joseph Wildfire. June 14, 2012 48 acres.

## **REGION 2**

### **Region 2 – Okanogan, Douglas, Chelan, Grant and Adams Counties**

**Regional Wildlife Program Manager: Matt Monda**

#### **DISTRICT BIOLOGISTS**

##### **District 5: Grant / Adams District - Rich Finger / Vacant**

**Weekender Opportunities:** The Columbia Basin Wildlife Area can be a treat to birders this time of year. American bitterns can occasionally be heard calling from the dense cattail patches but are rarely seen. Wilson's snipe can be heard winnowing from overhead. This sound is used by the male to advertise his territory and attract a mate. Black-necked stilts and American avocets can be found nesting or loafing around marshy ponds with short emergent vegetation. Western and Clark's grebes may still be performing synchronized dancing in courtship on Potholes Reservoir. Common nighthawks (photo below) start to become more obvious this time of year and can be recognized by their aerial display and nasal calling throughout nesting season.

A **Least Tern** has been reported in the North Potholes Reserve, a species which is more commonly observed along the California coast during the breeding season. Last posting on the 'Tweeters' listserv mentioned the tern being present on June 16<sup>th</sup> at North Potholes Reserve.

*Directions: From Moses Lake take I-90 west and take exit 174. Turn left on Hansen Road. Turn right on I-90 Frontage Road (south side). Drive approximately 2 miles west and turn left on gravel road. When gravel road T's (about 2 miles) take a right. Continue straight until you reach the large dike (Job Corps Dike) which separates North Potholes Reserve (on your right) from Potholes Reservoir (on your left).*

*NOTE: All areas of North Potholes Game Reserve located in sections 9, 10, and 15 are closed to all public access from March 15 through May 30 and for October 1 through February 1.*

##### **District 6: Okanogan District - Scott Fitkin / Jeff Heinlen**

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

**Lynx Research:** District Biologist Fitkin, seasonal biologists Vanbianchi and Monetta, and USFS staff hiked into a remote part of the Goat Creek drainage in an attempt to locate the den sites of our two collared female lynx and get GPS downloads of the last few months' activity. We successfully the collars of both animals, which mean we now have at least a few months of location data for all collared animals in the Methow study area. Both females have recent location clusters indicating probably denning locations. We attempted to get a visual on Aurora at her den, but despite zeroing in on her with telemetry she eluded detection in the densely forested, snow-covered landscape, so we have not yet confirmed reproduction for either female.



*Lynx trackers.*



*Lynx prey remains (grouse and red squirrel).*

**Wildlife Occurrence documentation:** Biologist Fitkin responded to a landowner who said he had caught something unusual in a bucket. It turned out to be a mountain beaver moving along an old irrigation ditch at night in the lower elevations of the Libby Creek drainage. Although this species is common in Western Washington, it is quite unusual to find them in the Ponderosa Pine zone this far east of the crest. We released the docile creature in nearby riparian habitat.



*Okanagan County mountain beaver.*

**Watchable Wildlife:** This is a great time of year to view deer, particularly in the early morning and early evening. Most fawns have been on the ground a week or so and are now more mobile. Bucks are sporting rapidly developing antlers in velvet.



*Nursing mule deer fawn.*



*Mule deer buck in velvet.*



*White-tailed deer buck in velvet.*

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

**Environmental Education:** Once again this year the beaver crew (seasonal biologists Monetta, Vanbianchi, and Douville) did a great job of educating and entertaining kids during national fishing day at the Winthrop Federal Fish Hatchery. Kids got to see beavers up close and personal and learn about the important role they play in natural watershed. Hat's off to crew for having 7 beavers on display for the event at the end of their first week of employment.



*Beaver crew entertaining kids on national fishing day.*

### **SPECIES RECOVERY**

#### **Pygmy Rabbit Recovery - Penny Becker**

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

**Monitoring of Released Kits:** Research Scientist Becker, Biologist Eidson and graduate student DeMay performed radio telemetry to track the 70 pygmy rabbit kits released in the last month. Tracking the very small transmitters with limited range has continued to be a significant challenge, especially with the large distances that some individuals have traveled. Flights tracked the rabbits to as far as 8 kilometers away, but distances dispersed have varied greatly with some individuals remaining very near release sites.



