

Wildlife Program

Week of May 31-June 3, 2012

LANDS DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Asotin Wildlife Area Addition: WDFW has completed the purchase of 1,144.65 acres located on Asotin Creek and in Asotin County. This acquisition is part of the Asotin Creek/Charley Fork project. The property has frontage on both Charley Creek and Asotin Creek. The value of this property to fish and wildlife are the riparian and riverine characteristics beneficial to endangered fish species (summer steelhead, Chinook salmon and bull trout) and shrub-steppe habitat beneficial to sharp-tailed grouse, bighorn sheep and elk. It is bordered by lands owned by the National Forest, the Washington Department of Natural Resources, and other WDFW lands. The property will be managed within the Wildlife Program by Bob Dice as part of the Weatherly Unit, Asotin Wildlife Area. This purchase is being funded by a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Section 6 program. Partnership funding is also being provided by the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the Mule Deer Foundation and the Inland Northwest Wildlife Council. Authority for this acquisition is provided in the capital budget.



Requests for Additional State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE): Two proposals to the Farm Service Agency (FSA) for additional SAFE acres were submitted before the June 1 deadline. SAFE provides costshare and annual rental payments to landowners willing to voluntarily establish habitat on cropland through up to 15-year contracts. One request was to add 30,000 more acres to the Shrubsteppe SAFE in Grant, Lincoln and Okanogan Counties. The second request was for a new SAFE project to establish 20,000 acres of shrubsteppe habitat within 3-mile radii of select ferruginous hawk nesting sites in Adams, Benton and Franklin Counties. If approved 50,000 more acres of SAFE would result in over \$54 million for targeted shrubsteppe habitat establishment on private lands. Only 400,000 acres of SAFE are currently available nationwide, however, and we already know that states' requests will greatly exceed the amount of acres available. WDFW already has the largest SAFE project in the nation with 63,000 acres in Douglas County. Letters of support for our additional acres requests were provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management and Colville Tribe.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

South Puget Sound Butterfly Breeding: Biologist Ann Potter continued field work on a south Puget Sound Mardon skipper habitat study with Project Lead Biologist Beyer and Technicians Gill and Piper. The objective of this ACUB funded research is to characterize the habitat selected for by Mardon skipper, which ultimately will inform habitat management and reintroduction efforts for this state endangered butterfly. To date, some oviposition sites have been located at the 2 study areas: Scatter Creek Wildlife Area and the Artillery Impact Area at Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

Golden Eagle Nesting Survey Resources: Biologist Gerry Hayes continued working with IT Specialist Tom Owens on analysis of WDFW's golden eagle occupancy and reproductive data in the WSDM database. Gerry and other Diversity Division staff finalized a budget proposal for seeking partners to assist with providing nearly \$170,000 in financial support of golden eagle surveys in 2013.

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

Southern Resident Killer Whales: Biologist Gary Wiles, with help from Sgt. Russ Mullins of Region 4 Enforcement, updated language on the Department's webpage regarding the state's killer whale watching regulations. These regulations were recently revised by the Legislature and go into effect on June 7; they are posted online (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/orca/>).

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

Habitat Connectivity Project: Project Leader Joanne Schuett-Hames worked on several new and old contracts including securing match. She spent considerable time planning for the June 5, 2012 WHCWG Full Group meeting. Details include coordinating with presenters, facility considerations, agenda modifications, and tracking RSVPs, carpooling, facilitation, etc. We have a strong group of expected attendees---clearly persons that are very interested in the information and in organizations and positions where the information will be used. We appreciate that Greg Schirato is attending and taking a key role in starting off the Columbia Plateau presentations.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Mazama Pocket Gopher Survey Coordination: Section Manager Bruce Thompson, Research Scientist Gail Olson, and Regional Program Manager Mick Cope coordinated and delivered a pocket gopher training session to nearly 30 field staff and cooperators from WDFW, DNR, and USFWS to promote cross-program awareness and consistent methods. Subsequent to the training, initial coordination materials were distributed to Regional Wildlife Program Managers and training participants to mobilize initial surveys, with emphasis on open forested areas that may yield information immediately salient to USFWS determinations about how to proceed with a federal ESA listing proposal.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Gray Wolf Monitoring: Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Jay Shepherd and Wolf Technician Tiffany Baker set motion sensor cameras in the Fifteen Mile Creek drainage in the Wedge area of Stevens County due to recent wolf sightings and howling detections. Two wolves were photographed on a motion sensor camera in the Wedge earlier in the week (see below).



