

Wildlife Program

Week of October 8-14, 2012

SCIENCE DIVISION

Wildlife Capture Training: Kristin Mansfield and Ella Rowan conducted the Chemical Wildlife Immobilization course in Olympia in September. Many thanks to Scott McCorquodale, Rich Beausoleil and Paul DeBruyn for making the class a success, and also to the Lacey Construction Shop and the Tumwater Lathrop Shop for use of their space. Approximately 20 Wildlife and Enforcement staff were certified or re-certified.

Livestock Depredation Workshop: Several staff from Region 1 and Olympia Carnivore team met in Issaquah to begin drafting a document (Decision Support tool) to guide agency field personnel in examining evidence associated with livestock depredations thought to be caused by a large carnivore (bear, mountain lion, or wolf). The group discussed various types of evidence observed in the field and the level of certainty in determining whether a large carnivore (and which species) was responsible for the depredation. The draft document will be sent out for additional review before it is finalized.

Presentation at University of Washington (UW) Wildlife Seminar: John Pierce was invited to speak at weekly UW Wildlife Seminar class (~250 graduate and undergraduate students). The title of John's presentation was "A Conservation Paradigm for the 21st Century." The main message of the talk was that successful conservation in the future will depend on a conservation strategy that is based on ecosystem management principles (including an increased focus on ecosystem structure, process and function), the integration of across multiple scales of ecological, social, and institutional elements, and the development of strong partnerships and mass collaborations like citizen science.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Golden Eagle Survey Planning - Biologist Gerry Hayes met with other biologists in both Diversity and Science Divisions to finalize plans for golden eagle surveys in 2013. A sample of breeding areas will be surveyed for both occupancy and productivity; Gerry is working with Shannon Knapp and Jim Watson to ensure a representative sample is drawn for the statewide golden eagle breeding population. Gerry is working with Gretchen Blatz to develop map products for each district's planning surveys and these will be distributed to district staff sometime in November.

Assisting Butterfly Conservation Cooperators: Biologist Ann Potter participated in the annual range-wide workshop for the Taylor's checkerspot. She presented information on Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) efforts and 2012 results for two tasks: 1) searching for new sites and monitoring extant populations of Taylor's checkerspot in Clallam

County, and 2) coordinating range-wide collection of samples of Taylor's checkerspot and sister subspecies for a genetics study. Workshop discussion topics also included updates on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) proposed listing, reviewing and updating the USFWS Taylor's checkerspot Action Plan, potential for experimental use of captive-reared larvae, and butterfly reintroductions.

WILDLIFE OUTREACH DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Rehabilitation: The lengthy Wildlife Rehabilitation rule revision project is proceeding, clarifying the practice and permitting of wildlife rehabilitators to make it easier for people to train for the profession and for rehabilitators to more efficiently operate by knowing what the regulations are and what is expected of them. The goal is to get as many wildlife rehabilitators to review these revisions. The nuances of rule writing are evident with every successive review and revision of the draft. We are working with the oiled wildlife staff on this rule to accommodate the specialized and critical practice of rescuing and rehabilitating oiled wildlife, trying to anticipate the circumstances of a large oil spill.

The 2013-2015 Wildlife Rehabilitation Grant will open for application in November. Thompson completed the revision of the Grant Application and the Application Guidelines, which also serve as the Request for Proposals. A notice will be sent out to all Washington wildlife rehabilitators at the end of October announcing the opening of the 2013-2015 Grant. We are anticipating another one hundred thousand dollars available for the grant.

Falconry: Tricia Thompson began the renewal process for falconry permits expiring on December 31, 2012, by inspecting the falconry databases to make sure all permits renewed in January 2012 were entered into the WDFW and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) databases, and no notices were sent out to those who already renewed. Falconry permits are issued for two years and expire at the end of the year; permits expiring on December 31, 2012, will need to be renewed by January 1, 2013. A few falconers are getting a jump on their renewal and have already sent in their applications.

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

Interpretation – Revised and printed a four-foot by eight-foot sign for the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area called “Columbia River Water Trail.” Text and map were revised to reflect the purchase of the McLoughlin Falls site.

