

Wildlife Program

Week of September 17-23, 2012

LANDS DIVISION

Emergency Fire Regulations: With dozens of wildfires currently burning, firefighters stretched thin, and wildfire risk extremely high, staff worked together to issue and implement emergency Washington Administrative Codes (WACs) to protect Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) lands from wildfire risk by limiting allowable activities on those lands. Over 500 signs were printed and distributed to wildlife area and access site managers for posting. The rules were enacted on Monday, September 17, and will remain in place until further notice.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

South Puget Sound Grasslands – Biologist Hays gave a field tour to Department of Defense representatives of the Army Compatible Use Buffer Program during the biannual program review. The tour focused on land acquisition, habitat management and restoration efforts at South Puget Sound Prairies.

Funding Wildlife Diversity Conservation Actions – Final approval was received from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS) Implementation 2012-2013 funding to support a broad array of wildlife diversity activities statewide. This approval will direct \$432,000 of State Wildlife Grant funding and \$232,615 of state matching funding toward 70 species conservation, survey and habitat management activities conducted by staff throughout the Wildlife Program.

Financial Support for Golden Eagle Status Review – Final approval was received from USFWS for nearly \$25,000 of support to conduct surveys of golden eagle breeding territories in 2013. This funding will specifically support time and cost-effective aerial surveys in remote and rugged areas. This survey work is part of a planned statewide status update to inform a species status review. This funding also represents cooperator support that is hoped to stimulate additional contributions from other cooperators that have been contacted for similar assistance.

REGION 1

Wolf Management

District 1

Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Shepherd, Wildlife Officer Dan Anderson, and Carnivore Section Lead Donny Martorello responded to a report from the Diamond M Ranch on September

21, 2012, of two injured Hereford calves in the Wedge. The two injured calves were examined, photographed, and a report was produced by enforcement with wildlife program input. Biologists Martorello and Shepherd, Assistant Director Pamplin, and Regional Director Pozzanghera attended the Stevens County Cattlemen's meeting.



Diamond M Ranch owners, Officer Dan Anderson, and Stevens County sheriff personnel observe and inspect an injured Hereford calf.

Technician Baker and volunteer Scott Price checked and retrieved trail cameras in the Curlew area and the Wedge. Wolf Technician Tiffany Baker and volunteer Karen Soenke scouted for wolf sign (tracks and scat) and deployed trail cameras in Tacoma Creek. Technician Tiffany Baker also checked a camera on Flowery Trail.



Scat found by Technician Baker while scouting Tacoma Creek.

District 2

Regional Program Manager Robinette accompanied Officers Spurbeck, Snyder, and King to investigate an injured horse in North Spokane County. This is consistent with WDFW's policy of having joint teams of biologists and officers investigate any livestock injuries/mortalities that may involve wolves. A cougar clearly injured this horse and enforcement officers then followed up with the landowner and neighbors.

District 3

District Biologist Wik and Assistant District Biologist Vekasy spent one day removing all of the remotely triggered cameras from the mountains prior to rifle seasons beginning. The cameras detected all major species except wolves. On an interesting note, a black fox was observed on two separate cameras above the Bluewood Ski Resort. Biologists will be conferring with their peers to determine if there is any significance to this detection.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Caribou: Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Shepherd, Wildlife Officer Dan Anderson, and British Columbia Wildlife Service Biologist Leo DeGroot recovered a dead radio collared caribou from Deep Creek. The caribou carcass had no apparent cause of death and was recovered from a densely vegetated area by dragging it up Deep Creek and winching it up to a bridge. The caribou was returned to Canada for necropsy.



Dead caribou cow in Deep Creek drainage in densely vegetated area.



Dead caribou cow being dragged up Deep Creek by Biologist Shepherd and Officer Anderson.

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

Private Lands/Access

Voluntary Public Access (VPA) and Habitat Initiative: Private Lands Biologist Davis enrolled an additional 408 acres in Columbia County under the VPA access initiative. To date, Davis has enrolled 12 contracts into the VPA program totaling over 11,000 acres of public hunting access and additional fishing access.



