

Wildlife Program

Week of November 12-18, 2012

LANDS DIVISION

Wildlife Areas

Columbia Basin Wildlife Area Addition: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) completed the purchase of 80 acres from the Spencer family for the Ephrata Lake project in Grant County. The purpose of the project is to enhance waterfowl habitat management opportunities and provide a migratory waterfowl resting site. This property is located approximately three miles south of Soap Lake and includes a large portion of the riparian zone of Ephrata Lake. The upland portion is native grassland, comprised of bunchgrasses, forbs and shrubs. It is integral to a large, public land protection complex that includes additional lands owned by WDFW, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Bureau of Reclamation (BOR). The property will be managed within the Wildlife Program by Greg Fitzgerald as part of the Seeps Lake Unit, Columbia Basin Wildlife Area. This purchase was funded by grants from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and the Pittman-Robertson program.



Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Non-highway and Off-road Vehicle Account (NOVA) Recreation Grant Committee Meeting: Paul Dahmer participated with other members of the RCO NOVA Committee to review and finalize ranking grant applications to develop funding recommendations for approval by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board. The Committee recommended funding for two of the three WDFW grant applications including a grant to develop an Americans with Disability Act (ADA) fishing access on the Cowlitz River in Lewis County and another to develop parking, trails and water access on the Similkameen-Chopaka Unit of the Scotch Creek Wildlife Area in Okanogan County.

Wildlife Area Management Plan Steering Committee: The first Wildlife Area Management Plan Steering Committee meeting was held in North Bend on November 14. This group is tasked with developing an outline and guidance toward writing new management plans for the wildlife areas. Steering committee members that participated include five wildlife area managers, Wildlife Diversity and Lands Division staff, and a Habitat Program representative. Several

subcommittees will be formed and will meet within the next two months to develop recommendations for the Steering Committee to consider.

SCIENCE DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Monique Lance and Scott Pearson are co-authors on a manuscript that was just published in the Condor. The paper documents population declines between 2000 and 2010 using at-sea surveys conducted annually between the Washington-Canadian border and San Francisco Bay. The most significant declines occurred in the Puget Sound, Strait of Juan de Fuca and the outer coast of Washington.

Mike Schroeder co-authored a talk recently presented at the North American Ornithological Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia. The talk was given by George Barrowclough of the Museum of Natural History in New York. The title was “Phylogeography and species limits in the spruce grouse complex.”