Welcome to the Greater Columbia Water Trail

The Greater Columbia Water Trail is an invitation to explore and discover the central Washington remarkable geologic features and natural resources that make the journey of the mighty Columbia River and its tributaries. Expect to encounter a wide variety of plant and animal species as well as historic sites and geology. The water trail encourages the water public open recreation by providing access to this extraordinary waterway through public launch, landing and camping sites.

The Greater Columbia Water Trail is a network of water trails within the Columbia River watershed, from Canada on the Stillman River, Okanogan River and Columbia River all the way through the Hanford Reach National Monument, where it joins the Northwest Discovery Water Trail. Public launch and landing sites have been marked to identify public access areas. There are eight dams located along the trail. Use caution near all dams and make passage plans before you leave home.

What is a water trail?
A water trail is a route along a river or other bodies of water for people using small boats like kayaks, canoes, day sailers or rowboats. Water trails are most identified by the trail facilities that support water travel. These include launch and landing sites, campsites, rest areas and other points of interest. Land trails have distinct trail or walkways. Water trails are the entire water surface (including lakes and streams) which dynamically change with flow, current, wind, boat waves, rocks, fish, waterpools, snags, swimmers, logjams, gravel and sandbars.

Water Trail Guidelines:

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Be a first class party with family and a close friend
- Respect private property
- Be cautious of all water hazards such as strainers, rocks, rapids and dams
- Check weather conditions before launching
- Protect yourself from the sun with a hat and sunscreen
- Put in or take out your boat only in designated public access sites
- Respect fish and wildlife
- Rest in it, but it isn't. Take all trash out, whether left by your party or others
- Avoid trampling vegetation
- Use designated recreation facilities
- Always use U.S. Coast Guard approved life raft for all paddlers

Visit www.gcwtr.org for more trail information.

From Highway 97 Oroville Bridge Access, you can boat downstream to several public access sites, including the Corvid Pump Station (9 river miles), Ellsworth Pump Station (13.4 river miles), the City of Toutain's Clark Toward Park public boat ramp (28.5 river miles), McLaughlin Falls Wildlife Area trail campsite (34 river miles) or further downstream to the River of Dreams at the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Public Access boat ramp (39 river miles). There is also public access located at the outfalls of the Okanogan River and the Columbia River's Wells Base weir located on both the right and left banks adjacent to Highway 97.

Road (County Road #480) and proceed about 7 miles north to the WDFW Stillman River Access Site #1, or WDFW Stillman River Site #2, about 5 miles and that downstream to WDFW Stillman River Access Site #3 for an exciting water trail trip. If you are going to float beyond the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Access Site, please give us to allow adequate time to get off the river before getting too close to Linker Dam. There is no easy access below the BLM Access Site, about 12 miles downstream from WDFW Stillman Access Site #1.

If you plan to camp, be prepared to protect your campsite from bears and limit outdoor cooking to camp sites only (see form allowed). Be sure you are camping on public land. Maps showing public ownership can be obtained from BLM, US Forest Service, and Washington Department of Natural Resources.

Wildfire Information – A summary of all this summer’s fires and their impact on WDFW lands and wildlife habitat was developed. A companion Frequently Asked Questions about the effects of the fires on wildlife was also developed.

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

Citizen Science: Citizen Science coordinator Margaret Tudor partnered with Conservation Districts, Washington State University Extension and 4H, Outdoor Learning Centers, and Education Service District staff to launch a cadre of 20 new Project WILD facilitators through three-day training. These trainers will provide Project WILD curriculum integrated with field investigation methods and templates to undertake stewardship projects at their workshops targeting teachers, citizen scientists, volunteer groups and youth. These Project WILD facilitators currently reach over 50,000 youth and adults per year.

Wildlife Outreach Volunteers: Volunteer Management Coordinator James Chandler, continued to assist Wildlife Research Scientist Penny Becker with recruiting volunteers for two pigmy rabbit volunteer projects. James is currently working with Public Affairs to issue a pigmy rabbit volunteer news release.