*Biologist Chad Eidson and graduate student Steph DeMay hike around Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area tracking released pygmy rabbit kits.*

**Pygmy Rabbit Husbandry:** Becker, Eidson and DeMay spent time on Sagebrush Flat wildlife area providing supplemental feed to the pygmy rabbits in the large enclosures and kits in the nursery area. Breeding season continues with more small kits emerging, but at a slower rate than earlier in the season. Thus far, more than 110 kits have been produced in the large enclosures. In addition, six kits born at the Oregon Zoo were brought to Sagebrush Flat and placed in the large enclosures.

## **WILDLIFE AREAS**

**Methow Wildlife Area Complex - Tom McCoy / Rob Wottlin / John Haegan**

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

**Bear Creek Channel Avulsion Tour:** On Tuesday the 12th, Tom McCoy and Gina McCoy met with Rusty Gigstead to look at the partial, trans-basin avulsion that is occurring for the second year in the Bear Creek Campground. The campground sits on an alluvial fan at the mouth of a canyon with the stream channel running through the highest elevation of the fan. High sediment loads from last years spring melt have reduced channel capacity to the point that high flows are spilling out in random locations. A portion of which are going west into Pearygin Lake (through the state park campground) rather than to the Methow River. If Bear Creek were to avulse some highly undesirable consequences would result. I believe that we have come up with a workable strategy to address this issue and there are capitol funds available for the project. We are hoping to get the project on the ground this fall.

**Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Complex - Dale Swedberg / Justin Haug**

**Weekender Opportunities:** Scenery and Neo-tropic migrant song birds, moose, elk, bighorn sheep and many butterfly species have been sighted in the valley. Early blooming wildflowers, e.g., balsamroot, are fading, but later species, e.g., cats ear mariposa lily, lupine, blanket flowers, scarlet gilia, sand phacelia, are coming into full bloom. Evening and Black-headed Grosbeaks are a common site (see picture) as well as Lazuli Buntings, Western Tanagers, Bullock's Orioles, and numerous warbler species. Newborn fawns can be seen close to their mothers (see picture) and moose continue to be seen throughout the valley.



Evening grosbeak



White-tailed doe with fawn

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

**Graduate Students:** Two graduate students arrived, one from WSU, Emily Haeuser, with Dr. Mark Swanson to conduct research on developing protocol for dry forest Ecosystem Integrity Monitoring. The other graduate student from Central Washington University, Kevin Haydon, is working on paleo fire history under Dr. Megan Walsh. Kevin will be collecting recent fire history data to try to calibrate the charcoal record in the lake sediment core samples.

**Chelan Wildlife Area Complex - Ron Fox**

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

**Knowls Unit Yellow Star Thistle:** Fidel Rios, Maintenance Mechanic, made a survey of yellow star thistle on the Knowls Unit and adjacent Forest Service land to determine timing of herbicide application for this particularly nasty weed that is known to occur only in a few locations in Chelan County. Based Fidel's observations, he recommended that spraying should start next week. Ron Fox, Chelan Wildlife Area Manger, contacted the Brigitte Ranne, Forest Service Botanists, about coordinating control efforts. It appears the Forest Service weed crew will be able to assist with the effort this year.



Prebloom yellow star thistle

**Rocky Reach Ute Ladies' Tresses Subcommittee:** Chelan Public Utility District led a tour of sites on the Rocky Reach pool that support Ute Ladies' Tresses, a small Federally Threatened orchid. The plant occurs on Chelan PUD, US Bureau of Land Management, WDFW, and private lands north of Beebe Bridge in Chelan County. Per their license, the Chelan PUD is required to address threats to the orchid on all ownerships. During the tour, it was easily determined the greatest threat to Ute Ladies' Tresses is the encroachment of invasive plants, especially blackberry. Based the recommendations of the subcommittee, The Chelan PUD will develop a plan for blackberry control to begin this fall.