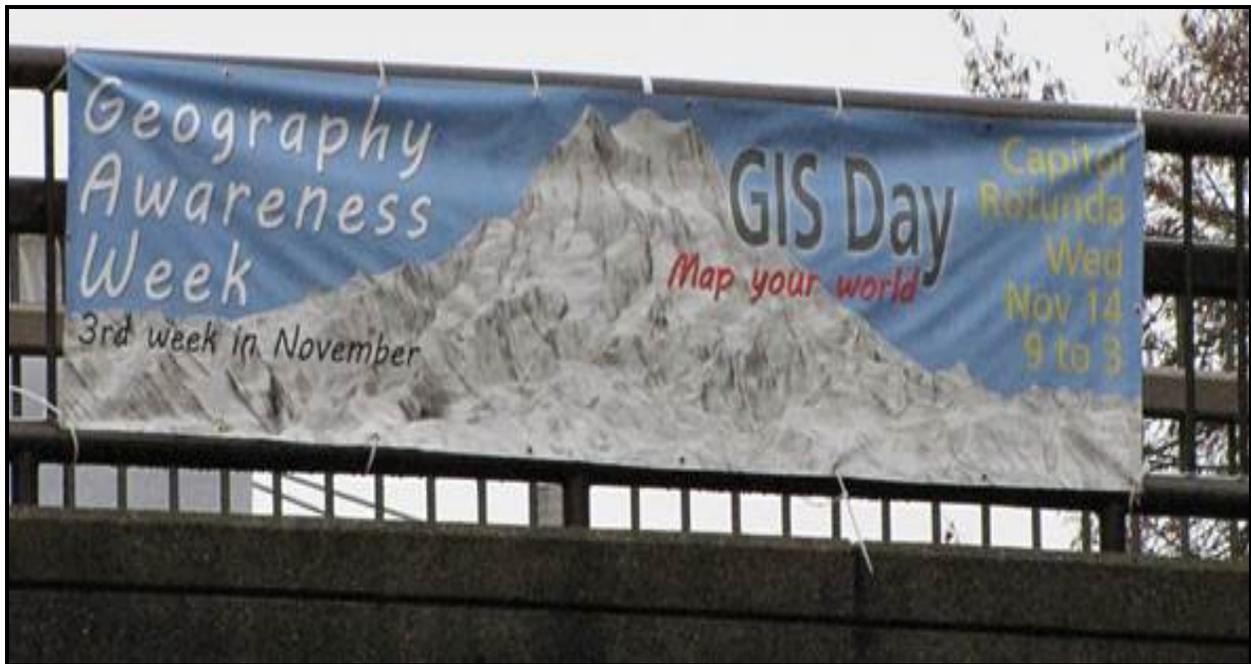
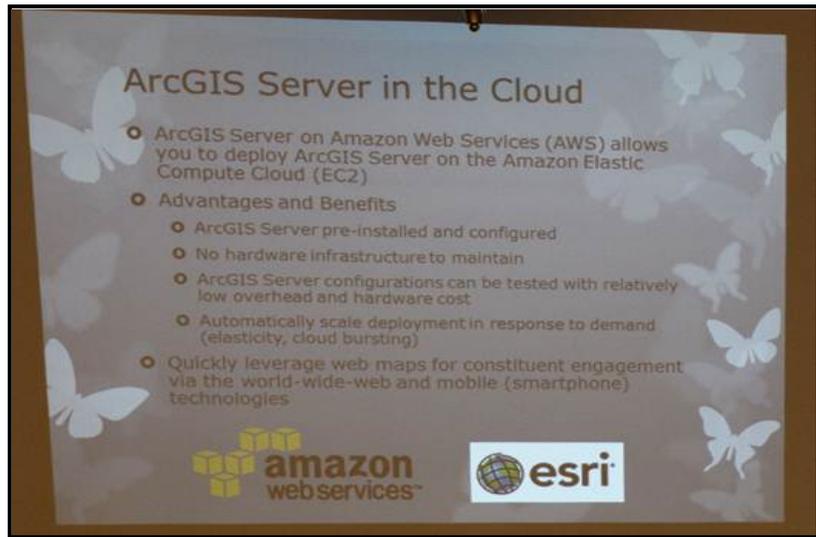
Abstract: We investigated species-limits and patterns of genetic variation in the Spruce Grouse complex (Tetraonidae: Falcipennis) using mitochondrial, sex-linked, and autosomal DNA sequences. Populations were sampled from throughout the range of the Canadian, Franklin's, and Prince-of-Wales forms. For the mitochondrial ND2 sequences, those three taxa were approximately two percent divergent from each other and formed monophyletic clades with high bootstrap support; 79 percent of the total genetic variation was distributed among the geographical regions corresponding to their populations. These results, along with salient phenotypic and behavioral differences, are consistent with three species-level taxa. Within Canadian and Franklin's Spruce Grouse, nucleotide diversity within populations was relatively low and among-population genetic variance was high; G_{ST} was 49 percent and 33 percent, respectively, among populations of these birds. This suggests the species are composed of fragmented populations with limited dispersal. In addition, the geographic pattern of haplotype distribution within the Canadian Spruce Grouse was highly structured, suggesting the existence of multiple Pleistocene refugia. The patterns of nuclear DNA sequences were generally consistent with the mitochondrial results, but with less differentiation. The geographical position of the transition between Canadian and Franklin's Spruce Grouse at the Z-linked aconitase intron was offset from the mitochondrial transition by several hundred kilometers.

Wildlife Survey Data Management (WSDM): The WSDM team has been developing a new wildlife data access and reporting application for mobile devices and the web. The application uses ArcGIS Online to display existing WSDM locations and record details on an interactive map, as well as providing the ability to navigate to, record, and submit new wildlife locations in the field. The tool uses the internal GPS in a mobile device to detect the observation location, or the user can manually select a point location from the basemap. Observations can also be recorded from any tablet or on the web from a desktop computer. The development and design of the application are intended to meet regional requests for a fast and easy data viewing and reporting tool. The phone app will be “unveiled” at the upcoming program meeting in

Wenatchee. Please sign up or drop in on breakout session number eight, “Monitoring Biodiversity – Reporting and Accessing WDFW Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) Data from your phone” for a chance to provide feedback on its development.