One of the 2 wolves photographed this week in the Wedge area of Stevens County.

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

WT Wooten WA – Volunteer Project: Assistant Area Manager Dingman worked Saturday and Sunday with volunteers from the Inland Northwest Wildlife Council to remove old barbed wire fences on the Wildlife Area.



Volunteers from INWC tearing out old fence along the Hartsock Grade.

REGION 2

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

Regional Wildlife Program Manager: Matt Monda

District 5: Grant / Adams District - Rich Finger

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

Saddle Mountain Wetland Project: Biologist Finger collected soil from the Saddle Mountain Wetland Project to perform a bioassay (a technique generally used to detect herbicide residues in soil) for various species which we may want to plant on the site. The purpose for the bioassay is to assess which species are likely to grow successfully in this specific soil which, based on existing plant communities, is highly alkaline. Finger will test grain corn, barley, proso millet, Japanese millet, and smartweed. Smartweed and millet have been seeded on this site but the results suggest that soil chemistry is inappropriate. It will be interesting to observe results more closely in controlled conditions. Soil samples from this site will also be collected and tested for pH and nutrient content. Unfortunately, perennial pepperweed and common reed have already started to encroach on newly disturbed areas within the wetland basin. Currently, fivehook bassia (*Bassia hyssopifolia*), very similar to *Kochia* is the most abundant species within the wetland basin.

Goose Island Caspian Terns: Biologist Finger and Regional Wildlife Program Manager Monda toured the Potholes Reservoir area to see the Caspian Tern colony and discuss alternatives to eliminating the nesting colony that is currently impacting listed anadromous fish species. The idea of temporarily providing a food source within a managed wetland basin was generally well received with some concerns over the cost of implementation and long-term Operation and Maintenance. Also in attendance were representatives from the Bureau of Reclamation, Grant County Public Utility District, RealTime Research, and Army Corps of Engineers.

Winchester Regulated Access Area: Biologist Finger mapped out a location for a 12.5 acre winter wheat food plot which is planned for August/September of this year. Unfortunately, last year's food plot was not properly placed and was flooded out. Prior to flooding the plot received high use by Sandhill Cranes. We hope to have a better understanding of water levels at the new location and should not experience significant flood kill to the crop, though some is anticipated.

District 6: Okanogan District - Scott Fitkin / Jeff Heinlen



Western painted turtle.



Female caliope hummingbird.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE



Bighorn Sheep Management: Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Heinlen received a report of a dead Bighorn sheep ram floating in Blue Lake – Sinlahekin. The ram was recovered and necropsied by WDFW wildlife and enforcement staff. No cause of death was identified nor did we learn how the ram ended up in the lake.

Common Loon Surveys: Biologist Heinlen received reports of two new Common Loon nests within the District this past week, doubling our total active nest thus far this year to four. These new sites need to be considered for addition to the lead restriction requirements for lakes with documented loon nesting. Updates are as follows:

Bonaparte Lake: One adult Common Loon was observed sitting on a nest built on a floating platform installed specifically for loon nesting. Further monitoring has determined that this nest failed but the loons have re-nested on a natural nest on the lake. This lake has been a very productive nesting territory for loons over the years.

Lost Lake: This is one of the most productive loon nesting territories in the state and again one pair of Common Loons has been observed on a nest on this lake. Bald eagles which pose a threat to loon chicks have all ready been observed harassing the adults this year.

Beaver Lake (new): One Common Loon nest was observed during the first part of the week on natural vegetation on a stable platform (log) in the lake. Unfortunately, further monitoring revealed this nest has failed with both adults observed out in the lake away from the nest and no eggs in the nest. This is the first documentation of Common Loons nesting on this lake.

Crawfish Lake (new): Due to limited natural nesting opportunities on this lake (from housing development) a floating platform was installed in the mid 1990s on this lake. Patience has paid off as a Common Loon pair has been observed nesting on this floating platform this year. Common Loons have been observed on the lake for many years but this is the first documented nesting on this lake.



Common Loon on nest - Beaver Lake.



Common Loon on nest - Crawfish Lake.

