

# Wildlife Program

Week of October 1-7, 2012

## **LANDS DIVISION**

**North Olympic Wildlife Area Addition:** Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) completed the purchase of 51.57 acres as part of the Dungeness Basin project to conserve and restore coastal wetlands properties. The property is located in Clallam County, approximately five miles north of Sequim fronting on Dungeness Bay. The property consists of 49.42 acres of tidelands and 2.15 acres of uplands containing the historic 3-Crabs restaurant. This purchase was funded by grants from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The property will be managed within the Wildlife Program as part of the Lower Dungeness Unit, North Olympic Wildlife Area.



## **WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION**

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

**Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Development** – Joint work by Wildlife Diversity Division and Science Division staff produced 11 species/subspecies (birds, mammals, herpetofauna, butterflies) information narratives that were delivered to Thurston County Planning staff for use in developing a Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan. The narratives were formatted for flexible incorporation by the County into the HCP to describe conservation status, population trends and distribution, life history, habitat, and reasons for decline.

**Mazama Pocket Gopher Survey Progress** – To date, data records have been compiled for 254 systematic, random plots examined for mound evidence in Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pierce,

and Thurston counties. Mound evidence was detected on 43 plots (16.9%) representing all land cover types. The target number of plots is 1,440 among 12 sample strata; data records thus far are not sufficient to provide meaningful summary information among strata. Data also have been reported from 63 opportunistic and directed survey locations. Letters continue to arrive regarding access for pocket gopher surveys. Responses from private landowners have been especially gratifying with willingness to provide survey access to more than 900 plot locations on private lands.

**Transboundary Carnivores:** Section Manager Allen and Endangered Species Biologist Jeff Lewis attended the Wildlinks Conference which was attended by about 50 invited participants representing US and Canadian federal and state agencies, Tribes/First Nations, private non-governmental organizations, and academics. Focus of workshops was on three topic areas: the Cascadia Partner Forum, Transboundary Connectivity Analysis, and Cascades Carnivore Collaboration. Allen helped lead sessions on the Cascadia Partner Forum and the Transboundary Cascades Carnivore Action Needs. Outcomes will be a creation of a listserv to facilitate dialogue and information sharing among US and Canadian collaborators, completion of the mission, goal and objective development for the Transboundary Cascades Carnivore Working Group, and prioritizing action needs for collaborative implementation.

## **WILDLIFE OUTREACH DIVISION**

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

**Wildlife Rehabilitation:** The lengthy Wildlife Rehabilitation Washington Administrative Code (WAC) revision project is proceeding. Some changes are being made to the section on veterinary medicine and what rehabilitators can practice. So far, of the 65 wildlife rehabilitators to whom we sent the letters, 15 have requested to be on the mailing list to review the draft. These and other wildlife rehabilitators have had many questions on the drafted WAC. Thompson spent considerable time searching emails and documents to fulfill a Public Disclosure Request (PDR).

The 2013-2015 Wildlife Rehabilitation Grant will open for application this fall. Thompson is revising the Request for Proposal (RFP) and will send it out to all Washington rehabilitators announcing this call for applications. We are anticipating another one hundred thousand dollars for the rehabilitation grant.

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

**WildWatchcams** - Chuck Gibilisco, Watchable Wildlife Section, coordinated with Chris Anderson, Region 4 Wildlife Biologist, to install a new [eaglecam](#) at the Lake Washington bald eagle nest site. This is the first bald eagle camera system installed in the Pacific Northwest under the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service new DRAFT Guidelines for bald eagle camera sets. The new camera is directly above the bowl of the eagle nest and can be zoomed in or out for close-up or distant views. Mixed reviews are coming in from eaglecam viewers and at least one adult eagle was observed by several individuals inspecting agency work. The pair of bald eagles at this

particular nest site did not successfully nest this past season. Eagle watchers and biologists are hoping to observe eagle nest building and other courtship behaviors pointing toward a successful nesting later this winter/spring.

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

**Citizen Science** – Citizen Science Coordinator Margaret Tudor presented to the WDFW Commission on Friday, October 5, along with Karen Dvornich, Executive Director of the NatureMapping Foundation, and Dr. Chris Grue, Associate Professor and Leader Washington Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, University of Washington. The presentation was titled “Intersecting Science Education and Natural Resource Management.” Margaret reported the recent changes in science education that now allow teachers to prepare K-12 students to undertake field science studies to contribute to citizen science projects.

**Wildlife Outreach Volunteers:** Volunteer Management Coordinator James Chandler assisted Wildlife Research Scientist Penny Beck with recruiting volunteers for two pigmy rabbit volunteer projects. Volunteers are needed to assist with maintaining the current enclosures for rabbit breeding and for building an enclosure on a new site. From October 22-25, 2012, maintenance of current enclosures and prep for winter (hog ringing fence, bending wire, pounding t-posts, etc.) at Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area, 20 minutes north of Ephrata. From October 30 - November 2, build new enclosures (digging out a trench, putting in posts, putting up wire, hog ringing fence, etc.). Project located at Dormaier Unit, 50 minutes north of Ephrata.