Ute Ladies' Tresses (it will bloom in August)

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

**Beebe Springs Natural Area:** Chelan Manager, Ron Fox, met with Guy Moura, Colville Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, concerning the cultural resource protection measures for Phase 4a. The recommendations came from a report completed by Eastern Washington University based on surveys completed earlier this month. Guy agreed with the recommendations in the report especially that a monitor be present during ground disturbing activities. Further consultation with US Corps of Engineers is the next step.

**PRIVATE LANDS - John Cotton / Eric Braaten / JoAnn Wisniewski**

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

**State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE):** Private Lands Biologist Braaten and PL Biologist Baarstad met with landowners about weed spraying in newly seeded SAFE fields and discussed work not completed.

Private Lands Biologist Braaten also went out and met with landowners that were dealing with Cereal Rye and goat grass outbreak within SAFE fields they were mowing most of these fields in efforts to control the rye and goat grass before it goes to seed.



Private Lands Biologists Cotton and Wisniewski conducted vegetation surveys on SAFE fields and met with landowners to discuss the content of their plans before sending plans to Foster Creek Conservation District.

**Restoration Site Tour:** Private Lands Biologist Cotton participated in a tour of Restoration Sites in Douglas and Grant Counties that was attended by staff from Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and others. Private Lands Biologist Cotton gave a presentation at one of the sites on the basics of the SAFE Program, methods used to remove existing grass from expired Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) fields, seedbed preparation, seeding mixes for grasses and forbs, herbicide treatments, and answered questions from the group.

## **REGION 3**

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

#### **Wildlife Areas**

Oak Creek Wildlife Area Manager Huffman attended a media event organized by The Nature Conservancy focused on the Oak Creek Forest Restoration Project. Reporters from 2 local television networks (KIMA and KNDO) and 2 newspapers (Yakima Herald Republic and the Ellensburg Daily Record) spent a day touring the project seeing work accomplished on USFS land and what is planned on WDFW and TNC land. The goal of the project was to discuss why the forest restoration is necessary mainly from a forest health and function perspective and little on wildlife fire prevention. The story ran by KNDO on Friday did a very good job of covering the project, but the story run by KIMA focused on catastrophic wildfires. Articles should run soon in the newspapers. A picture of the media day is attached.



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

**Wildlife Management**



**Goose Capture:** Wildlife Program employees Don Hand, Ryan Stutzman, Warren Becker, Oscar Medina and Mike Livingston worked with numerous volunteers including WFDW Fisheries Staff and members of the new Tri-Cities chapter of the Washington Waterfowl Association in capturing and banding Canada geese along the Columbia River in Kennewick and Pasco. A total of 209 geese were captured, 40 of which were recaptures from previous years and 169 were new captures and were fitted with USFWS aluminum leg bands.

## **REGION 4**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Peregrine Falcon Delisting Surveys:** Biologists Danilson and DeBruyn visited all of the designated “Federal Sites” and found them to be somewhat behind normal nesting chronology. One site (On WDFW land) had two newly fledged young, two sites still had young that were too small to see and one site may have failed due to predation of young. A Bald Eagle was observed raiding cormorant nests near the site where predation was suspected.



**A Bald Eagle raiding cormorant nests near a peregrine nest site where predation was suspected.**

Assistant District Biologist Cyra visited one of the three federal survey sites in District 13. On a prior survey to this site, the 4-hour visit mandated by the federal protocol produced no Peregrine observation. Per the protocol another 4-hour survey was performed, again resulting in no peregrine observations and a determination of no occupancy for the site. This site is in a poor location and is more often than not unoccupied.

Biologist Anderson and a volunteer spent time monitoring the Mt. Si and Rattlesnake Ledge eyries (peregrine chicks). Three eyases were noted at Rattlesnake, as observed earlier in the week by the volunteer and a group of birders. Mt. Si had a territorial adult that stooped on a Turkey Vulture, reiterating the zone of the west face that birds have been suspected to be using this year, due to previous observations Anderson made earlier this year. More time at Si will hopefully turn up young and confirm activity.