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

Geographic/Game Information Systems (GIS) Event: Science Division staff participated in all facets of the GIS Day Events held at the State Capitol Rotunda on November 14. WDFW partnered with staff at DNR, Department of Transportation (DOT) and Chief Information Officer (CIO) to organize and sponsor a very diverse and well-attended venue, comprised of 24 formal “GIS in action” presentations, organized into six thematic tracks: Transportation, Environment, Marine, Geology, Community and Imagery/Cartography. Andy Duff gave a presentation on “Collecting Volunteer-based Geographic Information on Wildlife and Habitat,” using ArcGIS online and mobile mapping application resources. Over 50 posters on display showcased examples of GIS data and resource applications which are central to numerous business and service delivery functions in Washington State Government.





GIS Analyst Brian Hall (above) coordinated and demonstrated the WDFW GIS display, while Senior GIS Analyst Brian Cosentino (below) took a snapshot of a neighboring exhibit at the GIS Day Events held at the State Capitol Rotunda on Wednesday, November 14.



REGION 1

Wolf Management

District 1: Biologist Shepherd met with and discussed wolf sightings with Black Canyon/Northport residents and checked remote cameras with Officer Don Weatherman. Biologist Shepherd drove across the top of the Wedge with Officer Don Weatherman and contacted hunters and saw no predator tracks in the snow. Biologist Shepherd sealed several cougars in Kettle Falls while returning from the Wedge. Biologist Shepherd discussed wolf and cattle issues with a reporter from the Chewelah Independent. Biologist Shepherd began to track down the last check for Leisa Hill, range rider for the Dawson National Forest allotment. Biologist Shepherd began to sort and put away hazing and other equipment used for wolf management in District 1.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Lincoln Cliffs Bighorn Sheep Aerial Survey: Biologists Ferguson and Atamian conducted the annual sheep survey on the Lincoln Cliffs sheep. No summary or analysis has yet been started, but draft numbers show one of the highest counts. A total of 90 sheep were counted, 49 ewes, 20 lambs, and 21 rams (four one-quarter, four one-half, six three-quarter, and seven full curl).



Biologists Ferguson and Atamian conducted the annual survey on the Lincoln Cliffs sheep.



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

Wildlife Management

First Deer Story: When WDFW staff and volunteers arrived at the Deer Park Washington State Patrol (WSP) truck scale for the first deer hunter check station on Saturday, there was a pick-up camper parked there next to the scale house that had “shut down for the night.” District Biologist Dana Base knocked on the camper door. Inside a man sleepily answered, “We’ll be out in a minute or so.” Base replied that was fine, but that we were with the WDFW and were preparing to open a hunter check station that day, beginning in about 15 minutes. The guy came out a short while later along with his 10-year-old daughter. They had driven all night from western Washington and were so dog tired that they pulled over at the WSP truck scale to rest awhile. Then, “Mark” asked about places that he and his daughter could hunt white-tailed deer in northeastern Washington. As Base had a bunch of details to get done to open this check station, as well as deploy staff to the Chattaroy check station, he asked one of our long-standing,



steadfast, and big game savvy volunteers Greg Koehn if he could provide some guidance to this dad and daughter hunting team. Well, lo and behold, Greg apparently gave Mark some excellent advice as the attached photo depicts his daughter's first deer harvest, taken later that weekend, and brought through the Chattaroy Check Station on Sunday, November 18, 2012.

Northeast Washington Deer Check Stations: Region 1 Biologists and a cadre of volunteers conducted check stations during the last weekend of the late buck season in northeast Washington. Check stations were open simultaneously on Saturday and Sunday on Highway 2 and Highway 395 at Chattaroy and Deer Park, respectively. A total of 271 deer hunters were interviewed with 59 white-tailed deer for a combined success rate of 21 percent. A couple of waterfowl hunters also visited the check station.



Master Hunter Gregg Koehn discusses deer antler scoring at the Chattaroy Check Station with a hunter who harvested a large buck.



Waterfowl hunters and their bag at the Chattaroy check station.

Private Lands/Access

Pheasants Forever Habitat Planting:

Private Lands Biologist Davis assisted Pheasants Forever with a tree and shrub planting on a site located in Columbia County.