## **REGION 1**

### **Wolf Management**

**District 1:** Biologist Shepherd and Technician Baker searched wolf location clusters for cattle depredation evidence with Bill McIrven of the Diamond M Ranch. Biologist Shepherd and Technician Baker placed and checked cameras in the Wedge to determine if and where wolves are still present, and removed wolf bait from the Diamond M property. Biologist Shepherd de-scrambled, mapped, and texted Smackout wolf locations to range rider Leisa Hill everyday of the week. Technician Baker checked and retrieved trail cameras in Deadman Creek and South Fork Boulder Creek and scouted for wolf sign and deployed cameras off Lone Ranch Road (west of Little Boulder Creek).



***Technician Baker in discussion with Bill McIrven of the Diamond M Ranch while preparing to search wolf location clusters for cattle depredation evidence.***



*Wolf scat with Hereford hair found while searching for cattle depredation evidence.*

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

### **Wildlife Management**

**Asotin Bighorn Sheep Capture:** Biologists Wik and Vekasy spent a majority of the week planning for and implementing the October 4 Asotin bighorn sheep capture. Approximately 22 volunteers, agency personnel, and partners (U.S. Forest Service, Nez Perce Tribe and Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Washington Wild Sheep Foundation, and Washington State University Veterinary School) assisted with the helicopter capture. Fifteen sheep were captured, including recaptures of six ewes for repeat disease sampling, two newly radio-tagged ewes, and seven rams outfitted with GPS collars.



## Wildlife Areas

**Leland property tour** – On October 3, property owner Ward Leland, Wildlife Area Assistant Manager (WAAM) Mike Finch, District Biologist Howard Ferguson, Lands Coordinator Brian Trickel, and Wildlife Area Manager (WAM) Juli Anderson extensively toured this 3,100 acre parcel north of Davenport. Property is composed of a mix of timber and open terrain, and the owner is interested in granting a conservation easement to ensure the parcel is never developed out. Anderson and Ferguson will complete the Lands 20/20 form to start the process. This parcel is in great shape, and during the tour deer were seen, as well as elk and bear tracks.



*On October 3, 2012, the northern view from the Leland property provides a scenic shot of the Columbia River (above). A view of the pond located on the Leland property (below).*



## **REGION 2**

### **District Biologists**

#### **District 5: Grant / Adams District - Rich Finger / Sara Gregory**

**Weekender Opportunities:** Winchester Regulated Access Area blinds are now ready for the waterfowl opener. Hunters are not required to hunt out of the permanent blinds. We expect that the entire project area will be adequately flooded for the opening season. Large numbers of pintails, white-fronted geese, and sand hill cranes are using the project area. Hunters should use caution as the bag limit on pintails is two birds per person. Also, these blinds will offer some good opportunities for wildlife viewing and photography during the off-season.



*One of the blinds constructed at the Winchester Regulated Access Area.*

The Frenchmen Regulated Access Area began filling with water last week and should be adequately filled to support seven parties. Both of the regulated access areas are ‘register to hunt’ opportunities. Registration occurs on site, not via the Internet.

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

**Caspian Terns:** Biologist Finger continued to work on the ‘Caspian Tern Alternative Feeding’ feasibility study proposal for the Priest Rapids Coordinating Committee (PRCC). This committee, composed of representatives from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, Colville Confederated Tribes, Yakama Nation, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation, and Grant Planned Unit Development (PUD) staff, oversees the implementation of the anadromous fish activities associated with the Priest Rapids Project. The proposal will be completed once a couple budgetary items are sorted out.

## **District 7: Chelan / Douglas District – David Volsen / Jon Gallie**

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

**Wolves:** Technician Spence spent most of this week working in Kittitas and Yakima Counties. No evidence of wolves was recovered in the areas. We currently have logged over 900 camera days of monitoring within Regions 2 and 3 and have not recovered any sign of an established pack. With the increased activity of fall hunting seasons, it has become more challenging for Technician Spence to access areas and operate undisturbed. Hunters are establishing camps in many of the targeted search areas, making it difficult to place new camera sites.



Technician Spence's work with the department will end on October 31, 2012. Until that time we will focus on following up on high probability reports, searching for sign and recovering deployed cameras. A Cascade red fox was captured on one of the cameras set this past week. Regional Program Manager (RPM) Clausing indicated that the area where this image was taken is known to have foxes, and that he has seen several there.

**Mule Deer:** Biologist Volsen continued working on management options for mule deer herds impacted by the wildfires in Chelan and Douglas counties. Included were estimates of deer impacted by the fires, identification of areas of possible conflict with ranchers/farmers, hunt options, and feeding options.