**Managing Impacts to Wildlife from Recreational Activities:** Following up from a meeting with Washington State Parks and interested climbers that concerned developing a management plan for the Index Town Wall climbing area, Assistant District Biologist Cyra surveyed the wall for peregrine falcons

that have been using the wall for at least 15 years. A single adult was observed perched, and after a period of time a young peregrine still several weeks away from fledging made an appearance on the traditional ledge for some time in the sun. No other young were observed. Several fixed ropes were observed on either side of the ledge indicating recent climbing activity in close proximity to the ledge.

Biologist Anderson met with Biologists and Staff of the USFWS and WA State Parks to provide nesting status and management advice at a public meeting regarding the USFS-WA State Parks closure of the Deception Wall. Peregrines are nesting on this popular climbing wall, which can get 200+ climbers on weekend day. The three eyases (peregrine chicks) are around 4 weeks along now and should fledge the first week of July. The closure has been extended to July 9<sup>th</sup>; to meet this later fledging activity. See USFS website for more information:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/mbs/news-events/?cid=STELPRDB5374403>

**Bald Eagle Nest Dataset Management:** Per our agreement with the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, WDFW maintains the dataset containing nest locations. A new nest was confirmed after reports by interested parties. In addition, while checking on a peregrine eyerie (nest site) adjacent to a federal survey site that is thought to be a possible alternate site, Assistant District Biologist Cyra, located a new bald eagle nest on Trump Island, complete with an almost fledged young.

**Common Loon Monitoring and Joint No Lead Sign Installation With Fish Program:** Biologist Anderson and Fish Biologist Spinelli observed a nest exchange of the Calligan Loons (about 1.5 weeks along in incubation) and installed WDFW signage at Calligan and Hancock Lakes that relay lead tackle ban. Anderson and Spinelli interacted with a number of anglers during the installation and discussed lead issues.



**Biologist Anderson and Fish Biologist Spinelli installed WDFW signage at Calligan and Hancock Lakes that relay lead tackle ban.**

**Golden Eagle Territory Research:** Biologist DeBruyn completed and sent a letter to local agencies and non-profits to get information on potential golden eagle nesting territories in District 14. Information gathered through this process will be combined with internal historic records to aid WDFW planning efforts to conduct future golden eagle nest searches throughout the state.

**US Navy Integrated Natural Resource Management Plans:** District Biologist Milner reviewed over 1000 pages of draft management plans and accompanying documents sent to her from natural resource managers from Naval Station Everett and Naval Station Whidbey Island. Under various federal laws, Navy bases are required to prepare integrated management plans every 5 years. Whidbey Island has not updated their plan since the 1990's so their draft required careful review and update suggestions. Once finalized, the plans will be signed by WDFW, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service and the Navy.

### **Wildlife Areas**



**Wilbur Ellis spread barley and fertilizer on 55 acres of fields at Lake Terrell. Natural Resource Tech Deyo disked the barley into the soil.**



**With the help of the Ferndale Fire Department, Manager Kessler and Natural Resource Tech Deyo installed an experimental purple martin nest box on the power pole above the Lake Terrell boat launch.**

**Stillwater Riparian Project:** Manager Paulson dropped off a letter of support to Sound Salmon Solutions for the last phase of their riparian area restoration project at the Stillwater Unit. This Earth Day restoration project will extend their work on Harris Creek.

**Lake Terrell and Intalco Unit Maintenance:** Natural Resource Tech Deyo mowed grass fields on the Lake Terrell unit and the archery course on the Intalco Unit and treated scotch broom with herbicides on the Lake Terrell & Intalco units.

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

### **Wildlife Management**

**North Cascades Elk Herd Management Plan:** Biologist Danilson drafted a document that compares and contrasts the 2002 plan and the 2012 draft plan and provided it to Chris Madsen at the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission for dissemination to the Point Elliott Treaty Tribes. This was completed upon request of the tribes following a meeting earlier in the month.