REGION 1

Wolf Management District 1: Biologist Shepherd and District 1 Sergeant Charron attended the Livestock Depredation Protocol Finalization meeting in Issaquah for two days. Biologist Shepherd, WDFW Officer Weatherman, Stevens County Sheriff Allen and Stevens County Captain Harbolt investigated the scene of a deceased bovine that was within the Smackout pack

territory. Smackout wolf locations were in the field where the carcass was found. The determination was that the bovine died of unknown causes although Smackout wolves at least scavenged the carcass. Biologist Shepherd, WDFW Officer Weatherman, and WDFW Captain Rahn revisited the site after the determination of confirmed was in reported in the press. Biologist Shepherd discussed wolf issues with cattle producers Jeff Dawson, and Myrna, Kira, and Brent Olson who all have cattle in the Rocky Creek area of the Aladdin Valley.



WDFW Officer Weatherman, Sheriff Allen, and cattle operators Brent and Kira Olson observing the remains of a cattle carcass that was at least scavenged by Smackout pack wolves in the Aladdin Valley (above). Further remains of a cattle carcass that was at least scavenged by Smackout pack wolves in the Aladdin Valley (below).

Biologist Shepherd and Technician Baker searched wolf location clusters for cattle depredation evidence in the Wedge and Biologist Shepherd checked cameras in the Wedge to determine if and where wolves are still present. Biologist Shepherd de-scrambled, mapped, and texted Smackout wolf locations to range rider Leisa Hill everyday of the week. Technician Baker and volunteer Scott Price checked and retrieved trail cameras in Tahoma and scouted for wolf sign.



District 3: Biologists Wik and Vekasy followed up on a recent sighting of a “pack” in the Touchet watershed. No sign was found on many miles of Forest roads with multiple howling attempts.

Wik participated in a conference call with Game Division Manager Dave Ware and Private Lands Program about the use of Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement (DPCA) contracts with livestock operators in the Blue Mountains. Private Lands Biologist Rasley will start working with livestock owners who are in the proximity of known wolf activity.

Vekasy also met with a local landowner in the Blacksnake/Biscuit Ridge area above Walla Walla concerning reports of collared wolves near his property. He did not detect any of the Oregon Walla Walla pack wolf collars although a friend of the landowners indicated he could hear two collars on his receiver that he believed to be from the Walla Walla pack, in addition to three other collars he believed to be on wolves originally from Idaho. The landowner also showed photos of “wolf” tracks that had all the properties of cougar tracks, but was not convinced with my identification. Vekasy also explained to the landowner that these were not wolf collars or any wildlife collars with which we are familiar. Vekasy spent some time online researching the origin of the signals through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and various websites, but was not able to positively identify the origin. He also spoke with Oregon Wolf Biologist Brown concerning movements of the Walla Walla pack and interactions with the above mentioned reporting party with radio-tracking equipment.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

White-tailed Deer Disease Surveillance: District Wildlife Biologist Dana Base along with other staff received reports from stakeholders on local die-offs of white-tailed deer and collected tissue samples from fresh deer carcasses found in Game Management Units (GMUs) 117 and 121. These are to be submitted to a laboratory through WDFW Veterinarian Dr. Kristin Mansfield for confirmation of Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD). Reports of dead deer received to date have only been within farm and forest portions of GMUs 117 and 121. The long warm and dry spell this fall has created the “perfect storm” of environmental conditions for an EHD outbreak.

Wildlife Areas

Reardan *ventenata* grass control – On October 10, Wildlife Area Assistant Manager (WAAM) Mike Finch and Natural Resource Worker (NRW) Jim Bauer returned to the one acre infestation site after harrowing it last week. This week they used a disc to further chop up the vegetation. Eric Braaten, Private Lands Biologist in Region 2, was kind enough to loan us this small disc. Weather permitting, an application of the herbicide Telar will be made next week after one more harrowing of the field. While at Reardan, Finch studied coyote hunting in a restored grass field.



Natural Resource Worker Jim Bauer disked *Ventenata* grass infestation at Reardan Audubon Pond on October 10.

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

Wildlife Management

Modern Firearm Deer Opening Weekend

District 1: Biologists Base, Shepherd, Myers and Program Manager Robinette worked the Deer Park and Chattaroy check stations on Sunday. Hunting participation continues to be low, as are success rates. The Deer Park check station had 114 hunters visit with 12 deer inspected for a success rate of 10.5 percent. In 2011, the Deer Park check station had 117 hunters with seven deer for a six percent success rate. The Chattaroy check station had 66 hunters visit with nine deer for a 13.6 percent success rate. We haven't had a check station at Chattaroy on the opening weekend for many years, so there is nothing to compare this data to.