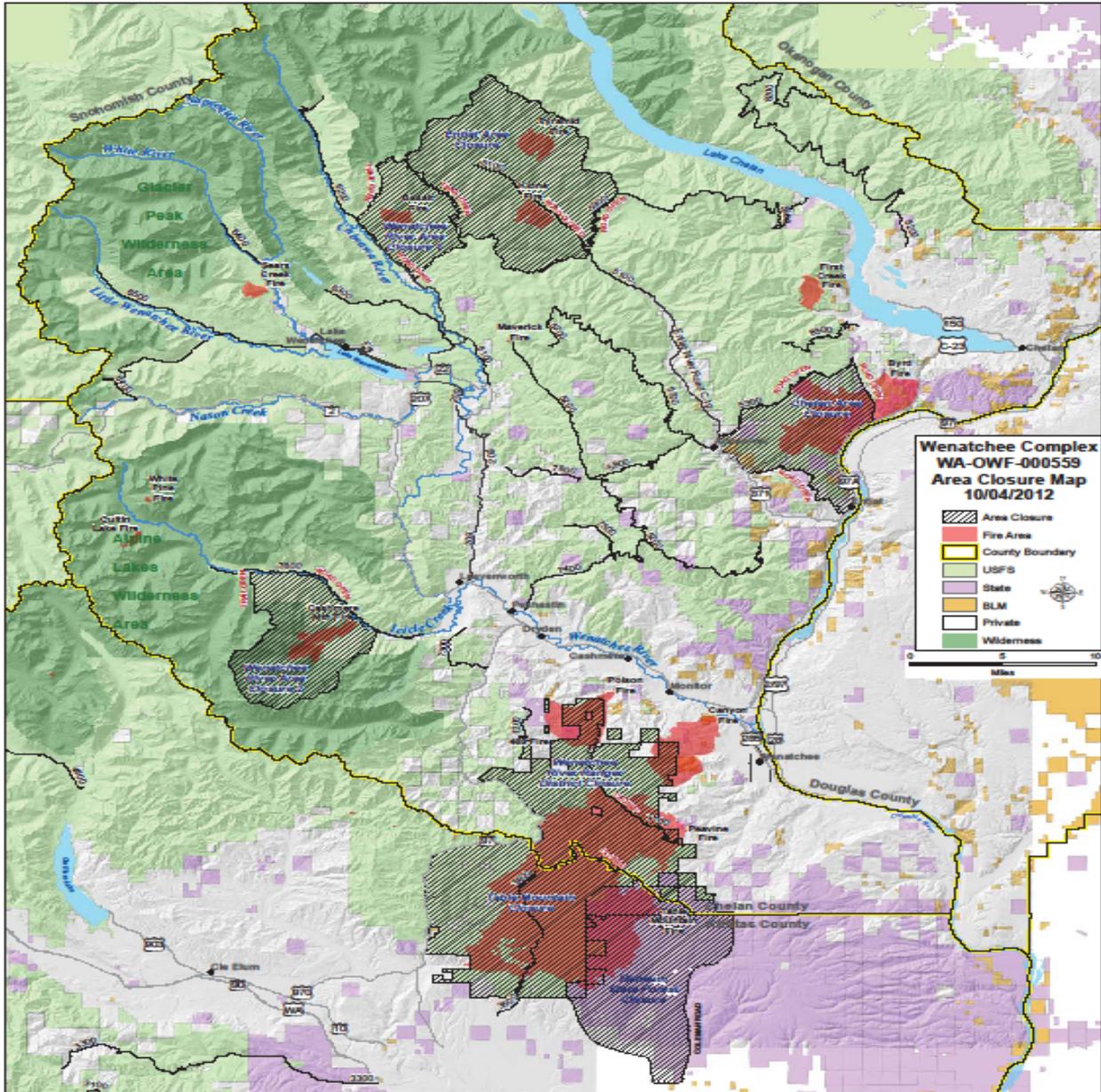
### ***GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES***

**Hunter Support:** Biologist Gallie and Volsen spent considerable time addressing the concerns and questions from hunters in regard to general and permit hunting that has been disrupted due to the wildfires in Chelan and Douglas counties. The USFS and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) have enacted wide ranging access restrictions to large portions of Chelan County, prohibiting public access to these lands. General season hunters were given advice on closures and alternative areas, while permit hunters were placed on a list for possible options when they were excluded from their hunt area.

**Fire:** Entry closures were relaxed for a large portion of Chelan County. This should alleviate concerns for many hunters before the opening of the general deer season. Game Management Unit (GMU) 251 (Mission) is still under entry closure, which is impacting some of the ongoing elk opportunity.

The USFS is beginning its Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) evaluation process that will analyze fire severity and produce maps of fire impacts. Products from that process should be available early November and will help us make decisions about the long term impacts from the fires.

**Species Recovery**



*Area closures in Chelan County as of October 5, 2012.*

## Pygmy Rabbit Recovery - Penny Becker / Chad Eidson

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

**Troubleshooting mortalities:** In the first three weeks of September, there was a pulse of mortalities in one of the large enclosures. In all, 18 pygmy rabbits died. Five were aerial predation events, while the rest were intact and emaciated carcasses. Lab testing revealed no disease or other obvious causes of death. To rule out food and water limitation as a source of mortality, more feeding stations were added, more greens provided, and more irrigation placed in the enclosure. No additional mortalities were found this week. Next week Becker and Eidson will collect fecal genetic samples to assess the number of rabbits remaining in the enclosures.