**2012 Mountain Goat Surveys:** Biologist Danilson coordinated with District 13 Biologist Milner and tribal representatives to finalize the scheduling and financial commitments for the 2012 mountain goat survey flights. The surveys are scheduled for the week of July 23<sup>rd</sup> and will include the standard Mount

Baker survey area as well as the Darrington area. Mountain goat surveys are conducted annually in the Mount Baker area to inform harvest management decision making. The Darrington area has not been surveyed since 2009 and is a high priority area for potential future mountain goat translocation/reintroduction. Funding (made available through the Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe) is making the 2012 surveys possible and will aid upcoming planning efforts.

**Band-tailed Pigeon Proposal Development:** Biologists Danilson and DeBruyn completed a draft band-tailed pigeon proposal for the WDFW non-waterfowl duck stamp funding request for proposals. If funded, this project would help District 14 personnel expand the current knowledge of mineral sites used by band-tailed pigeons in Whatcom and Skagit Counties.

### Wildlife Areas

**Spencer Island Handicap Blind Project:** Manager Paulson toured the Spencer Island Unit with the WDFW American Disability Act Program Manager. Manager Paulson explained that the Seattle Chapter of the Washington Waterfowl Association would like to build a handicap accessible blind on the unit. The group not only wants to build an official handicap accessible blind, but they also want to make sure that access to that blind would pass American Disability Act specifications.

**DeBay's Slough:** Manager Belinda Rotton contacted a neighboring land owner to request administrative access and to clarify the property boundary on the Skagit River portion of the DeBay's Slough property prior to field preparations on the site. WWRP funding will be used to remove blackberries and plant a riparian corridor along the bank of the Skagit River.

**Skagit Agriculture Program:** Habitat Technician Cosgrove continued to monitored drainage on the Island Unit farming activities on the Island have been stalling due to the current cycle of rain and high river conditions. Efforts to improve drainage have not met with much increased success in field access. Boling Farms completed the barley planting on the Samish Unit this week. Wilbur Ellis has been scheduled for herbicide treatment in 2 -3 weeks. Field preparations continue on the Leque Island Unit. Corn plantings were completed and additional field prep is needed for barley planting area.

### Private Lands/Access

The grading crew from Olympia spent the early part of the week cleaning up parking lots and entry roads at a few WDFW access sites in Snohomish County.



**High Bridge access area parking lot.**



**Crescent Lake south parking lot and entry road**



**Lewis Street river access in Monroe**

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Headquarter Unit:** Manager Link and Wildlife Area Manager Belinda Rotton attended the presentation by Kathy Kilcoyne of the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) regarding the Samish Welts WRP wetland easement. NRCS has received farm bill money to implement a wetland enhancement project on the site. The management team appointed a technical review team and a meeting will be scheduled to determine feasibility.

**Samish Unit** - Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Habitat Tech Curran Cosgrove flagged the area to be mowed on the Samish Unit. This area has an extensive thistle problem which impacts neighboring

organic farms. Timing of control efforts often conflict with other agricultural and weed control activities so a contract mower will be used to mow portions of this site.



**Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Habitat Technician Cosgrove constructed and installed a new sign kiosk on the south end of Eide Road on the Leque Island Unit. Seasonal use of the site outside of hunting season has increased, use of the site for bird watching has continued following the snowy owl activity this winter. The site is also popular for access for sturgeon fishing and there are plans to install a footbridge to improve access to the fishing site.**

### **Private Lands/Access**

**Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program:** Technician Otto worked with Department weed crew staff to arrange delivery of a small disc for private lands program to use. Staff hope to install a couple of test food plots on Waterfowl Quality Hunt sites and determine their effectiveness through the hunting season. With some minor repair, the newly acquired disc will help plant those plots.

**Waterfowl Advisory Group:** Biologist Roozen prepared and presented information on the Snow Goose and Waterfowl Quality Hunt Programs to the Waterfowl Advisory Group.