A total of 284 plants, including a mix of rose, juniper, bitterbrush and sumac, were planted chiefly to benefit pheasants. However, other upland game birds species will also benefit from the habitat enhancements.

The owner of the site will plant an additional 100 big sagebrush plants over the next two weeks. In addition, perennial grasses intended as nesting cover will be seeded in February.



Volunteers help plant trees and shrubs to benefit wildlife in Columbia County.

REGION 2



Bighorn Sheep spotted west of Blue Lake on Sinlahekin Wildlife Area (above). A coyote (below) spotted on the move on Methow Wildlife Area.





A white-tailed deer (above) is spotted on the Methow Wildlife Area. A mule deer (below) overlooks the valley at Sinlahekin Wildlife Area.





A snowy scene out in wolverine country (above) is a drastic comparison to this scenic view of Pasayten Wilderness (below).

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Education and Outreach: Biologist Fitkin attended the Western Wildlife Outreach (WWO) workshop in Mazama. Previously known as the Grizzly Bear Outreach Project (GBOP), the group has changed their name to reflect their expanded educational mission that includes cougars, wolves and black bears. The purpose of the workshop was to brainstorm priority needs and ideas for future educational material and products. WWO is a non-advocacy, non-profit environmental outreach group that seeks to educate the public on how to coexist with large carnivores and share information on carnivore ecology and management.

Wildfire: Significant re-sprouting is occurring in the wildfire areas in Chelan County. With the falls rains, vegetation, primarily grasses, have started growing across a large portion of the burned areas.



The sprouting should help minimize erosion events and provide forage for deer on winter ranges. North facing slopes at higher elevations are not recovering as fast as soil temperatures are lower.

Coordination for Spring 2013 Translocations: Becker worked with the Wyoming Fish and Game biologist that presented our request to their Commission for pygmy rabbits from their state. We received final approval for pygmy rabbit translocations in February/March of next year. Becker also fielded some questions from Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife biologists that are in the review process of our permit request for translocations, also in 2013.

Wildlife Areas

Construction of Dormaier Breeding Enclosure: Research Scientist Becker, Wildlife Area Manager Peterson, and a crew of staff and volunteers finished building a new breeding enclosure on Dormaier unit near Jameson Lake. Many thanks to all that contributed their hard work to accomplish this tough task.



Regulated Access Areas: Natural Resource Technician Will Carpenter checked and adjusted water levels in the managed wetland cells in the Frenchman Ponds Regulated Access Area (FRAA) and Winchester Regulated Access Area (WRAA) as they continue to fill. Wetland cells in FRAA are full, but the water level of the Frenchman Hills Wasteway (the water source) is falling, making adjustments to the water control structures a daily chore.



Fire Rehab – Aerial Seeding: After false starts on Friday and Saturday due to fog and rain, on Sunday, JR Helicopters of Yakima was able to seed a total of 140 acres between the Central Ferry Canyon and Foster Creek burns. They also seeded Bureau of Land Management (BLM) acreage within the Foster Creek burn with seed provided by BLM. All together they applied approximately 3,500 pounds of seed in about four hours.



Fall Seeding: Trying to stay ahead of the weather, staff spent much of the week on projects within the Bridgeport unit. Tuesday, Natural Resource Technician (NRT) Angel Hastings completed a forb interseed on 30 acres located within the Foster Creek Burn. This site had been seeded to native grasses 10 years ago and lacked a diversity of forbs. We originally intended to interseed forbs here sometime in the next few years, but as this summer's fire removed 10 years of residual grass, we were given an opportunity that couldn't be missed to complete it now. When Angel had finished, she moved the tractor and Truax seed drill to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) field that lessee Lee Hanford is to seed. We are loaning Lee our two Truax grass drills to help complete this task. Lee is providing the tractor, his expertise and good humor.



Maintenance Mechanic Fidel Rios transported the second drill from the shop and Biologist Dan Peterson assisted Angel and Lee with calibration of each drill. Fidel and Lee spent a good part of Wednesday hooking the drills to a new double hitch we recently

Conservation Reserve Program lessee Lee Hanford seeds his field. This will result in the establishment of 180 acres of native grasses and forbs. In the distance can be seen the process of removing native shrub-steppe habitat (darker areas) to make way for more apple orchards (light irregular areas).

purchased from Warden Welding. As this was its first use, there was a bit of a learning curve to get everything working correctly. By day's end, Lee was well underway and quite impressed with how well the tandem drills operate. When he finishes this 180 acre field, we will move the whole operation across the road and begin seeding our Recreation Conservation Office (RCO) funded project, a total of 300 acres.