Bald Eagle Carcasses – Lead Related: Biologist Heinlen received the lab results for the last two bald eagle carcasses submitted for necropsy and toxicology work. The eagle collected in May from the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area was submitted to the USGS National Wildlife Health Center. The eagle collected from the Methow River in March had the liver only submitted to Washington State Universities Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Lab. Both Bald Eagles were found to contain toxic levels of lead in their systems.

Wolverine Research: Our Canadian partners recently downloaded photos from some of their run-pole sites and one site yielded pictures of three different wolverines, including our old friend Melanie, an adult female first captured in 2006. This is our first documentation on her since 2010. It's great to know that she and Rocky (our original study animal pair) are both still on the landscape contributing to the gene pool and giving us valuable data on this elusive species.



Adult female wolverine Melanie.

Wetland Habitat Enhancement: This year's field season for the Beaver/Wetland restoration project officially got underway last week with the hiring of 3-person temp crew. In addition to capturing nuisance beavers and relocation them to vacant habitat higher in the watershed, his

crew will be gathering the second year of baseline flow and temperature information from data loggers deployed in streams last year. A primary goal this season will be to refine and enhance our beaver establishment techniques and success. Long-term project goals include enhanced wetland creation and persistence on the landscape, as well as improved stream temperatures and late season flows in beaver-modified streams. Habitat created would benefit a wide-range of wildlife taxa, and improved stream temps and flows would benefit listed salmonids and other fish species. If we are able to keep the project funded for several more years we hope to be able to quantify any changes in temp and flow metrics that the project achieves.

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

Birding Field Tour: Biologist Fitkin and Region 1 Biologist Ferguson led a morning birding tour along a riverside portion of the Methow Valley Community trail. The outing was a wrap up to a weekend-long birding festival hosted by the Base Camp in the Upper Methow Valley. Great morning of birding with many species identified including redstarts and veerys.



Killdeer nest.

Snake Survey Tour: Biologist Fitkin and USFS biologist Rohrer hosted a half-day snake field survey on a portion of the Methow Wildlife Area as part of the National Snake Week survey effort. The citizen science effort is modeled after the Christmas Bird Count. In this case, participants document all snakes found while simultaneously logging survey locations and time in the field. Despite marginal temps, we were able to find multiple individuals of multiple species, including several rattlesnakes. We hope to host another field day during the designated week in September.



Common (Valley) Garter Snake.

Environmental Education: Assistant District Biologist Heinlen continued to give presentations on the wolverine research being conducted in the North Cascades and how to safely live with bears. Biologist Heinlen gave these presentations to 44 Omak sixth grade students at their Camp Desuatel. All presentations were well received with most students not realizing wolverines lived in the North Cascades nor how to live with safely in bear country. This made for a total of 146 sixth grade students from three school districts receiving these presentations this year.

Scotch Creek Wildlife Area Complex - Jim Olson / Brian DuPont / Mike Nelson

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Weed Control: Natural Resource Technician Topping completed for this week:

Headquarter Unit – 16.5 acres of chemical weed control was completed this week. Target weeds consisted of White top, Kochia, Dalmatian Toadflax and Scotch Thistle.

Eder Unit – 6 acres of chemical spray was applied to the following target weeds: White Top, Dalmatian Toadflax, Hounds Tongue and Russian Olive saplings.

Tunk Mt – 2.5 acres were sprayed targeting Dalmatian Toadflax, St John's Wort and Russian / Diffuse Knapweed sites.



Federal Surplus Equipment: Manager Olson and Asst. Manager Dupont made a trip to the Federal surplus yard at Fort Lewis this week to receive a military 5-ton truck. We also received and hauled in the truck 20 bunk beds and mattresses for the new bunkhouse on Scotch Creek.

Pogue Mountain Forest Health: Assistant Manager Dupont led the Wenatchee Washington Conservation Corp. crew, by hand thinning and slash piling of overstocked pole sized Ponderosa Pine on Pogue Mountain. We have approximately 3 – 4 weeks left for this activity.



Before



After

Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Complex - Dale Swedberg / Justin Haug



GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE.