***An adult pygmy rabbit inside the large enclosure (left). Displayed are the varying sizes of pygmy rabbit fecal pellets from kits and adults (right).***

**Nutrition Data Collection:** Although there is a lot of sagebrush remaining in the enclosure with high mortality, the possibility remains that there is something about pygmy rabbit nutrition requirements this time of year that is not well understood. Dr. Becker contacted Dr. Jen Forbey from Boise State University about the issue and decided to do a comparative study of pygmy rabbit nutrition on our release site and in Idaho. Dr. Forbey came to Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area this week to collect plant and rabbit fecal samples for analyses.

**Monitoring of Released Rabbits:** The last glue-on transmitter fell off of a released kit last week. This young rabbit had the transmitter attached for over 90 days, which was significantly longer than the average three-to-four weeks for most others. While collecting sagebrush samples at the release site, three other rabbits were observed incidentally. Due to limited ability to detect rabbits in summer conditions, the next assessment of released pygmy rabbits will be done in snowy winter conditions in the coming months.



*Fresh pygmy rabbit tracks into an active burrow on the release site.*

### **Wildlife Areas**

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

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

**Fence Contract:** Fence construction and repair contracts are underway. Currently we have three different contractors either building or repairing boundary fences on five different properties. At the rapid rate they are moving we expect construction to be complete by the middle of this month.

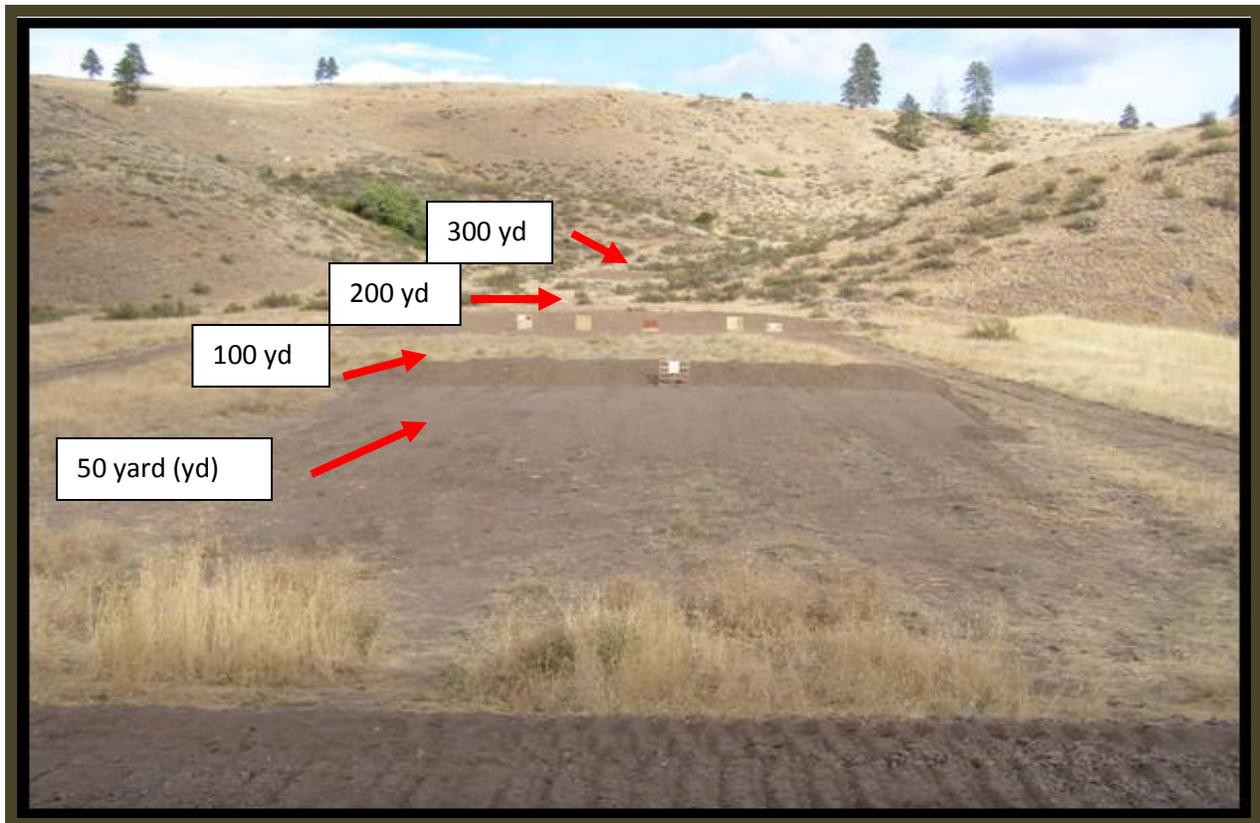
#### ***GOAL 3: USE SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES, DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE***

**Shooting Range:** The annual hunter safety course range day was held on Saturday, September 29, at the Methow range. One of the instructors commented that this was the most successful range day they'd ever had because of the new range facilities. In fact, the students expended a record amount of ammunition because they were having such a good time. The adjustable height stools were particularly well appreciated as they allowed the smaller students to be well positioned at the benches.