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

**Skagit Wildlife Area** – Manager Rotton received authorization to offer the Natural Resources Technician position to Curran Cosgrove. Curran worked in this position for over 5 years before taking a voluntary demotion to a career seasonal position on the Skagit.

**Wildlife Program Staff Radio Training:** Biologist Cyra provided the required state radio training and assigned call numbers to several new staff. Radio training and a call number is required for all users per our contract with the Department of Natural Resources.



Biologist Anderson assisted WDFW staff with trapping at West Rocky Prairie. One gopher was trapped. Many traps plugged – gophers plug their tunnels and traps when disturbed, and one mole was trapped.

## **REGION 5**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

##### **Black-tailed Deer Research Project:**

Fawn captures associated with the Region 5 black-tailed deer research project occurred during the second week of June. Thirteen does 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 and Coweeman Game Management Units. To date, eleven of the does are known to have given birth and 18 fawns associated with these does have been captured.



**Hydropower Mitigation / Acquisition:** Pacificorps owns and operates three hydropower projects on the North Fork Lewis River. As mitigation for the impact of creating reservoirs and the resulting loss of terrestrial habitat, the Utility is required to acquire and manage mitigation lands. The Utility does an excellent job of managing thousands of acres of wildlife habitat surrounding their hydropower facilities and does so in cooperation with WDFW, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Cowlitz and Yakama Tribes, the U.S. Forest Service, etc. As part of their mitigation requirements, money is set aside by the Utility for the acquisition of additional lands to be managed for wildlife habitat.

On June 4, 2012 a major milestone was reached when 2,111 acres were purchased by the Utility for wildlife habitat and public recreation. This effort was conducted cooperatively with Pacificorps, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and was supported by WDFW's Major

Projects Division within Habitat Program and Wildlife Program in Region 5. This purchase represents the completion of nearly 5-years of work on behalf of the Utility and associated agencies and NGOs to acquire property in the vicinity of Swift Reservoir. With this purchase, Pacificorps now owns and manages approximately 13,000 acres in the watershed of the North Fork Lewis River for high quality wildlife habitat. Please see the attached map and fact sheet offering additional information regarding this significant purchase. Thanks to Pacificorps' Kirk Naylor and Bill Richardson and Ray Crosswell of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation for their dedication and skill in acquiring these lands.

**Resident dark Canada goose brood survey:** Biologists Miller and Bergh looked for resident dark Canada goose broods on Miller Sands Island in order to approximate gosling age. This information is needed to ensure that these geese will be molting, and therefore flightless, when banding is set to take place.

**Streaked horned lark surveys:** Biologists Miller and Bergh assisted the Center for Natural Lands Management with surveys for this rare subspecies of horned lark on various dredge material islands in the Lower Columbia River.

**Rock Creek/Golden Eagles:** Biologist Anderson did a follow-up golden eagle nest survey in Rock Creek to determine nesting success. The Rock Creek site currently has two juveniles golden eagles on the nest and consideration is being made to potentially transmitter one of the birds for a study on raptor/wind power interactions. In addition, Biologist Anderson continued to work on the proposed Rock Creek acquisition. Rock Creek has been submitted for funding through the Recreation and Conservation Office – Critical Areas category.

**Peregrine Falcon Survey:** Biologist Stephens conducted a Peregrine Falcon survey near Lyle. This site is being monitored by WDFW for nesting and reproductive status. The nest is still active and several nest exchanges between the pair were observed.

## **Wildlife Areas**

### **Klickitat Wildlife Area:**

**Fire Management Plan:** Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven met with Richard Tveten (WDFW) and Wyatt Leighton (Department of Natural Resources) to discuss and develop a more detailed fire management plan for the Klickitat Wildlife Area. Prior to modern fire suppression efforts, many parts of the KWA burned on intervals of 5 to 30 years. This is a high fire frequency, and the absence of fire in the last 60 to 80 years has allowed the accumulation of large amounts of fuel. The importance of the forest to the maintenance of the western gray squirrel population makes the risk of a stand-replacement fire a special concern. Presence of a large number of residences in certain areas adjacent to the Wildlife Area, as well as archeological sites requiring protection from disturbance, make it even more essential to have a well-considered plan for fire management in place. Two additional corridors for creation of fuel breaks were identified.