A fly fisherman fishes the newly enrolled Voluntary Public Access Feel Free to Fish river frontage along the Walla Walla River.

Wildlife Areas

Water Festival – This educational program for area fourth graders was held Tuesday and Wednesday of this week at the Sherman Creek Hatchery. Sherman Creek Wildlife Area's Natural Resource Technician (NRT) Christensen and Wildlife Area Assistant Manager (WAAM) Palmer hosted one station where kids learned about predator-prey interactions and the difference between antlers and horns.



Natural Resource Technician Jerry Christensen informs area fourth graders (above) and helps provide the kids with a hands-on learning experience (below) on September 18, 2012.

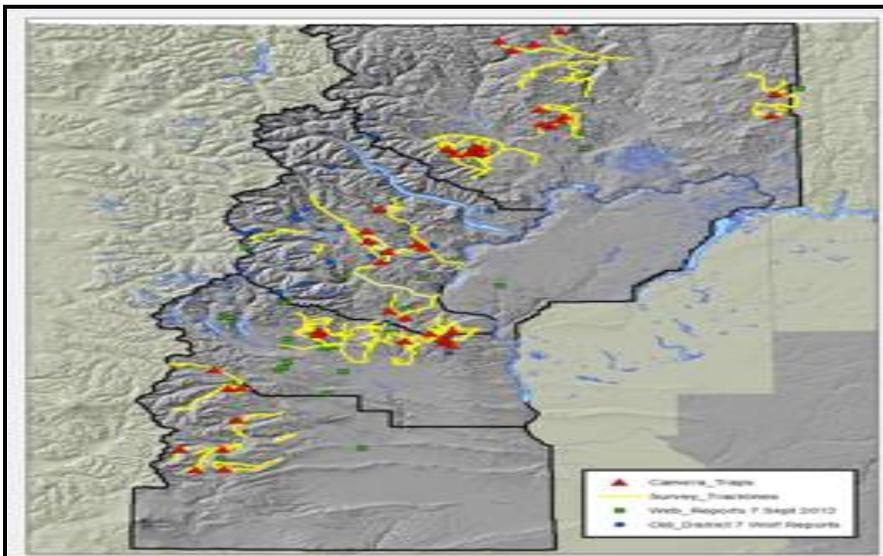




Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Daro Palmer explains to area fourth graders about predator-prey interactions and the difference between antlers and horns on September 18, 2012.

REGION 2

Wolves



Technician Spence worked in Okanogan County this week checking camera traps and placing cameras in new areas.

District Biologists

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



Close-up views of a Red-breasted nuthatch (above) and a male Wilson's warbler (below).



GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Triploid checkered whiptails: Biologists Finger and Gregory met with Biologists Buchanan and Hallock from Olympia to survey for whiptails at Lind Coulee. After a day and a half of surveying around known whiptail sites, it was noted that whiptails are overlapping in habitat use with the native side-blotched lizards. Whiptails observed do not appear to be more than eight

inches long from head to tail. Also, they remain active in the presence of people instead of seeking cover like most native lizards.

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

Youth Hunt: Biologists Finger and Gregory released pheasants for the youth hunt this weekend. Finger coordinated permitting for the local Pheasants Forever chapter to conduct a youth event on WDFW lands.



Pheasants released at Steamboat Rock (above). Youth hunters show their skills (below).