Whitman County: Biologist Lewis and Supervisor McCanna worked Saturday and Sunday for the modern firearm deer opener in Whitman County. Participation was moderate with average bucks being killed. The biggest problem area was in the South Fork of the Palouse and Parvin Road area with hunters shooting across the road. Biologist Lewis and McCanna met with several upset landowners in the area and spent a couple of hours on Sunday afternoon in the area. While working over 14 hours, over 200 does were observed in the field with only one spike being seen by biologists. Main violations were failure to leave evidence of sex on the carcass and signing their license.

Wildlife Areas

Mountain Goat in Cloverland near Asotin Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technician Debby Flynn was contacted by a farmer in Cloverland who found a mountain goat behind his barn. Flynn went to verify the claim and took photographs. This location is many miles from the nearest known mountain goats.



REGION 2

District 6: Okanogan District - Scott Fitkin / Jeff Heinlen

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wetland Habitat Enhancement: Biologist Fitkin assisted the Methow Beaver Restoration Project field crew with the last beaver release of the season. All told, the project relocated about three dozen beavers to unoccupied sites on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) land this season, and gathered the second year of baseline flow and temperature information from data loggers deployed in study area streams. The crew will finish up the season monitoring previous release sites and compiling this year's data.



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

Okanogan Deer Harvest: Biologists Fitkin and Heinlen ran the Winthrop deer check station for opening weekend of the general modern firearm season. The two checked 127 hunters with 17 deer. These numbers are almost identical to check station data from last year, and are in line with anecdotal observations of good success and lower than average hunter numbers being reported by enforcement agents in the district. Prospects for the remainder of the season should get even better with periodic valley rain and mountain snow expected through next weekend.



Methow mule deer harvest.

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

Firearms deer season: Hunter participation was down as was anticipated. Fire closures leading up to the season opener may have pushed hunters into other areas. Game Management Unit 243 (Manson) received more activity this year likely due to fire closures, yet hunter success was low. The Entiat (247) and Chiwawa (245) unit showed reduced participation and harvest as well. Hunter numbers also appear to be low in Douglas County.

Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Complex - Dale Swedberg / Justin Haug

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

Prescribed Burning - Fire effects and Fire By-products Tour: This tour, organized in collaboration with Washington State University (WSU) Chelan-Douglas Co-operative Extension Office, was attended by 14 people from as far away as Cle Elum. Attendees represented WDFW, Okanogan Conservation District, Suncadia (a development), private landowners, retired WSU

Cooperative Extension employees, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and Forrex – a British Columbia Non-profit natural resource organization.



REGION 3

None

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Biologist Cyra continued working on the very large Pigeon Guillemot nesting colony data set and the report for this project. Pigeon Guillemot surveys were conducted for three consecutive years at every known and new site in northern Puget Sound in the early 2000s. A final report was never completed, so we are now working on data quality and a final report.



Osprey Nest Removal: Acting District Biologist Anderson provided Osprey nest removal permits for five Osprey nests in District 12. Requests were either access conflict or safety and damage issues. Anderson fielded a complaint from one citizen regarding nest removal. Removal and destruction of an inactive Osprey nest requires a permit from WDFW. This requirement is due to the state Wildlife Interaction Rules. These rules outline that WDFW work with the public to reduce property damage or safety issues related to wildlife that WDFW deems a permit and review process is needed. Osprey is one of the species outlined for this review and permit issuance. Information on the Wildlife Interaction Rules can be found at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/rules/>

Wildlife Areas

Lake Terrell Dam: Manager Kessler coordinated with the Whatcom Conservation District Manager on the Lake Terrell Dam project. The project is now 95 percent complete. A work party with the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association will complete the tree and shrub plantings next week.