**Range Management:** Cattle were moved off the North Breaks subunit of the KWA pasture on June 12<sup>th</sup>, and on June 13<sup>th</sup> cattle were taken off the Grayback subunit. Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven inspected key areas and took photos to be stored with monitoring documentation. Vegetation sampling at the two exclosure sites was not accomplished during the early June timeframe due to weather and other issues requiring attention. This task has been postponed until June 2013, the last year allowed within the 3- to 5-year protocol cycle.

**Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area:**

**Scotch Broom Pulling at St. Helens:** Technician Pyzik spent the week removing scotch broom in the Mudflow Unit where scotch broom has taken over about one acre of potential forage area. With the use of a new tool, Pyzik was able to remove the acre of scotch broom.

**Before**

**After**



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

**Private Lands/Access**

Biologist Stephens met with a private landowner to discuss hunting access on their property in the Schultz Creek Drainage area near Mt. St. Helens. The landowner has reservations about allowing hunting access because of abuse to property and negative commentary about the landowners posted on hunting blogs that has occurred since they purchased the property several years ago.

## **REGION 6**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Mazama Pocket Gophers:** Biologists Skriletz, Hoenes and Michaelis spent time conducting opportunistic Mazama pocket gopher surveys in Capitol Forest and across Highway 8 near Summit Lake. Biologists located several sites where mounds were present, but could not be certain whether they were from gophers.

Biologist Skriletz, Hoenes, and Scientific Technician Christina Capelli set traps at several sites, but were not successful in trapping the rodent responsible for the mounds. Site characteristics (soil type, vegetation, ground litter, slope, etc.) at most sites in Capitol Forest have made mound identification and trapping efforts more difficult than in other areas where moles and gophers have been trapped and surveyed.

Bio Schmidt conducted a gopher survey in Rochester at the request of the realtor for the property. Although WDFW no longer conducts surveys for property development, Bio Schmidt was able to use this site as an “opportunistic” survey for the region-wide gopher occupancy survey effort currently unfolding.

Biologist Tirhi spent 10 hours conducting pocket gophers surveys along the northern boundary of Vail Tree Farm covering 25 miles of survey route by car and foot. Five sites were located occupied by moles and none by pocket gophers. Tirhi attempted to set traps in two locations, however, soil conditions were not adequate for trapping—caved and tunnels could not be located.

**Edith’s Checkerspot Searches:** Biologist McMillan took the opportunity when the weather brought sunshine on Friday, June 15th to begin exploring the higher elevation sites for checkerspots. The ONP permit for handling checkerspots has not been provided to Bio McMillan yet, so the effort was to proceed without handling the checkerspots. Blue Mountain was the target to do a combination Checkerspot and MPG search. Unfortunately the Deer Park gate was locked, so driving access was not an option.

Hurricane Ridge was checked and for the week it was the best weather day since Monday June 11<sup>th</sup>. The weather was partly sunny, and B-2 to B-3 conditions. Few butterflies were observed and no checkerspots were observed. Castilleja is beginning to flower in some places at Hurricane Ridge.

**Streaked Horned Larks on Tenasillahee Island - Dredge Operation:** The larks on Tenasillahee Island were found by a Dredge Oregon crew while going about their planned deposition operation. Our lark surveys had not confirmed breeding behavior at the site in the past several years, although one or two birds had been detected intermittently. After conferring with the literature, lark experts, and our data it was recommended that the young birds be undisturbed for at least another week to 10 days and that a 90 ft buffer be placed around the area. During our tour of the islands, Biologist Linders and Hannah Anderson (Center for Natural Lands Management) visited the site while we were out conducting lark surveys on many of the dredge deposition sites in the river. Dredge Oregon for the Port of Portland went to special lengths to ensure that the larks and their young were protected during the dredge operation. As recommended, they had placed a 100 foot buffer around the area, irrespective of the problematic

effect to the dredge operation. We determined that both adults and two young were continuing to use the area, observing the female carrying food to feed the young as well as a short flight by one of the young birds. Although the young was flighted, it was apparent that it was still learning and not likely able to fly long distances. The Port of Portland and Army Corps are to be commended for their proactive approach on this issue.