On the following day, Sunday, September 30, two volunteers, one of them a bulldozer owner/operator, showed up with the dozer and completed construction of the safety backstops at

the Methow shooting range. The only cost to WDFW was fuel for the dozer. That morning they constructed burms at 50, 100, 200, and 300 yards. They also constructed a ramp for emergency vehicle access (requested by the local fire district) and prepared the area around the benches for additional gravel placement. During construction three separate parties showed up to shoot (the range was temporarily closed). Each cheerfully accepted the fact that they wouldn't be able to use the range during construction and, without solicitation, stated that they were deeply gratified to see their state dollars being well spent.

At this point all range maintenance and cleaning is being completely covered by unsolicited volunteer effort. This has become a community effort. The garbage cans and bags, rakes, brooms, shovels and 13 chairs have all been donated by local community members whom have also started hauling the garbage away when the cans are full! The goodwill towards WDFW, the amount of volunteer effort, and the enthusiastic support generated by this shooting range project is unprecedented.



*New safety burms constructed at the Methow Wildlife Area shooting range.*

**Fire Camp demobilized:** The fire camp at the Geestman property is now fully demobilized. The area was left very clean with trampled grass and bare parking areas being the only remaining evidence of the activity. The site worked so well as a fire camp that the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has asked that we designate the area as a permanent facility that could be used to serve any future fires in the southern-half of the Methow Valley Ranger Districts. Methow staff has put that topic on the agenda for the upcoming district team meeting. Site rehabilitation, paid for by the USFS fire budget, will begin later this month.

## Chelan Wildlife Area Complex - Ron Fox

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

**Byrd Fire:** Chelan Wildlife Area Manager Ron Fox has been planning for rehabilitation needs on the Oklahoma Gulch and Knowles area necessitated by the Byrd Fire. Ron toured the area with Jeff Burnham, Range Ecologist, and they found most upland areas were lightly burned, while grass and an array of weeds were beginning to re-sprout. Areas of high intensity burn were restricted to riparian areas in Oklahoma Gulch and Horse Draw on the Knowles area.



***High intensity burn observed at Horse Draw on the Knowles area.***

Needs for fire rehabilitation include the cleaning, repair and installation of culverts on the road accessing the Knowles area, seeding and erosion control of high intensity burn riparian areas, and weed control on access roads and dozer lines.

**Entiat Deer Fence:** Within the burn perimeter of the Byrd Fire is approximately four miles of deer fence that roughly parallels Highway 97A. The fence is on Wildlife Area, US Forest Service, DNR, and private lands. The fence was built in the late 1960s and was historically maintained by Enforcement Program. Much of the fence is now burned, in the process of falling down, or is already on the ground. It will not keep any deer out of orchards in this area, is a safety issue for the public and a potential hazard for wintering mule deer.



***Entiat deer fence was destroyed by the Bryd Fire in lower Navarre Coulee.***

## **REGION 3**

None

## **REGION 4**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Region 4 Cougar proposal:** Assistant District Biologist Cyra met with Research Scientist Kertson and District Biologist Milner to review a proposed cougar demographic study linked with an analysis of public views on cougar management and sustainable living practices.

**Hurns Field Elk:** Biologist DeBruyn counted elk at the wildlife viewing site near Concrete on State Highway 20. There were 24 cows with 12 calves, nine yearling females, seven yearling males (spikes), 10 branch antlered bulls of which six were fully mature, and four “raghorns.”

**Preliminary Snow Goose Age Ratio Survey:** Biologist DeBruyn determined age ratios for 3,600 early-arriving Snow Geese on the Fir Island Reserve. There were a total of 653 juveniles which represented a little over 18 percent of the flock.

**Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area Measures & Workplan Workshop:** Biologist Milner attended this workshop, which is part of a two year effort to develop a Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area Conservation Action Plan. Participants come from many organizations and the project is jointly sponsored by the Tulalip Tribes and Snohomish County.