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

Wildlife Management

Northern Puget Sound Snow Goose Study: Biologist Danilson worked with Waterfowl Section Manager Kraege, Waterfowl Specialist Evenson, and a team from the Cooperative Wildlife Research unit at The University of Washington to capture, band and radio collar snow geese in the Skagit and Snohomish valleys. The objectives of the study are to document the population size, evaluate distribution, site fidelity, habitat use, and examine relationship of the population to other flyway use areas. The geese have arrived in impressive numbers, but have so far eluded most capture efforts. Eighteen geese were captured the first day and equipped with bands and neck collars. Four of the eighteen were outfitted with radio transmitters.



Swinomish Reserve: Biologist DeBruyn anchored buoys marking the Swinomish Brant reserve in anticipation of the upcoming hunting season. Tidal conditions dictate a fall work schedule.

Island Center Forest Hunt Access: Acting District Biologist Anderson worked with WDFW Contracts staff and King County to enter into a five-season contract allowing for limited deer hunt access to Island Center Forest on Vashon Island.

Wildlife Areas

Pheasant Release Program: Manager Belinda Rotton and Natural Resource Specialist (NRS) Greg Meis provided information to the Skagit Valley Herald regarding the Western Washington Pheasant Release program and in particular the new Bow Hill Pheasant Release Site. The article is scheduled to run in this Saturday's paper. Manager Rotton is compiling comments from concerned land owners in the area and will be working with the Upland Game Bird program to develop a survey of hunters that may have used the site.

DeBay's Slough Unit: NRS Greg Meis and Natural Resource Technician (NRT) Curran Cosgrove planted the grass cover crop for the newly cleared planting area on DeBay's Slough. NRS Meis is revising the planting plan and developing the final plant list for purchase. Property boundary signs were installed along the eastern boundary of the hunt unit.

Island Unit: Natural Resource Technician Curran Cosgrove disked and packed portions of the Fireman's One and the Barn fields to break down the encroaching reed canary grass.

Fir Island Farms: NRT Cosgrove installed additional Game Reserve and Discover Pass sign at the Fir Island Farms Snow Goose Reserve. The Snow Geese began arriving this week in greater numbers and have begun using the Reserve even with limited forage available with the recent lack of rain.

Tennant Lake Hunter Access: Manager Kessler and a volunteer worked to clear out a beaver dam on the access channel to Tennant Lake. The dam prevented boats from being able to get into Tennant Lake and access the three waterfowl hunting blinds.

Pheasant Release: Manager Kessler and volunteers released 450 pheasants on Whatcom Wildlife Area sites for the regular pheasant hunting season.

Opening Day of Waterfowl Season: Opening day was very busy at most of the units of the Whatcom Wildlife Area. Tennant Lake, Lake Terrell and the Nooksack unit were heavily used both Saturday and Sunday. Skagit Headquarters was also busy with 76 vehicles in the parking lot. Weather conditions were favorable with rain and some wind.

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

Private Lands/Access

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 successful elk hunters to collect access key for property.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Biologist Roozen drafted agreements, created multiple hunt unit maps, and relayed information to webpage editors. Technicians Otto and Deyo continued blind construction on multiple hunt units in the Region.

Snow Goose Quality Program: Biologist Roozen met with partner landowners to agree on acreage enrolled in the program. Roozen began creating unit maps and agreements for the program.

Department of Natural Resources/WDFW Access Meeting: Department staff from Region 4 and Olympia met with the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to discuss facilitating public access to gated DNR land.

Wildlife Areas

Wiley Slough: Manager Rotton coordinated with WDFW Engineer Ray Berg regarding the permitting process for the dredging project and survey work for the pump station installation. Currently the dredging project is scheduled to begin the week of October 22, and survey field work has been completed for the pump station. Manager Rotton and NRS Meis checked the work area and marked trees to be downed for the dredging project.