Sherman Creek Wildlife Area: Prescribed Burn Specialist Tom Leuschen and Dry Forests Restoration Specialist Ray Guse spent the week laying out a series of complex burn units on the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area near Kettle Falls, while the Sinlahekin burn crew continues prepping fire-lines. All of the burn units have been recently thinned to reflect the fire resilient ponderosa pine savanna that occurred here historically. Old growth heritage trees now dot the landscape after the thinning. Much work remains to finish laying out the units, writing burn plans and prepping the units before implementation can begin this fall. Funding for much of the prescribed fire work is provided by a state jobs bill brought about with the help of The Nature Conservancy. WDFW will employ many firefighters and contractors to implement the Type 1 burns. An MOU between the US Fish and Wildlife Service and WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife for cooperative assistance in prescribed fire was signed and executed this week. MOU's with other agencies are currently undergoing administrative reviews and will be executed in the near future. Assistant manager Haug sprayed weeds in various locations around the Sinlahekin

Wildlife Area and pulled Scotch Thistle on the Chiliwist Wildlife Area. He also worked on several new Agricultural Leases.

Weed Survey/Treatment of McLoughlin Canyon Wildlife Area (Wilson Acquisition):

Assistant manager Haug met with Okanogan County Weed Technician to survey the weed situation at the McLoughlin Canyon Wildlife Area, in particular, the Class A weed Wild Four-o'Clock (*Mirabilis* spp.). A significant amount of *Mirabilis* was sprayed but at least two more site visits for herbicide treatments are needed. The new wildlife area has a very serious weed problem that will require an intense amount of work to get a handle on. We will work to roll with new area into our already demanding weed control schedule.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE.



Assistant manager Haug met with representatives of the Okanogan Land Trust and Friends of Buzzard Lake to assist them with the construction of fences and installation of gates and signs at the Buzzard Lake Wildlife Area (see pictures below). Fishing regulation signs were created by an individual from the Okanogan Fly-Fishing Club. This work is funded through the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) and is intended to keep campers in the camping area and ORVs and cattle out

of the riparian area and adjacent wetlands. The barriers put up to date will help deter people from damaging the area, as was customary before WDFW purchased the property 3 years ago.

Assistant manager Haug participated as an educator at the Tonasket 6th Grade Camp at Lost Lake. He instructed groups of kids the use of a GPS and how to properly navigate an area using the device. The class enjoyed the competition of the course he laid out and teachers expressed to him their fondness for the change of pace.

Chelan Wildlife Area Complex - Ron Fox

Weekender Opportunities: Wildflowers are still providing a spring show on the Swakane and Chelan Butte Units of the Chelan Wildlife Areas. North facing slopes, riparian areas, and higher elevation areas around 3,000 feet are the better locations for finding wildflowers.



Blue Elderberry



Purple Sage



Northern Mule Ears

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Chelan Butte Field Restoration: Brad Zabreznik, Maintenance Mechanic, started mowing four fields seeded with native grasses and forbs last fall to reduce annual weeds competition. The weed of greatest concern is cereal rye that infests many of the old farm fields on the Butte. Brad was making good progress completing two fields but on the first pass through the third field the mower broke down. While waiting for parts he switched back to disking fields to prepare them for seeding this fall. During May, Brad was able to disk seven fields (325 acres) and mowed two fields (30 acres).



Chelan Butte rams in recently mowed field. (There are 30 rams in the photo)

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

Beebe Springs Natural Area: After another round of review, Chelan Manager, Ron Fox, Michael De La Cruz, Construction Project Coordinator, and design consultants from J.A. Brennan finalized construction drawings for Phase 4a.

Ron also met with archeologists from Eastern Washington University at Beebe Springs. They came up for 3 days to complete the cultural resource surveys for the Phase 4a work area. For the first time ever, visiting archeologists were bored at Beebe Springs and found only a few flakes on the surface and one very small flake in a test hole. The remainder of the section 106 consultation should proceed smoothly from here.



EWU archeologists conducting survey of proposed trail at Beebe Springs.

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 Wisniewski and Kelli Bartholomew performed vegetation surveys on SAFE tracts in southern Douglas County and began writing plans that describe the methods required to establish native grasses. Private Lands Biologist Braaten continues to spend time checking SAFE fields and meeting with landowners in Douglas County for weeds and new grass seedlings.