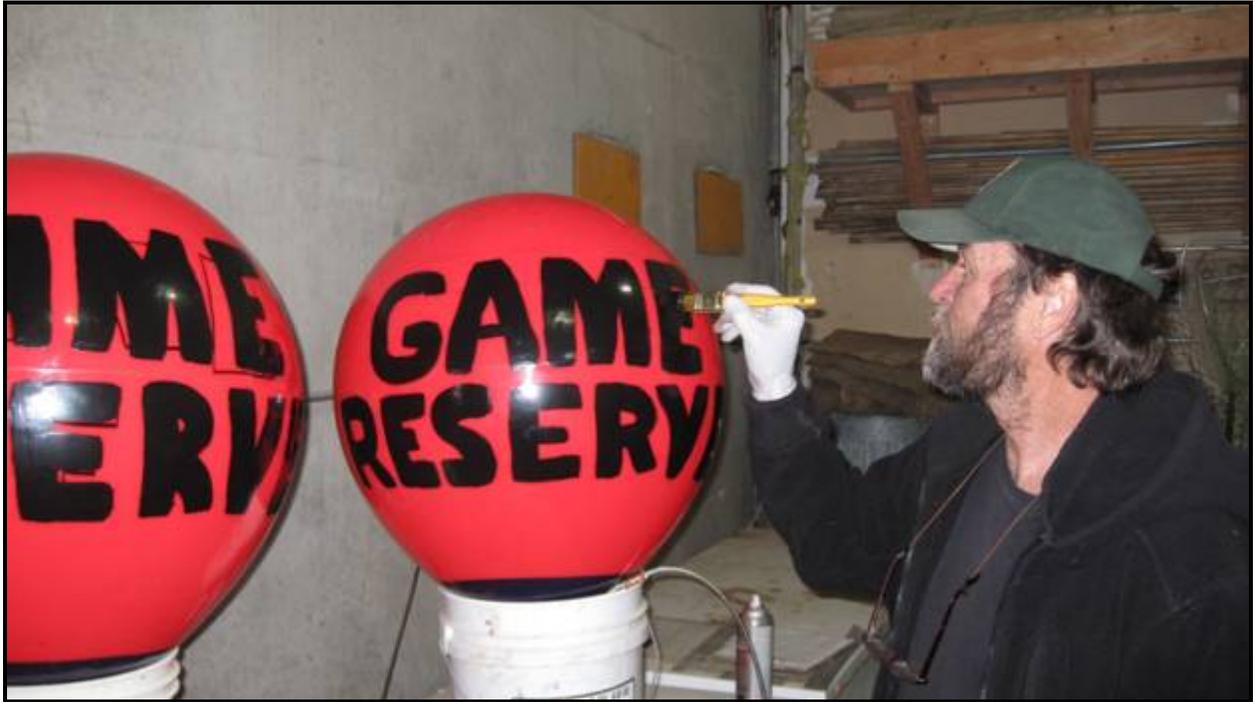
#### **Wildlife Areas**

**Tennant Lake Wetland Enhancement Project:** Manager Kessler coordinated with Port of Bellingham managers on the Port's wetland enhancement project. Due to the extremely dry conditions, they have had to water the planted trees and shrubs much more than anticipated. They will begin work on the project border fence next week. This project is mitigation for wetland impacts at the Bellingham airport.

**Nooksack Unit Corn Harvest:** The Agricultural lessee began the corn harvest on the Nooksack unit. Manager Kessler coordinated with the harvesters before and during the harvest. This was a very good year for corn, so what is left behind should be high quality.

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

## Wildlife Management



*Biologist Paul DeBruyn rigged and painted marker buoys to replace some that were stolen from the Swinomish Brant Reserve in Padilla Bay.*

**Northern Puget Sound Snow Goose Study:** Biologists Danilson and DeBruyn along with Waterfowl Section Head Kraege, Biologists Evensen, Milner, Roozen, and Technician Otto, met with personnel from the Skagit Wildlife Area and the University of Washington to plan and prepare to capture and band Snow Geese.

**WDFW-Woodland Park Zoo-Point Defiance Zoo-Northwest Trek Citizen Amphibian Monitoring Program:** Acting District Biologist Anderson provided frog identification assistance to volunteers. For more information on the Woodland Park Zoo Backyard Wildlife Habitat webpage, please visit <http://www.zoo.org/backyardhabitat>

**WDFW-Critter Zoom Eagle Camera Updates:** Acting District Biologist Anderson worked with USFWS biologists to provide information regarding eagle camera placement needs to the collaborating property owner. This was in regards to consultation requests from USFWS. Eagles have been seen back on the nest already this last week. See the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Eaglecam website for more information and eagle viewing during the nesting season at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/wildwatch/eaglecam/index.html>

## Wildlife Areas

**British Petroleum (BP) Unit Field Mowing and General Pheasant Release on Whatcom Wildlife Area:** Manager Kessler discussed recent unexpected field mowing on the BP Unit with the Area Environmentalist. As part of their new farm plan, they started rehabbing some fields to

plant new grass and corn. In the short term this will affect this season's pheasant hunting, but should benefit wildlife beginning next year. Manager Kessler also posted signs warning of a partial closure of the unit for field preparation work occurring next week. Manager Kessler and volunteers released 450 pheasants for the regular pheasant hunting season.

**DeBay's Slough Unit:** Natural Resource Specialist Greg Meis and Natural Resource Technician Curran Cosgrove disked and prepared the riparian planting area for blackberry control and grass seeding to follow next week. They also checked the hunt unit side to determine if there were any last minute adjustments that could be made to improve the hunter access for this waterfowl season.

**Samish Unit:** Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove continued to mow ponds to control cattail and improve waterfowl and hunter access on the site.

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

#### **Wildlife Areas**

**Lake Terrell Unit Search:** A neighbor of the wildlife area had their house burglarized, and the thieves ran to the east side of Lake Terrell when confronted. Whatcom County Sheriff deputies, a helicopter, and tracking dogs searched the area. Manager Kessler coordinated with the Sheriffs, providing aerial maps and opening locked gates. The two men were apprehended after climbing down from trees and giving themselves up.

**Leque Island Unit:** Manager Rotton has been coordinating with Peter Swartzman of the Pacific Groundwater Group regarding some additional water samples needed for the groundwater study on Leque Island and Davis Slough.