Leque Island Unit: Wildlife Area staff gathered additional water samples and gage readings for Peter Swartzman of the Pacific Groundwater Group who is the lead investigator for the groundwater study on Leque Island and Davis Slough.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Wildlife Management

Motor Boat Certification Course: Biologist Milner participated in the October certification course which is designed to introduce state employees who operate boats to the basics of boat operation, rules and requirements, and recommended best practices.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Mazama pocket gopher surveys: Biologists George and Holman continued surveys for Mazama pocket gophers (MPG) at historic sites in Clark County. This multi-component study is being conducted with the intention of updating distribution descriptions and illustrating relative occurrence of gophers among broad habitat associations. Most records of the species in Clark County are no more recent than the 1940s, locations are general in nature and the landscape and land-use of the County has been tremendously altered over the intervening years. Biologist George also produced maps illustrating potential habitats for Mazama Pocket gophers within

Clark County. Several locations to conduct additional surveys were determined based on suitable soil types, geographic locations and parcel ownership. To date, no gophers have been confirmed in Clark County. Visits to additional locations of suitable habitat will continue.

Black-tailed Deer Research Project: A fawn mortality search associated with the Region 5 black-tailed deer research project was conducted. Twelve remaining study does and their associated young are being monitored by a combination of remote (satellite) and field (VHF) methods. The does are located in two study clusters concentrated within the Washougal and Coweeman Game Management Units. To date, in the Washougal cluster of six does, 11 fawns have been captured and four remain alive.

Wildlife Areas

Cowlitz Wildlife Area

Davis Lake Unit Barn French Drain: Wildlife Area staff installed a French drain along 200 feet of the north side of the Allen Barn on the Davis Lake Unit. The four-inch perforated pipe was installed just below the bottom of the barn's foundation to redirect surface water away from the barn to prevent the pond that forms on the inside of the barn during periods of rainy weather. The pipe was then covered with drain rock.

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Sondino Unit: Wildlife Area manager Van Leuven met volunteer Enz at the Sondino Ponds to clean and wax the lower sections of the water depth gauges and record current water levels. The enameled plates require cleaning after the water recedes so the markings on the plates are readable. Water levels are satisfactory for turtle habitat requirements.



Water depth gauges to record current water levels.

In addition, several new wood duck boxes have been put up near the Sondino Ponds. These were built and installed by Mr. Hulbert, using Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) grant funds. Painted sheet metal "collars" have been attached to the trees below the boxes to discourage terrestrial mammals from raiding the nests. These boxes will be monitored for use annually.



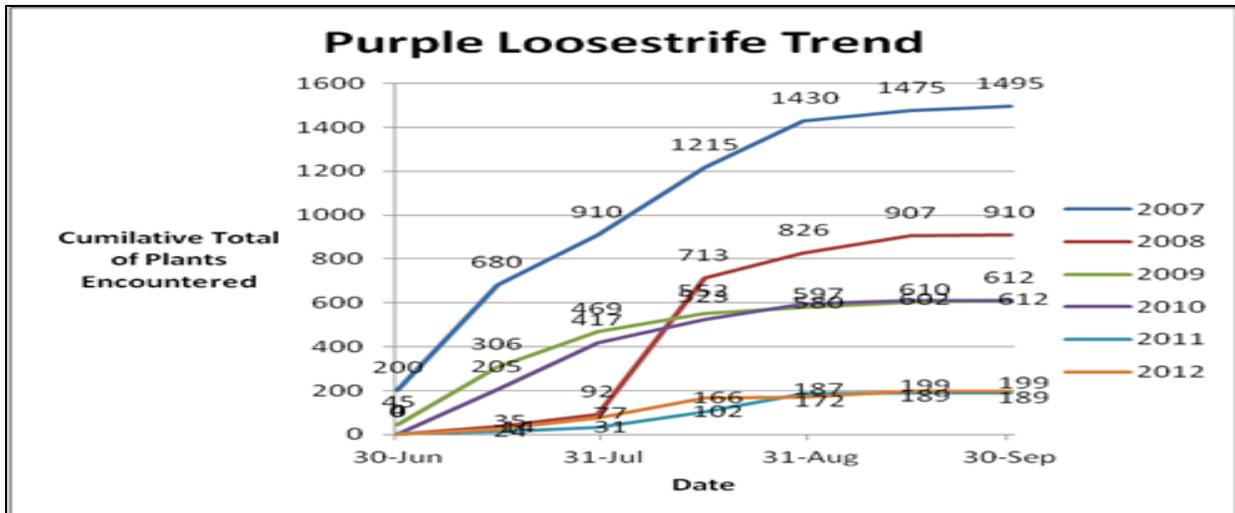
Sondino duck box.

