

Wildlife Program

Week of May 21-27, 2012

REGION 1

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

Wildlife Management

Spokane County No Shooting Zone Advisory Board Meeting: Biologist Atamian attended the board meeting during which a proposed No Shooting Zone for a 1200+ acres of DNR and Private land east of Newman Lake was discussed. The private landowners that brought the proposal to the board are mostly concerned with activities that are already illegal (trespassing, blowing up trees, shoot after dark, dumping garbage, etc.) thus better enforcement of current laws may accomplish the goal. However, the private landowners may still pursue a No Shooting Zone ordinance, but if they do so will opt for zoning that will allow hunting.

Private Lands/Access

Private Lands Access Provided: Biologist Baarstad and Private Lands Technician Bendixen met with Avista Utilities staff concerning a new recreation management plan Avista is developing for their Long Lake properties in Spokane County. We developed a cooperative plan that maintains their participation in the Hunting by Written Permission Program and allows Avista to establish sites on the property for boat-in only camping.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Wildlife Management

Western Black Bear Workshop: District Wildlife Biologists Dana Base and Howard Ferguson along with a few other agency staff attended the 11th Western Black Bear Workshop, this year held in Coeur d' Alene, Idaho. This workshop occurs every three years, and rotates in meeting locations amongst the western states. Attendants generally include state and federal wildlife agency personnel along with tribal, university, and county officials along with affiliates from non-governmental organizations. The workshop featured many outstanding presentations on black bears, grizzly bears, and Andean bears, the only bear species endemic to South America. Technical sessions including population modeling using Spatially Explicit Capture / Recapture, Program RISKMAN, and related methodology were also presented.

REGION 2

None

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Ferruginous Hawks: Private Lands Biologist Ryan Stutzman and District Wildlife Biologist Mike Livingston worked with Farmbill Coordinator Don Larsen to develop a new SAFE proposal targeting ferruginous hawk foraging habitat in Benton, Franklin and Adams Counties. All cropland within a 3.3 mile radius buffer around hawk nests active between 2003 and 2010 will be eligible for sign up. The amount of eligible land in the project area was estimated to be 167,000 of non-irrigated cropland acres and 120,000 enrolled CRP acres. This proposed SAFE is unique because it is highly targeted to improve foraging conditions within known nesting territories of the ferruginous hawk. As a result, acres enrolled will spatially have the highest likelihood of benefiting wildlife. Secondly this SAFE requires a diverse seed mix of native plant species. This requirement will increase restoration success by using plant materials best suited for the local environment. Finally, the targeted nature of eligible cropland and the diverse plant species will ensure the greatest number of shrub-steppe wildlife will benefit from this project.



Main: Ferruginous hawk territory surrounding nest. Red represents cropland eligible for SAFE enrollment. **Center:** Ferruginous hawk pair on nest (credit: Bob Davies, WDFW).

Wildlife Areas

Land Acquisition: District Wildlife Biologist Mike Livingston, Program Manager Ted Clausing, Regional Director Jeff Tayer, and Assistant Director Nate Pamplin toured the Rattlesnake Mountain Acquisition project with representatives from the McWhorter family, Benton County, Senator Hewitt's office, Tri-City Herald, The Nature Conservancy, and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. Everybody on the tour was impressed with the size of the ranch, the healthy condition of the shrub steppe and the significance of the McWhorter family in the region's ranching history.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Common Loon Trapping Effort with Biodiversity Research Institute: Biologist Anderson spent the week with Dr. Jim Paruk and Darwin Long, loon researchers with Biodiversity Institute. The team visited all known breeding sites for Common Loons in King County; meeting with Seattle Public Utilities, US Army Corp of Engineers, and Tacoma Water staff. Despite the continual rain and/or thunderstorms each day, trapping attempts were made. The loon pair on the masonry pool at Chester Morse Reservoir danced over and around the net, almost allowing for two birds to be caught. Unfortunately, the rising pool did not allow for the net to be deployed far enough out in the water to ensure a safe trap. Water levels were high on both reservoirs due to rain and release of water this week, as well as on natural lakes due to recent heavy rain events. The Calligan Lake pair was observed copulating on the WDFW/Hancock platform on Monday of this week, which is promising for a nesting attempt this year at the site. Net capture at this site ran into issues with thunderstorms. All in all, experience with trapping methodology was learned, as well as where at each sites offer best trapping situations and what is needed specifically at each site to provide for site-specific trapping efforts. Also, what water level ranges on reservoirs should be targeted to allow for future trapping events, providing necessary shallows on the reservoirs at limited beach sites (weather dependent). Nine of 12 resident loons are without bands in King Co. The BRI-WDFW team looks forward to future efforts with better weather conditions and water levels more conducive to trapping. Banding of Common Loons, a State Sensitive listed species, is called for in the Common Loon State Status Report:

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/pub.php?id=00341>

Washington's loon population is the farthest south within North America, which at one time extended all the way to the Mt. Shasta area of California. Management information regarding the limited number of summer resident and breeding Common Loons in Washington can be found here:

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/loons/>

Biodiversity Research Institute's loon camera can be found here, for watching interest:

<http://www.briloon.org/looncam>



A loon pair, within 1 foot of the net that was set up for diurnal net capture and banding. Washington's loon population is the farthest south within North America, which at one time extended all the way to the Mt. Shasta area of California.



Trap used to capture loons for banding.

Caspian Terns nesting in Seattle: Biologist Anderson corresponded with USFWS Migratory Bird Division and local enforcement officers regarding potential Caspian Terns attempting to nest on Trident Seafood in Elliot Bay. The birds have been observed by Anderson and others over past few years staging there over the summer. It appears that a pair or two are now making a go at it in the limited refuse that has collected along the HVAC systems on the roof. USFWS, WDFW and USDA WS are working together to provide management advice and needs to Trident Staff. Anderson has been requested by USFWS to monitor the roof and confirm nesting. If nesting is the case, it will be submitted for PHS mapping.

Kenmore Heron Colony Management Assistance: Biologist Anderson phone conference with city of Kenmore planning staff regarding management needs of the Kenmore Park and Ride colony given planned development of the old fire station across the street. Anderson also discussed flood management and beaver conflict reduction with concerned citizens in that same area. Anderson referred them to the Living with Wildlife Beavers website and recommended they take up the flooding concern with the city and property owner. More information on Living with Wildlife Beavers, as well as Great Blue Heron management can be found at the below websites:

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/beavers.html>

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/phs/>

Bald Eagle Management: District Biologist Milner provided information to US Fish and Wildlife Service staff regarding violations to State Bald Eagle Management Plans that served as conditions to Forest Practice Permits in Whatcom County. Milner spent part of a day going through archived boxes at the Mill Creek Regional office locating historic information to provide to Service biologists to help them decide how to proceed with serious permit violations.

Biologist DeBruyn worked with Biologist Milner and US Fish and Wildlife Service biologists to establish the history of a bald eagle roost and its management in Northern Whatcom County. The USFWS and Washington DNR have determined that a private timber harvest has encroached on the roost area and have issued a stop work order pending further investigation.

Peregrine Falcon Surveys: Biologist DeBruyn checked on a pair of peregrines nesting on DNR property in Whatcom County. There is a timber sale planned for the area and the DNR has a management plan for the territory that mandates monitoring the site for occupancy. The site was found to be occupied and supporting a viable nesting attempt.

Oregon Spotted Frog Surveys: Biologist Danilson completed a draft proposal for internal review. If funded, the proposed project, due to the US Fish and Wildlife Service on May 31, would fund an additional season of Oregon spotted frog surveys including hiring to seasonal technicians to assist with landowner contacts and conducting surveys. WDFW, US Forest Service, and other project partners and volunteers located several Oregon spotted frog breeding sites in Skagit and Whatcom Counties in 2011 and 2012.

Nutria Sightings and Response: Biologist DeBruyn responded to a report of a colony of nutria by a homeowner in South Skagit County. Upon inspecting the site, it appears that the animals are most likely mountain beaver. The homeowner will try to obtain a specimen. Biologist Danilson attempted to follow up with another landowner on a separate potential nutria sighting, but was unable to make contact.