Private Lands/Access

Great Grey Owl (GGO) Nest Platforms: Assistant Manager Dupont worked with a private contractor to hang 11 GGO nest platforms in the timbered portion of the Chesaw Wildlife Area. Four of the platforms were placed in the 90 acres set aside for the GGO's, Goshawks and diversity. Five were hung in the 222 acres to be thinned and two were placed in adjacent forested areas. The contract for purchasing the timber has been awarded and logging will take place this winter on the Chesaw Wildlife Area.



Eleven Great Grey Owl nest platforms were hung in the Chesaw Wildlife Area.



State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE): Private Lands Manager Cotton met with Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) and Foster Creek Conservation District (FCCD) staff to discuss progress on current SAFE contracts, how contract deliverables will be handled, and how to manage the contracts that are behind schedule. Private Lands Biologist Braaten met with several Douglas County landowners regarding fall SAFE grass and forb seeding. Private Lands Biologist Wisniewski began producing PDF maps that show where forbs are seeded for each contract. The maps are a portion of our contract deliverables.



GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Wildlife Areas

Chiliwist Wildfire: A fire started on Wednesday, November 14, on the Chiliwist Wildlife Area consuming approximately 300 acres. Seasonal Klehm re-seeded the half-mile dozer line with native vegetation.

Prescribed Burn Training in Twisp: Manager Swedberg, Assistant Manager Haug, fuels specialist Guse, and the entire burn team (along with attending Rx burn contractors) attended prescribed burn training in Twisp instructed by WDFW prescribed burn specialist Tom Leuschen. The training was intended to help newly employed staff and various contractors with information on previous burns and those expected



to begin this coming spring. Videos were used to show various nuances of our burning program including firing patterns, fire behavior on local conditions, and information on the effort that goes into implementing a prescribed burn as a state agency.

REGION 3

None

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Hozomeen Wolf Camera Project: Biologist DeBruyn and Wolf Specialist Paul Frame finished installing motion activated cameras baited with scent lure along trails in northeast Whatcom County. Travel corridors east of Ross Lake were the focus of the trip. Fifteen cameras will remain active all winter and spring in an effort to document trail use by large carnivores and their prey.



Wolf Biologist Paul Frame prepares to launch onto Ross Lake in the North Cascades.

North Cascades Elk Herd Management Plan: Biologist Danilson facilitated a meeting with other Wildlife Program staff and Region 4 Enforcement personnel to address agricultural conflicts and elk herd expansion in District 14. The meeting, also attended by Manager Link and Biologist Anderson, provided a collaborative exchange of ideas and recommendations to address

this issue. Danilson also conferred with graduate student Anna Yost from Central Washington University to assist in helping develop her research proposal for her Master's Degree project. Ms. Yost's project will model habitat preferences of elk throughout the managed range of this population.

Pacific Flyway Shorebird Survey: Biologist Milner and Gary Slater of Ecostudies Institute concluded volunteer training sessions for the upcoming surveys of Port Susan, Skagit, Padilla and Samish Bays. Two evening sessions were offered and were well attended by members of Skagit Audubon Chapter. Milner worked on locating access for the surveys in Padilla and Samish Bays, visiting potential areas and assessing them for viewing potential, and contacting landowners for permission to come onto their property.



Swan Tech Sherman Anderson approaches an injured Trumpeter Swan in Skagit County. A total of 10 swans have been collected so far in the Swan Mortality and Morbidity Project, including possible lead poisoned birds, power line strikes and shot birds.

Publications: WDFW Biologists Milner and Evenson, along with retired WDFW Biologist David Nysewander, received copies of the paper “Large-scale monitoring of shorebird populations using count data and n-mixture models: Black Oystercatcher (*haematopus bachmani*) surveys by land and sea,” on which they are AUK co-authors.

Authors were notified this week that the paper “Agricultural lands subsidize winter diet of Pacific Dunlin (*Calidris alpina pacifica*) at two major estuaries,” by Keith A. Hobson, Gary L. Slater, David B. Lank, Ruth L. Milner and Rachel Gardiner has been accepted for publication in Condor.