#### **Private Lands/Access**

**Game Management Unit (GMU) 418 Elk Hunting Access:** Region 4 private lands staff surveyed the unit for hunter activity, logging operations, and unwanted activity. Biologist Roozen met with and issued access keys to GMU 418 permit holders.

**Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program:** Biologist Roozen drafted agreements, created multiple hunt unit maps, and (Biologist Roozen and Technician Otto) continued discussions with potential partner landowners. Technicians Otto and Deyo continued blind construction on multiple hunt units in the Region.

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Wild Links Conference:** Biologists Danilson and DeBruyn attended the annual Wild Links conference put on by Conservation Northwest at The North Cascades Institute's Environmental

Learning Center on Diablo Lake. The conference focuses on trans-boundary (U.S./Canada) wildlife research issues. This year the emphasis was on connectivity and climate change. DeBruyn also attended a meeting of the Trans-boundary Cascades Carnivore Working Group and met with WDFW staff from Region 2 to discuss continuing cooperative carnivore monitoring projects.

## **REGION 5**

None

## **REGION 6**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Mazama pocket gopher surveys:** Biologist Anthony continued directed and opportunistic gopher surveys in Mason County at the few sites that were still accessible during the fire closure.

Biologist Michaelis visited 15 plots in Grays Harbor and Thurston counties as part of WDFW's effort to improve its understanding about Mazama pocket gopher distribution. Survey efforts have been put on hold because remaining plots in District 17 are located on Green Diamond parcels that are currently closed to all human access due to the dry conditions and fire risk.

Biologist Tirhi continued with Mazama pocket gopher Wave 5 surveys in Pierce and Thurston counties, completing five plot-based surveys and 22 opportunistic surveys.

**Oregon Spotted Frog:** Biologist Tirhi and Hayes represented WDFW at the 2012 release of captive-reared Oregon Spotted Frogs. The 2012 event marks the fifth year of the captive rear and release program, a collaborative effort among WDFW, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Northwest Trek Wildlife Park, Woodland Park Zoo, Oregon Zoo, Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, Washington State Department of Corrections, Washington State Department of Transportation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Port Blakely Tree Farms, Washington Department of Natural Resources, NW Zoo & Aquarium Alliance (NWZAA), U.S. Geological Survey, Mountain View Conservation & Breeding Centre, and The Nature Conservancy.

Each spring frog eggs are collected from locations in Thurston and Klickitat counties and taken to four rearing institutions (Woodland Park Zoo, Oregon Zoo, Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium, and Cedar Creek Correctional Center) where they are hatched and raised until post metamorphic juveniles and released back into the wild.

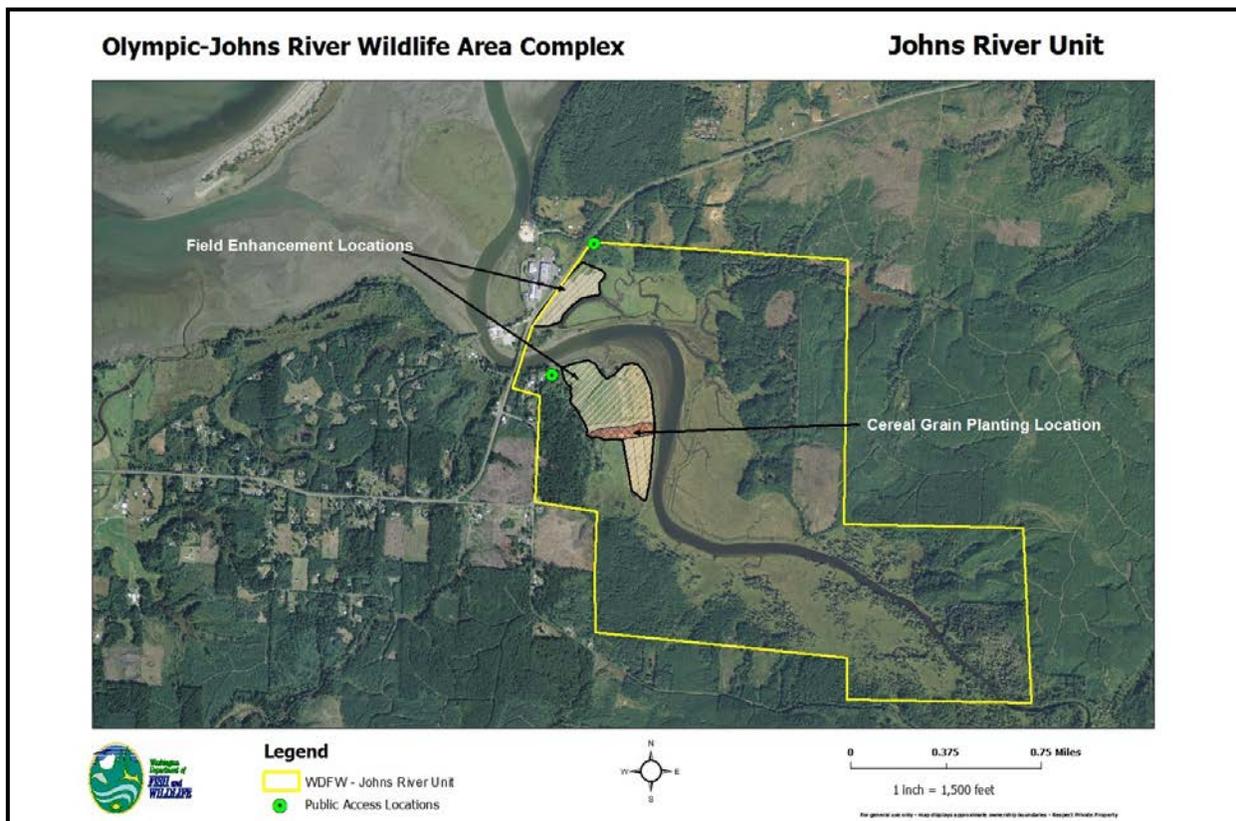
This year, a total of 1,592 frogs were released to the pilot reintroduction site. Collaborators will be reviewing the progress of the project this fall and determining the future of the program.