Wildlife Areas



Construction of the Tennant Lake wetland enhancement project is now in full swing. Work is being completed by the Port of Bellingham.



Natural Resource Tech Deyo completed cultivating and harrowing all the barley fields on the Lake Terrell Unit of the Whatcom Wildlife Area.



Manager Kessler coordinated with Dept of Ecology workers installing a temporary PH monitor in the Nooksack River on our Nooksack unit. There was a recent fish kill in the Nooksack river, and when checked the PH was measured at a very low level. The PH will be monitored for a month to see if the low readings repeat.

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

Wildlife Management

Sustainable Lands Strategy: Manger Link participated in a Snohomish Estuary project proponent coordination session to discuss the status of Snohomish estuary restoration projects, agriculture net gain opportunities, and the emerging conceptual Sustainable Lands Strategy (SLS) package outline for the estuary. Snohomish County is finalizing its transition from the 2nd Phase of the SLS (developing SLS framework elements and outlining "packages") to Phase 3 (technical development of the packages, policies, agreements).

Wrangel Island Lesser Snow Goose Proposal: Biologist Danilson met with Waterfowl Biologist Evenson and District 13 Biologist Milner to further develop a study proposal which will improve our understanding of snow goose movements and habitat use of lesser snow geese that overwinter in the Skagit and Fraser Delta. With more than 100,000 snow geese overwintering in the area, WDFW must strike a balance to manage this species for diverse recreational opportunities while mitigating the impacts to agricultural producers can be impacted by geese foraging on winter and early spring crops. Pending funding and approval, this project help inform local management, but also shed light on snow goose movements in the Pacific Flyway.

2012 Elk Survey Data Analysis: Biologist Danilson worked with Deer and Elk Specialist McCorquodale to conduct analyses of data collected during the March-April North Cascades elk herd survey flights. Preliminary analyses were conducted in prior to season setting deadlines, however a more comprehensive data will provide more accurate insights regarding population trends and inform management decision making for future years.

2011 Mountain Goat Harvest Reporting Follow Up: Biologist Danilson conducted a database search and contacted internal personnel to follow up on harvest reporting for the 2011 Mount Baker area mountain goat hunt. While it is mandatory to report, in some years hunters may forget or fail to report for other reasons. With a sensitive species like mountain goats, it is important to make the extra effort to follow up with hunters to get this information. In 2011, all tag holders reported. Neither the state auction tag, nor the raffle tag filled their tag in the Mount Baker hunt area. Total harvest for 2011 was four goats.

North Skagit Spring Bear Hunt: North Skagit spring black bear hunts continue through May 31. Hunter activity was limited this week, in part due to undesirable weather conditions. However, technician Otto remained busy following up on vehicle gate lock and trespass issues. Biologist Roozen continued limited conversations with hunters, as well as discussions with Department of Natural Resource and Sierra Pacific staff to follow up on concerns/issues.



A black bear sniffs out a WDFW biologist working in Cascade foothills.



An entomology class from Western Washington University visited Lake Terrell to survey the insects active in and around the lake.

Wiley Slough Adaptive Management: Regional program staff to include Wildlife Program Manager Russell Link, Habitat Biologist, Brian Williams, Habitat Engineer Bob Barnard, and CAMPS engineer, Ray Berg met with the Wiley Slough Working Group to discuss the various proposal to improve drainage conditions. Items discussed include the status of tide gate repair alternatives, pump operations and new pump stations development, dredging proposal and berm development on the retention pond. The desire is to make every effort to improve conditions during this summer's work window if possible.

Wildlife Area Manager Belinda Rotton coordinated with Dike District #22 representatives regarding the current management of the tide gate and dike structure on Wiley Slough. Skagit Wildlife Area staff have monitored the tide gate trash racks for debris and controlled vegetation on the dikes following the Wiley Slough Restoration. DD#22 representatives assist with removal of debris and repairs to the temporary trash rack on the tide gate structure.