Wildlife Areas

British Petroleum Salmon Enhancement Project: Manager Kessler coordinated with the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA) on a habitat improvement project on the British Petroleum unit. Three hundred trees and shrubs were planted close to Terrell Creek on the unit. The area close to the planting project was closed for hunting for the three hour project. Manager Kessler installed signs and then monitored hunting during the project to avoid any problems.

Lake Terrell Water Levels: Manager Kessler monitored the water level at Lake Terrell following the dam remodeling project for fish passage. The lake water level continues to rise even with a large amount of water flowing over the new dam.

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

Wildlife Management

2013-14 Big Game Hunting Season Recommendations: Biologist Danilson solicited input and met with Wildlife Program and Enforcement personnel to facilitate input on the recommendations for the 2013-14 big game hunting season. The development of new harvest strategies for the North Cascades elk herd to address elk related agricultural conflicts is the biggest proposed change for the upcoming year. Additionally, Danilson has provided Section Managers with language that propose new area boundaries for the Mount Baker mountain goat hunt sub-units and the North Skagit spring bear hunt.

Private Lands/Access

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Biologist Roozen met with partner landowners to discuss access agreement topics and questions.

Technicians Otto, with Biologist Roozen's assistance, repaired and maintained multiple hunt units in the Region. The Region 4 private lands staff continued scheduled surveys of hunt units.



A Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program unit in Whatcom County was repaired and maintained.

Bow Hill Pheasant Release Site: Manager Link and Private Lands Biologist Roozen walked the new release site and spoke with hunters in the parking lot. The hunters were quite appreciative of this hunting opportunity. However, this release site has concerned several surrounding property owners. Region 4 staff is compiling all comments from hunters and concerned citizens and will review the Land-use Agreement with DNR after the end of the season. Further work needs to take place with the surrounding property owners before recommending this site remain open next year.



The Bow Hill pheasant release site parking lot (top of page) and the new reader sign (above).

Game Management Unit (GMU) 418 Elk Hunting Access: Region 4 private lands staff surveyed the GMU for hunter activity, logging operations, and unwanted activity. Modern firearm season came to an end on Friday, November 16.

Snow Goose Quality Program: Region 4 private lands staff monitored and noted snow goose foraging off Fir Island in relation to the traditional locations. Snow geese continued expansion into previously unutilized areas, with many small groups throughout the Region.

Wildlife Areas

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Planting Project: A WWRP planting project was completed on DeBay's Slough Reserve near the viewing area and on the river side. The planting crew included Skagit Wildlife Area staff with the assistance of the North Sound and Willipa Bay Weed Crews. Good job to all and thanks for completing the planting a day ahead of schedule.



Samish Unit: Natural Resource Specialist Greg Meis and Natural Resources Technician Curran Cosgrove checked water and food resource conditions on the site. Good sheet water exists over most of the site. Agricultural food resources are decreasing as birds have begun accessing the site for available food.

Pheasant Release: Manager Kessler and volunteers released 465 pheasants for the regular pheasant hunting season on Lake Terrell, Intalco and BP Units. He responded to many requests for information on the Thanksgiving week pheasant releases.

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

Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area: Manager Belinda Rotton spoke with neighbor and Dike District Commissioner Ken Balsler regarding safety zone signs on this adjoining property boundary. Natural Resource Worker Kraig Paulson coordinated with Mr. Balsler and was able to get the signs adjusted and installed.

Natural Resource Worker Kraig Paulson met with the WDFW Range Ecologist Jeff Burnham on the Ebey Island Unit to discuss the grazing permit and long-term monitoring on the grazing lease. Jeff and Kraig discussed potential pasture grass improvements, development of riparian vegetation along the drainage ditches and Deadwater Slough, and the development of fencing and a watering system.

Headquarters' Unit: WDFW Crew from Capital Asset Management Program (CAMP) completed the dredging work on Wiley Slough. Site cleanup and placement on stray dredge spoils to minimize erosion.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Wildlife Management

New Wildlife Program Staff: Loren Brokaw has been hired as an Environmental Specialist 5 and will be working as our Region 4 Restoration Projects Coordinator. Loren will work half-time coordinating new and ongoing restoration projects on WDFW lands. He will work quarter-time doing public outreach associated with many Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Projects throughout the Region. In the spirit of the Conservation Initiative, Loren will work closely with our Watershed Stewards, Wildlife Area Managers, Fish Biologists and Enforcement staff. Loren's first day will be December 17.