Opening of Modern Firearm Season for Deer: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven responded to many calls regarding hunting access, whether fires are permitted, and land ownership. Van Leuven drove the major roads on the Soda Springs Unit, making sure that signs were in place and no fires were lit. Many of the people who came to the Klickitat Wildlife Area (KWA) were new to the area, having been excluded from their customary hunting grounds. Interestingly, a lot of people who usually do hunt on the KWA did not come, so there was plenty of room for the newcomers to set up camps. Very few problems were observed related to camping this opening weekend. There were no fires. The rain gauge at the KWA office measured 0.24 of an inch of rain on Friday and 0.05 of an inch of rain on Saturday.

From October 13-14, Manager Van Leuven conducted hunter success surveys on the Soda Springs Unit. On October 13, Van Leuven contacted 84 hunters and checked three deer. All three deer were three-by-three bucks taken in GMU 388. On October 14, Van Leuven contacted 75 hunters, but checked no deer. Van Leuven did receive a report of one small bear being taken on Sunday. Hunters saw very few deer during opening weekend. The number of people hunting on the KWA this weekend was probably at about 60 percent of the usual number for the season opener. The closure of company-owned timberlands seemed to be a large factor in suppressing hunter turnout.

Shillapoo Wildlife Area

Purple Loosetrife Control: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald completed this year's control activities for Purple loosetrife on Shillapoo Wildlife Area this past week. Hauswald treated all infected areas on the Wildlife Area starting in early July and ending in late September on a 10-14 day interval. The total number of plants encountered is decreasing across the Wildlife Area even though there was a slight increase in the number of plants treated in the 70 acre survey area in the North Unit and in the Vancouver Lake Unit this year over last year's numbers. The overall trend in the survey area has had a reduction in the number of loosetrife plants encountered by more than 86 percent since 2007.



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

Wildlife Areas

Shillapoo Wildlife Area

Cover Crops for Wintering Waterfowl at Shillapoo: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald planted about 20 acres of winter grain as forage for wintering waterfowl and Sandhill cranes in three fallow areas in the North Unit lakebed agricultural fields and one field in the South Unit that will be replanted to a pasture next spring. This acreage was in addition to the New Columbia Gardens planting about 10 acres of winter grain in the stubble of a harvested corn field that they lease in the North Unit.

Private Lands/Access

Technician White and Biologist Stephens, along with volunteer Parenteau, began reconstruction of a readerboard sign on Hancock property in Klickitat County. The sign posts were snapped in half by vandals during the summer, so reconstruction involved setting new posts in cement.



The damaged readerboard sign (left) was replaced on Hancock property in Klickitat County.

St. Helens Land Access Volunteer Orientation: Biologist Stephens and Technician Pyzik conducted an orientation in Longview for those interested in volunteering for the St. Helens Land Access program. The orientation is mandatory for those interested in participating in the program. This was the third and final orientation date being offered for the 2012-13 season. The purpose of the volunteers is to help facilitate additional weekday motorized access to Weyerhaeuser's St Helens Tree Farm.

Klickitat Private Lands: Technician White prepared handouts for hunters visiting private lands, and assisted Biologist Anderson in getting the word out about private land closures due to continued extreme fire danger. Technician White also patrolled private lands, replaced signs, and informed a few early arrival hunters of private land closures.

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

Wildlife Management

Fire Danger Closures and Hunting Prospects: Biologist Anderson along with Biologists Holman, Stephens, Bergh, and Technician Pyzik spent considerable time this week working with Olympia staff to monitor fire closures and access to public and private lands in Region 5. An evaluation was done to determine which special hunts had limited access for consideration of point restoration to hunters later in the season. Predicted rainfall this next week should reduce fire danger and improve hunter access to private industrial lands, especially on the west side of the Cascades.

Media attention on upcoming deer season and the Black-tailed deer study: Biologist Holman conducted interviews with The Columbian newspaper from Vancouver and Northwest Sportsman magazine. Each media outlet was keenly interested in details from the black-tailed deer study as well as prospects for the upcoming deer season in southwest Washington. Look for articles during the months of October and November featuring these topics.