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

**Wildlife Management**

**Black-tailed Deer:**

Vail: Biologists Tirhi and Schmidt conducted doe and fawn surveys on Vail Tree Farm over two consecutive days spending 32 man hours using radio collar locations, location readings from collar, visual searches, and ground searching. Both does were located in their traditional drainages but neither was located by visual or ground searches. Biologists spent several hours

conducting ground searches for fawns at last location (triangulation) of doe without success. They also checked on the only remaining fawn (now a yearling) collared last winter, and are happy to report she is still alive. Biologists Tirhi and Piazza conducted doe and fawn surveys on Vail Tree Farm using radio collar locations, location readings from collar, visual searches, and ground searching. One of two remaining does was located via collar as a cougar-killed mortality. The kill was within 24 hours and internal organs partially consumed; pregnancy was indeterminate. Collar was recovered and returned to Dr. Cliff Rice (project lead). The last remaining doe was also located but evaded sighting and no fawns were located after 2.5 hours of searching

Pysht: Two of the three collared does in the Pysht Cluster have had their fawns collared. W Twin fawns are not collared; following are the field days spent searching for this doe's fawns. June 2nd Bio Loafman observed the collared doe for a split second on June 2nd, but was unable to tell if she appeared pregnant or not; at the same time the 2011 fawn was in the general vicinity but not together with the doe.

June 3rd The fix locations show a very tight cluster on June 3rd, possibly indicating a time when she may have had fawned.

June 5th Bio McMillan and Bio Ament searched for W. Twin (90) doe on June 5. Bio McMillan observed a bear in the clearcut also frequented by the doe. Considerable bear sign has been observed by the Bios searching the area. The field crew was unable to get a visual of the doe on the June 5th effort.

June 7th First Visual of collared doe's twin fawns from this season: Bio Loafman reported getting a visual of the doe with twin fawns from this season.

June 8<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> Bio's Ament and Loafman were finally successful at getting a few visuals of the doe with fawns on June 8th but were not close enough to capture the fawns before the doe moved into the trees. A second attempt to capture the fawns on June 14. The fawns are staying close with the doe and are highly mobile. The area the doe uses is in a young brushy forest which is difficult to walk through. The movement decline model never did get triggered by this doe's GPS fix data. Researcher Rice will need to advise if any further efforts should be attempted at the W. Twin site.

Capital Forest: Biologist Michaelis continued to monitor radio-collared black-tail deer in Capitol Forest and was successful in capturing the fawns from every radio-collared doe. Nice job Warren! Now Biologist Michaelis' objective will be to monitor the radio-collared fawns on an every other day basis so causes of mortality can be determined following a mortality event.



Biologists Lofman and Manson working up a fawn in Clallam County

### **Private Lands**

Bio Harris met with another large land owner in Region 6. This landowner has approximately 320,000 acres, mostly in region 6 with some in region 5. They are very interested in forming a cooperative access agreement if it can help them with problems associated with public access. It was tentatively agreed to try a trial agreement in GMU 658 as this is one area where they are having some of their worst abuses. This effort will require contacting and including other landowners to make this work. Developing agreements that assists the landowners with problems associated with public access and that meet wildlife management goals is relatively new for the region. As such we are learning as we go, giving a whole new meaning to adaptive management! If this agreement can be worked out it will provide reasonable access to 7000 plus acres of public land within the GMU during hunting seasons and some access to areas that have good fall salmon fishing. It will also provide better passive access to the public lands outside of general deer and elk seasons.