WDFW Biocontrol Insect Collection: Private Lands Biologist Braaten began collecting Mecinus janthinus, this week to aid in the control of Dalmation Toadflax in Douglas County. Many of the weevils are breeding Late May early Jun, so the collection of female weevils is higher, which lay the eggs within the stems of the Toadflax plants. Weevils will be released in areas that need some control. WDFW has been donating these biocontrol insects to private landowners after collecting them saving them the cost of \$0.50/insect. Insects are collected at WDFW established nursery sites where insects can still be found after their initial release 13 years ago.



REGION 3

None

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Caspian Terns Nesting in Seattle: Biologist Anderson had previously been requested by USFWS to monitor the Trident roof, at Port of Seattle Magnolia facility, and confirm nesting. Anderson swung into this site while on other area efforts. Trident staff relayed nesting and allowed for roof access. Anderson stayed on the far end of roof so as to not disturb birds. A number of birds, at least 20 or more, were attending eggs. Below is a picture, far off.

Mazama Pocket Gopher Survey Training: Biologist Anderson attended an internal raining prence/absence occurrence survey of Mazama pocket gophers. The training was very informative, particularly the field practicum efforts covering multiple types of habitat gophers have been found to use. information on the Mazama Pocket Gopher in WA, a State Threatened species can be found here:

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/00390/>

http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/endangered/species/mazama_pocket_gopher.pdf

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

Peregrine Falcon Federal Delisting Monitoring and Conservation: Biologist Anderson spent time with volunteers examining Rattlesnake ledge and Mt. Si federal delist monitoring sites for Peregrine Falcons. An adult male continues to be observed at Rattlesnake, likely indicating nesting activity given behavior. However, no firm evidence of nesting yet observed. Mt. Si continues to show no activity. The Deception Wall eyrie was also observed, due to management efforts in collaboration with USFS (property owner) and WA State Parks (access and climbing use management entity). The female falcon was observed with at least two 1.5-2 week old chicks.

Biologist Milner met with representatives of the climbing community and staff from Wallace Falls State Park to discuss a recreation plan that is in preparation and how to integrate the peregrine falcon eyrie that falls within the park. The eyrie is on a popular climbing wall, which fortunately, is part of a much larger system. Seasonal closures were agreed upon and the spirit of cooperation among all parties was very appreciated by all.

Common Loon Nest Monitoring: Biologist Anderson visited Calligan Lake to check on status of loon pair at Calligan Lake. The pair is still present; however nest activity was not evident. This may be a young pair, based on behavior. Anderson made contact with a few of the anglers using the lake and asked they pass any observations of loon use particularly nesting on logs or the platform along. The pair had been observed copulating the week prior on the loon nest platform that WDFW, in collaboration with Hancock Timber Company, has provided on the lake. Information on Common Loon management and status, a State Sensitive species, can be found at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/pub.php?id=00341>

Washington's loon population is the farthest south on the west coast of 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/>

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

Wildlife Management

WDFW Snoqualmie Wildlife Management Area Acoustic Bat Detection Efforts: Biologist Anderson and Wildlife Area Manager Paulson met with members of Bats Northwest to examine all lower Snoqualmie Valley wildlife management units; Stillwater, Cherry Valley, and Crescent Lake units. The group was taking opportunity to examine sites and discuss development of pilot

efforts to utilize acoustic bat survey techniques to assist in determining bat activity and use on these sites and develop a partial list of species occurrence. These management units span the entire lower Snoqualmie Valley. See below picture of group at Crescent Lake Wildlife Management Unit:

North Cascades Elk Harvest Management Coordination: Manger Link and Biologist Danilson attended an all-day meeting in Mill Creek with WDFW and tribal representatives to discuss harvest management. This involved discussing the 2012 co-management agreement and providing an update on the draft North Cascades Elk Herd Plan.

2012 Mountain Goat Survey Funding: Biologist Danilson continued to make arrangements to receive financial support for the Mount Baker area. Additionally, Danilson has identified outside funding sources to support mountain goat surveys in the Darrington area, which hasn't been surveyed since 2009, and coordinated with Biologist Milner to determine whether there was interest and support for conducting surveys. The Darrington area population of mountain goats is possibly the most depressed population of goats in Washington. Earlier planning efforts identified this area as one of the highest priorities for future mountain goat reintroduction and/or augmentation.