Private Lands/Wildlife Access

Private Lands Access Agreements for Deer Hunting: Biologist Roozen began contacting Whidbey Island landowners regarding their interest (and questions) in allowing public access for deer hunting on their property. Roozen is in the process of setting up a meeting with potential partner landowners for June. Roozen and technician Otto made site visits and assessed acreage owned by these landowners in preparation for that meeting.

Quality Hunt Sites Reservation System Planning Committee: Biologist Roozen continued his role in developing a new online system dedicated to private lands access online reservation system, and various methods to manage that access and make it available to the public.



Access Area Manager Derek Hacker cleaned up the Lake Serene parking access.



WDFW Region 4 Access Staff Robert Lantiegne and Derek Hacker repaired the entry road and boat launch turnaround at the Nooksack River access in the city of Ferndale. The site was used on Sunday May 27 by Ski to Sea Race support boats.

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

Wildlife Areas

Puget Sound Chapter of Pheasants Forever Meeting: Manager Paulson attended the monthly meeting of the Puget Sound Chapter of Pheasants Forever. Paulson gave updates on the Waterwheel Creek and Fish Passage projects and their impacts on the Youth and Senior Hunts at the Cherry Valley Unit. Paulson also talked to a few members that were interested in volunteering for habitat projects at the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area.

Washington Waterfowl Association Awards Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Volunteers: Manager Paulson attended the Washington Waterfowl Association monthly meeting. The Washington Waterfowl Association recognized two Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Volunteers, Mark Ryder and Mark Thompson for their years of service, volunteering their time and effort at the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area. Manager Paulson introduced and handed the plaques to Ryder and Thompson.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Flamulated Owl Surveys: Biologists Anderson met with WDFW Biologists Holman, Stephens, George, and USFS Biologist Flick to discuss survey methodology for conducting flamulated owl surveys in May and June. This year's focus will be completing four surveys in oak habitat in Klickitat County. Biologist Holman established one route associated with the flamulated owl survey effort. Survey routes for this year's effort focus on oak and oak/pine habitat. The surveys are being conducted to establish baseline information on this little-known owl species.

Elk GPS Collar Retrieval: Biologist Bergh and Technician Pyzik searched the ground for GPS collars that were scheduled to fall off at the end of April. Three out of the four collars were retrieved successfully and the fourth will be re-attempted again next week. These collars recorded GPS location of elk for the past two years and need to be retrieved in order to access these data.

Wildlife Areas

Klickitat Wildlife Area:

Grazing Permits: Manager Van Leuven monitored grazing on the Davenport permit area; no issues so far. Manager Van Leuven visited the Frey grazing permit area with Klickitat County Weed Control Coordinator Hudson to inventory plant species (including weeds) on the range there. We identified 75 different species of plants. The weed issues are mainly along the edge of Hwy 142. Manager Van Leuven also checked on the Sorenson grazing permit (also on the Fisher Hill Unit); no cattle observed, and tall grass suggests little or no grazing activity.

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

Wildlife Areas

Shillapoo Wildlife Area:

Watchable Wildlife: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Hauswald observed the following wildlife while he was checking pond levels this past week on the Wildlife Area: American White Pelican, Black Swift, Lazuli Bunting, Western Kingbird, Western Tanager, Common Yellowthroat, Cliff Swallow, Merlin, Cinnamon Teal, Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teal, a leucistic hen mallard, Western Painted Turtles, Black-tailed Deer, and a River Otter.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Snowy Plovers: Biologists Sundstrom and Peterson continued to monitor snowy plover nesting activities at Midway and Leadbetter Beaches. Of special interest, Sundstrom observed the first hatched nest of the year at Midway Beach, but based on observed adult behavior it is believed the fledglings have already died.

Table 1. Summary of snowy plover nest status at Midway and Leadbetter Beaches.

Location	Observed	Failed Nests				Incubating	Hatched
		Depredated	Abandoned	Human	Other ¹		
Midway	5	0	0	0	1	3	1
Leadbetter	6	1	2	0	2	1	0

¹Other = Includes nests that have failed but proximate causes are unknown and nests that failed due to environmental factors.