## Wildlife Areas

**Chehalis Unit:** Wildlife area finished management activities at the Chehalis Unit. Mowing occurred on approximately 160 acres to provide sheet water habitat for wintering and migratory waterfowl. Staff is also in the process of establishing a new access point to the wildlife area on the recently acquired "Osgood" parcel. Property boundaries have been signed, and a small parking facility with an informational kiosk was constructed to direct waterfowl hunters through the site. Additional mowing occurred on this site to provide access to the "Hutula Lake" wetlands.

**Lower Dungeness:** Real Estate closed on the 3 Crabs parcel on Wednesday of last week. Manager Guzlas will be setting up the access and parking at this addition to the Lower Dungeness Unit over the next week. Manager Guzlas will work with Real Estate to establish an auction for salvaging the buildings present on the site.

**Johns River Unit:** All aspects of the migratory bird stamp funding were completed at the Johns River Wildlife Area Unit. The Johns River Wildlife Area Unit located on the south shore of Grays Harbor has specific management objectives that are related to maintaining high density waterfowl numbers. This strategy is achieved through a variety of wet soil management techniques. These include the utilization of two water control structures, discing and planting of cereal grains, and field mowing. Each activity is critical to the maintenance of this site in order to provide enhanced feeding and resting habitat for migratory bird populations. Annual maintenance includes management of two water control structures, mowing of 85 acres, and farming approximately 10 acres for cereal grain production.



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

### **Wildlife Management**

**Dungeness Recreation Area** – Pheasant hunting started at the Dungeness Recreation Area on October 6. Biologist Ament got a new supply of “No Shooting Zones” and “No Lead” shot signs from the warehouse. They have actually produced metal signs to replace the plastic signs that often faded quickly after a short time in the sunny exposure they received in Sequim. Biologist Ament also produced a new supply of “No Deer Hunting” signs for the Dungeness Recreational Area (DRA). On October 5, she replaced any faded signs and posted new signs at the site. She actually installed a few new posts and “No Shooting Zones” signs at strategic locations where signs were needed. It is important to note that this is the last year that Clallam County will be allowing hunting on the Dungeness Recreation Area.

**Waterfowl Surveys:** Biologists Hoenes, Evenson, and Michaelis conducted their first waterfowl flight from a beaver float plane in Willapa Bay. Large rafts of birds were concentrated along northern and southern portions of Willapa Bay. Rafts consisted mainly of Northern pintails, mallards, and American wigeon. A few common loons in non-breeding plumage were also observed. Surveys are being initiated in Willapa Bay in response to concerns hunters have expressed since it was announced clam growers have been given authorization to control Japanese eelgrass on commercial clam beds in Willapa Bay. By conducting bi-weekly survey flights the Department hopes to document any changes in waterfowl usage or distribution within Willapa Bay that occur in response to changes in the abundance or distribution of Japanese eelgrass.

**Chehalis Pheasant Release Area:** Biologist Harris posted signs at the Chehalis pheasant release that notifies hunters of the recent lime application recommending that they avoid the front field as this was the only field that had lime applied. Some hunters complained that it has caused some irritations to their dogs. Unfortunately this will be a problem until we receive enough rain to disperse into the soil. Lime application usually happens at the same time in the Chehalis valley. There are very few companies with the equipment to apply so the company tends to do one application to all customers in a short window. Additionally, staffs who release pheasants were asked to not release in the treated area. Hunter reports indicate that they did not release in the affected field. The current weather forecast indicates that this may no longer be a problem after this weekend.

### **Private Lands/Access**

**Hunter Access – Fire Closures:** Biologist Harris worked on keeping fire closures and lands open for access up to date. As of the writing of this report, almost all private industrial forest lands in Region 6 were closed to public recreation (hunting for example). It will likely take several days of rain before companies re-open their land to the public. Current information is passed on to regional staff and Olympia customer service. All district staff continues to respond to public inquiries concerning access to private lands during the fire closure. Updates by Biologist Harris have been very helpful.