North Skagit Spring Bear Hunt: Spring black bear hunts ended May 31. Hunter activity increased for the final several days of the season, and therefore so did private lands staff. Biologist Roozen and technician Otto dedicated many work hours to the hunt, monitoring hunter and wildlife activity, responding to access calls and hunter harvest. The hunt unit proved more productive with more bear activity and logging roads more accessible because of quick snow melt.

Private Lands Access Agreements for Deer Hunting: Biologist Roozen contacted Whidbey Island landowners regarding their interest (and questions) in allowing public access for deer hunting on their property. Roozen and District 13 biologist Milner are scheduling a meeting with three potential partner landowners for June. Roozen and technician Otto continued mapping potential access locations and contacted local gun club regarding their possible role in the hunts.

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.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Black-tailed Deer Research Project: The initial fawn captures associated with the black-tailed deer research project in Region 5 have occurred. Thirteen does are being monitored by a combination of remote (satellite) and field (VHF) methods. Please see photos of black-tail fawns 275, 276, and 165.





Western Pond Turtle Management: Biologist Holman along with volunteers Kate and Frank Slavens marked 20 western pond turtles in preparation for release into the wild. This initial “early release” will take place earlier in the summer than typical releases as the animals are of suitable size and no longer need to be in captivity. To date, 1,284 western pond turtle juveniles have been released into the Columbia River Gorge populations over a span of 21 years. Biologist Anderson met with USFWS staff and the Port of Skamania to discuss western pond turtle habitat improvement at the Beacon Rock Golf Course and Pierce National Wildlife Refuge. The two landowners have adjacent property lines and share wetland habitat important to the western pond turtle. Discussions were centered around ways the Port and the Refuge can cooperate to enhance wetland habitat through a federal/private MOU.

Flamulated Owl Surveys: Biologist Anderson conducted the first of three protocol surveys for flamulated owls as part of the eastside coordinated survey. Biologist Flick from the USFS also conducted a flamulated owl survey and we appreciate her help in this effort.

Wildlife Areas

Klickitat Wildlife Area:

Grazing Permits: Manager Van Leuven monitored grazing on the Davenport permit area; only one issue was noted where a fence corner separating WDFW land from private land needs to be repaired. In Sheep Canyon, within the permit area, Manager Van Leuven found a clump of

sticky-stemmed penstamon blooming. This is a tall, showy species that is uncommon on the Wildlife Area.



Sticky-stemmed penstamon

Mourning Dove Survey: Manager VanLeuven conducted the annual mourning dove survey along route 540, from BZ Corners to Glenwood. Conditions were ideal, however only one dove was observed.

Shillapoo Wildlife Area:

Annual Mourning Dove Survey: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Hauswald conducted the annual mourning dove survey last week in the Vancouver area. The survey route started in the Vancouver lowlands and ended in the Ridgefield area. During the survey he heard 15 different doves and observed another 12 while driving or stopped at the listening locations. This year's survey had the highest count of both birds heard and seen since the survey route began in 1994. Several of the listening locations had high noise levels which made listening for the calls very difficult if not impossible to hear at some of the stops. An additional route will be established by next year in a more rural area in the district, in order to have listening posts that do not have high urban noise levels.

Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area:

St. Helens CAG Meeting: The Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area Citizen Advisory Group meeting was held last week. Members of the group included representation from the Back Country Horseman, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, U.S. Forest Service, local community advocates for the Toutle Valley, and a retired Weyerhaeuser forester. The group discussed the plan update for the Wildlife Area, reviewing the previous two years accomplishments and the goals for the next two years on the Wildlife Area.

Scotch Broom Pulling at St. Helens: Technician Pyzik spent the week working on removing scotch broom in the Mudflow Unit where scotch broom has taken over about two acres of

potential forage area. With the use of a new tool, Pyzik was able to remove about ½ acre of scotch broom.



Before



After

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE.

Wildlife Management

Mazama Pocket Gopher Training: Biologists Stephens, George, Bergh, and Holman attended training on surveying for and identifying Mazama Pocket Gopher mounds. This species spends most of its time underground so the mounds they create at the soil's surface are the most efficient method of determining if gophers are present in an area. The training was intended to educate staff that work in areas where the Mazama Pocket Gopher has historically occurred so they can survey these areas between now and October. The results of this effort will assist the USFWS in determining the species' listing status under the Endangered Species Act.



Identifying Mazama Pocket Gopher mounds

REGION 6

None