Brian Bohem has been hired as a Fish and Wildlife Biologist 3 and will be our new Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager. Brian's background includes habitat restoration, land-use planning and farming. Brian is a hunter and fisher who came to us from Sound Salmon Solutions where he was the Habitat Program Manager. While there, Brian did everything from driving heavy equipment to managing volunteer groups and balancing budgets. Brian's first day will be Wednesday, January 2, 2013.

Winter Waterfowl surveys: Biologist Cyra finalized the flight following documentation for winter waterfowl flights in preparation for flights commencing the first week of December, as well as for possible use at the upcoming Program school session on aerial surveys. Biologist Cyra also drafted specs for a Request for Quote for vendors of Nomex dry suits for use on extended over water surveys.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Western Pond Turtle: Biologist Anderson and Program Manager Jonker attended a Western Pond Turtle Population and Habitat Viability Assessment (PHVA) workshop in Olympia. The PHVA workshop was put on by the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group and sponsored by the Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle. A total of 28 biologists, veterinarians and turtle experts from Washington, Oregon and California gathered to outline conservation issues and actions for recovery of the state endangered western pond turtle. The three-day workshop placed an emphasis on habitat, population demographics and husbandry as topics for review and discussion. The PHVA process has been used throughout the world in the recovery of endangered species. WDFW will benefit from this workshop in our recovery efforts for this species.

Columbian White-tailed Deer Surveys:

District 10 Biologists Miller and Bergh are conducting doe/fawn surveys of Columbian white-tailed Deer (CWTD) on off-Julia Butler Nation Wildlife Refuge locations beginning this week in Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties.

The surveys are part of a long term data set compiled by USFWS that documents fawn recruitment into the population. One of the factors that are limiting this population is poor fawn survival during the first six months of life.

Previous studies suggested that coyote predation on this limited population was the main limiting factor. Surveys take place weekly until the end of December.



Columbian white-tailed deer with the classic white eye ring that these deer have.

Western Gray Squirrel: Biologist Van Leuven checked squirrel hair snag traps on the Klickitat Wildlife Area. This involves some preparation of traps, carrying replacement traps out to the field when checking on conditions of existing traps, recording data and picking up traps with hair in them, and putting the tape with hair in labeled bags. This evaluation is being done to test the effectiveness of using three-inch versus four-inch traps for collecting hair samples in the Klickitat population. Hair samples are being used to determine presence/absence and as genetic markers for individual animals in various study areas.

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

Wildlife Management

Southwest Washington Management Area 2A and 2B Goose Hunt: The first full week for the goose hunting season in Management Area 2A resulted in lower than normal numbers of geese checked in at all check stations. Technicians identified a total of 263 geese from November 10-17. Harvest rates were approximately 2.3 geese per hunter. One dusky was harvested during this period, however all zones remain open for hunting at this time.

Hunters interested in participating in this season can refer to pages 16, 20 and 21 of the Washington State Migratory Waterfowl and Upland Game Seasons pamphlet for further details regarding requirements for participation. As a reminder for those planning on participating, Management Area 2A hunts take place on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The season will extend from November 10 through November 25, 2012, and December 5, 2012, through January 27, 2013.

Private Lands/Access

Hunters Using Private Land: Technician White conducted checks of hunters using private land cooperators' properties in Klickitat County. White spoke with a total of 26 hunters, visited about 20 camps, and observed 50 vehicles on roads or parked at gates and camps. White checked a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) area where Hancock foresters suspect that individuals may drive across to access closed roads. White also picked up trash at campsites on Western Pacific Timber and Hancock land.