Wildlife Areas

Cowlitz Wildlife Area

Hunter Education Online Evaluation Class: Wildlife Area staff conducted a five hour course to evaluate 15 students who had passed the online hunter education class. These students take the Agency approved online course studying at their own pace. After each unit they must take a quiz and pass with an 80 percent score before proceeding to the next unit. Once each unit has been successfully completed, they may then take the final exam. Students are given two attempts to pass the final; otherwise they must retake the whole course. Students then enroll in an evaluation class to be trained in the safe and proper handling of firearms. If they pass a 20 question review quiz, demonstrate a proper attitude, and show an understanding of the eight required skills, they are then certified under the hunter education program. This class is in very high demand with classes filling to capacity almost as quick as they become available. Students literally travel from all over the state to attend these courses and to become certified.

Access

Citizen Help: While Access Staff Spangler and Rhodes were working on the Lacamas Lake launch, a vehicle went into the ditch, overcorrected, and rolled over between one to three times before crashing into the sand filled barrels at the boat launch entrance. Luckily the young girl driving was still able to walk and talk with only a large bump on her head. Spangler and Rhodes kept an eye on her and flagged traffic until medic and police arrived.



The car crash at the Lacamas Lake launch luckily resulted in minor injuries.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Mazama Pocket Gophers (MPG): Biologist Michaelis visited four plots in Mason County 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. Rain is expected this weekend and Biologists Hoenes and Michaelis hope to resume efforts next week.

Biologist Ament conducted a MPG search effort on October 8, along roads located along the Sol Duc River just west of Olympic National Park. She continued exploration of the 2918 USFS Road system where she had conducted some search efforts in the lower elevation areas last month. She investigated the main 2918 road and some spur roads. Any signs of fresh dirt or mounds were investigated. Biologist Ament did not locate any sign from MPG's or moles during her search. She did, however, locate a few areas with sign from mountain beavers. Some of the

sign was quite fresh in slopes directly adjacent to the 2918 Road. Biologist Ament has realized that there is much exploration of the Sol Duc road system that could be conducted. Unfortunately, she encountered various locked gates (some for USFS and some for private timber lands).

Biologists Linders and Walker completed 23 survey plots on Joint Base Lewis-McChord's (JBLM) Artillery Impact Area (AIA) in a single day of access. Access has been acquired for about 21 of the 27 remaining plots in Waves three, four and five. Those plots are likely to be completed by the end of the week.

Proposed Federal Listing of the Taylors Checkerspot Butterfly and the Streaked Horned Lark – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to extend Endangered Species Act protection to the streaked horned lark, the Taylor's checkerspot butterfly (TCB), and their habitats. For the streaked horned lark, the Service also designated critical habitat at six locations in the Puget Sound lowlands, four sites along the Washington coast, and three islands on the lower Columbia River for a total of 6,262 acres in Washington. For questions or additional information about the Service's proposal, a copy and information about the subspecies involved is available on the USFWS website at <http://www.fws.gov/wafwo/>

The proposal will be open for public comment for 60 days ending December 10, 2012. Please see the proposal to see how comments may be provided to the Service. The Service may take up to one year following the date of the proposal to make a final determination on the status of the species and their habitats.

Taylor's checkerspot working group meeting: Biologists Linders, Ament, Hays, Potter, and Johnson together with Research Scientist Olson attended the annual Taylor's checkerspot working group meeting at Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge on Thursday. Attendees included biologists and managers from federal, state and local governments as well as non-government organizations (NGOs) and private landowners. The morning session was focused on survey and management project updates. The afternoon session focused on new projects and changes to the Action Plan, a prioritized strategy to move conservation forward over the next three to five years. Biologist Linders prepared handouts and presented summaries of highlights of the two captive rearing programs, the surveys at Range 76 and the reintroduction work. Linders graphed abundance estimates for R76 from 2007-2011 showing shifts in the timing of the flight season and order of magnitude changes across a two year period from a high point in 2007 to a low point in 2009 and back again. The USFWS also announced the proposed listing of the TCB at the start of the meeting.

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

Private Lands/Access

Private forest lands in Region 6 are beginning to re-open now that we have had several days of rain. Hunting seasons will hopefully continue normally for the remainder of the season.