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

Wildlife Management

Black-tailed Deer:

Capitol Forest: Biologist Michaelis monitored radio-collared black-tail deer in Capitol Forest that are part of an ongoing research project that is determining habitat use patterns and cause-specific mortality rates for female and juvenile black-tailed deer that occupy commercial forests. Biologists heading up this research effort are hoping results will help better understand the causes of recent declines in local black-tailed populations. Currently, Michaelis has been searching for newly born fawns in hopes of capturing and fitting them with radio-collars. Although the females Michaelis has been monitoring are close to parturition, no fawns have been observed.

Mason: Bio Murphie conducted fawn searches and doe checks last week. He reports collaring 3 fawns so far associated with 2 does in the Mason unit. Fawn work will continue this week.

Pysht: Bio McMillan and Bio Loafman visited the W. Twin site to get visuals on the doe and 2011 fawn. Bio Loafman was able to stalk the doe in the forest edge and capture these photographs.



W Twin Doe shows signs of still being pregnant.



W Twin Fawn 2011 has well fitting collar.

Bio Ament assisted Bio Loafman in the field on May 25th to determine if the West Siebert Creek collared doe may have had her fawns. The doe had triggered the movement decline notification. They were unsuccessful at finding fawns and were unable to get a visual of the doe. However, they did determine that her 2 yearlings were still hanging with her. Project Lead Rice conveyed that the doe likely does not have fawns yet if the yearlings are still present with the doe. Bio Loafman will make an attempt on Tuesday to get a visual on the W. Siebert doe.

Private Lands

Hunting and Fishing access in several GMU's:

Bio Harris met with staff of one of the largest private industrial timberlands owners in region 6. They are attempting to meet the needs of the community and the desires of their share holders. WDFW is working with them on developing a public access strategy for lands that are open for public fishing and hunting access that addresses the owners concerns, WDFW management goals, and provides reasonable public access for fishing and hunting. In addition to this strategy he is working with them on developing an access agreement that will help the landowner with issues related to public access. Because of the size, issues, and complexities involved with their ownership it was decided to work at the GMU level and develop a proposal for one GMU. Once this is completed it will then have to be forwarded to their corporate offices for comment and review. We hope that this process will serve as a model for other GMU's.



Above: garbage dumped at one of the most productive shore fishing areas on the Quillayute River system. Because of the public abuse the land owner is incredibly frustrated with the mess and considering severely restricting or denying access. This abuse costs them staff time and funds to clean up and has increased to epidemic proportions recently.

GMU 615 - The Nature Conservancy:

Bio Harris met with a representative for the “The Nature Conservancy” (TNC) at their Clearwater properties in GMU 615 (Clearwater). In 2011 they purchased over 3000 acres that is approximately 11 miles long and 1 mile wide of the Clearwater River corridor. This area is known by department staff as a great area to observe and hunt elk as well deer, bear, and grouse. Additionally it has great access to the river over much of its length including a relatively unknown boat launch. Several comments from local sports people, including comments in local papers and on local radio shows indicated that there was great concern for continued public access to this area. A final management plan for the area has not been written at this time but, TNC plans to keep the area open for public recreation including hunting and fishing! Getting the message out that the land is accessible and open for hunting and fishing is of high importance to TNC. Currently their land is more accessible than most of the private lands in the GMU and they hope to keep it that way.

Habitat management in the upland portion their property is also planned. They are currently treating noxious weed and planting trees in the clear-cut portions and plan variable density thinning on some of their holdings that will include openings greater than 2 acres. However funding is an issue as the thinning will not generate a positive cash flow because size and distance to market. TNC asked if there was any assistance that the WDFW with this? This would be a great opportunity for the WDFW to partner with TNC on habitat improvements that will have a long term effect on elk and deer habitat in the GMU.

Bio Harris will work with TNC staff to improve and educate on the great access their lands have. TNC staff also requested help on the Ellsworth creek lands on S.W. Washington. Overall their acquisition ensures public access for fishing and hunting for the long term as these lands were scheduled to be subdivided and sold by the previous owner.