St Helens Land Access Program: Biologist Stephens supervised volunteers for the St Helens Land Access program on Weyerhaeuser property. The project was successful in redirecting hunters in vehicles away from active timber harvest operations. The active areas are open to walk-in access; many hunters were glad to have the walk-in only opportunity and in some of these areas they enjoyed a high success rate. A total of 18 volunteers turned out and donated hundreds of hours for the first round of permit hunts. Big thanks to all of the volunteers who worked during the early November hunt period.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Western Pond Turtle: Biologists Tirhi, Skriletz and Schmidt attended the three-day Western Pond Turtle Population and Habitat Viability Assessment (PHVA) workshop lead by the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The work was funded through a grant obtained by Jennifer Pramuk of the

Woodland Park Zoo, a member of the Western Pond Turtle Working Group. The PHVA was arranged in two parts: (1) an analysis and compilation of the goals and action steps needed for pond turtle recovery in the fields of habitat, populations and captive rearing and (2) a modeling effort using available metrics to analyze recovery options. The workshop was well attended by approximately 30 biologists, scientists, curators and zoo keepers. A workshop report will be compiled to help guide recovery efforts in Washington including necessary action items.

Willapa Bay Waterfowl Survey: Biologists Hoenes and Michaelis conducted the fourth of six waterfowl survey flights over Willapa Bay. Biologists observed 71,872 dabblers with 60 percent classified as American widgeon. The number of dabbling ducks observed during the flight declined by 24 percent compared to the flight conducted on November 2 (see table 1). Surveys are being conducted every two weeks until the end of December so biologists can gain a better understanding of the temporal variation in waterfowl usage of Willapa Bay and how it is influenced by the availability of eelgrass.

Table 1: Summary of total count and composition of dabbling ducks observed during Willapa Bay waterfowl flights.

Survey Date*	Dabbling ducks Identified	Widgeon	Pintail	Mallard	Teal
10-18-12	81,957	62%	18%	9%	11%
11-2-12	94,537	69%	17%	10%	4%
11-16-12	71,872	59%	27%	12%	2%

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

Wildlife Management

Willapa Bay National Wildlife Refuge (NWR): Biologist Hoenes and Regional Program Manager Cope met with Willapa NWR staff to discuss recommendations they are proposing to extend waterfowl and big game hunting opportunities on Willapa NWR. Regional Program Manager Cope will be sending a letter to the NWR in support of their proposed changes.

Canada Goose Check-Stations: Biologists Michaelis and Sundstrom manned the Canada goose check stations in Raymond and Reikkola. Michaelis checked 42 geese from 15 hunters while Sundstrom checked 38 geese from 14 hunters. None of the geese checked were determined to be dusky Canada geese.

Canada Goose Surveys: Biologists Michaelis and Sundstrom conducted Canada goose surveys as part of a regional effort to determine seasonal distribution patterns for Canada geese populations that winter in southwest Washington and northwest Oregon. Although the primary focus is cackling and dusky Canada geese, information is also collected for a variety of other species of Canada geese including lesser, Taverner’s, western, and Vancouver. Michaelis and Sundstrom observed 805 and 9,626 geese, respectively.

Private Lands/Access

Hunters Dumping Trash GMU 658: Biologist Harris went to a reported dumpsite in GMU 658. This dump site was reported by the land manager in an area that was opened for motorized access during modern deer and elk seasons. A forester reported that it was not there a few days prior. This location was located at a gate several miles from Highway 101 and approximately four miles from the main line gate. The main line gate is located several miles in after driving through another industrial forest landowner. If this was a case of someone just dumping there were numerous spots they could have dumped prior to this location. It appears that some hunter, after walking in the gated road, decided that this was a good location to dump some debris accumulated from a home repair project. Additionally it appeared they had a snack while there and threw the wrappers and bottles out the window. Biologist Harris picked up the trash while there. He also noted that trash along mainline and at many of the internal gates where people had parked increased significantly during the hunting season. Appears Bush beer is popular this year! Biologist Harris told the land manager he would organize a trash pickup after the hunting seasons.

Elk River access GMU 658: Biologist Harris talked to land manager for lands surrounding DNR lands around Elk River. He requested motorized access through the Muzzleloader season. The landowner will try to keep open for the late season muzzleloaders. However, since opening the gates at the start of Modern Firearm deer season they have had an increase in dumping. Biologist Harris said he would get the dump sites cleaned up since the dumping would not have happened if the land manager had not allowed motorized access. Harris plans to visit the area and possibly recommend closing a few gates early to reduce dumping issues. He also discussed creating some disabled access opportunities in the GMU. The land manager stated he would be willing to consider creating opportunities for disabled hunters on all the lands he manages.