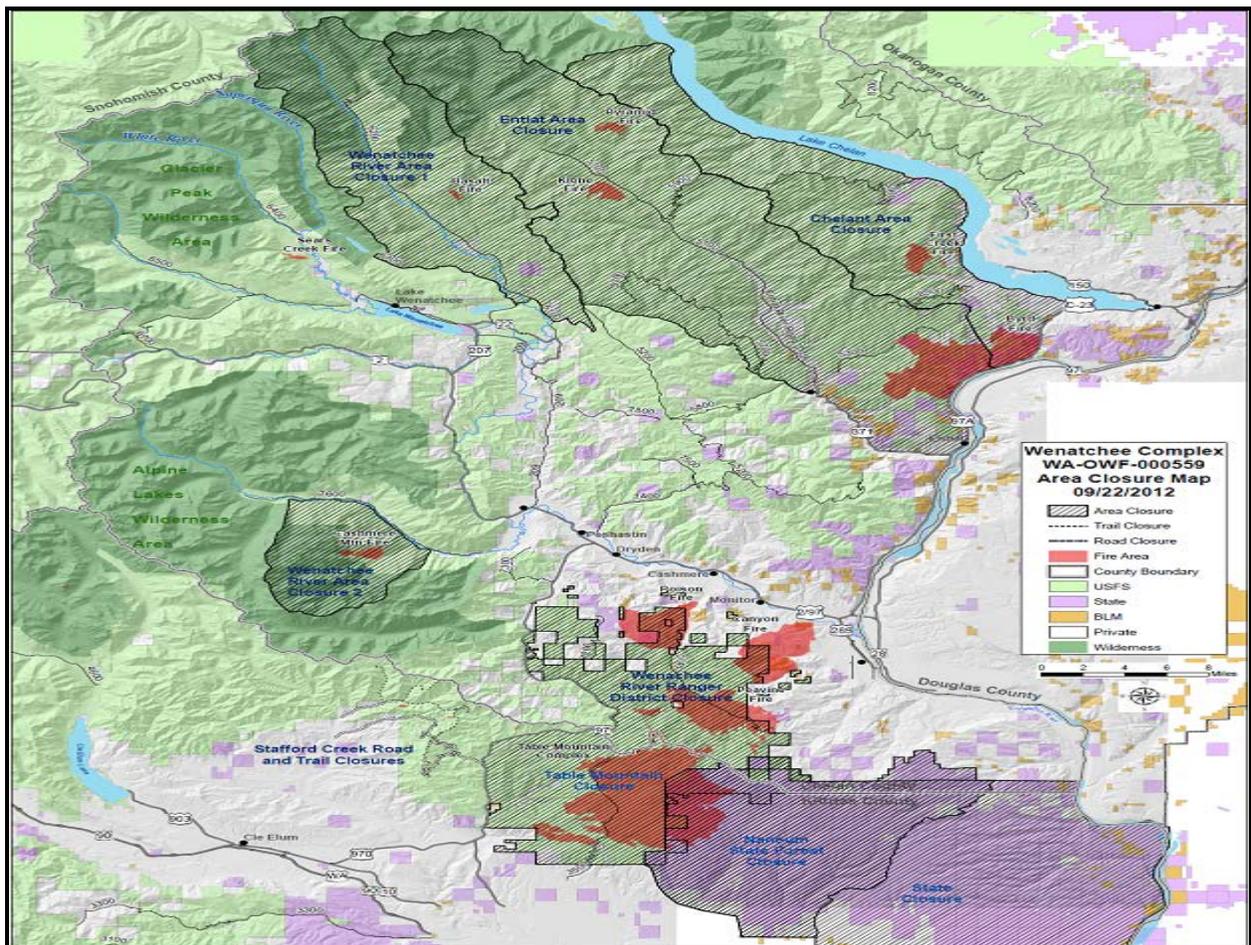
District 7: Chelan / Douglas District – David Volsen / Jon Gallie

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

Wildfires: Area entry closures due to wildfires have impacted recreational opportunities within Chelan County. If closures remain in place, general hunting seasons may be impacted as well as current permit seasons. Air quality in the county is keeping hunters out of the field as well with sustained particulate levels of hazardous to dangerous occurring over the past two weeks.

Biologist Volsen pinned two bighorn rams this week. One was harvested in Game Management Unit (GMU) 250, the Swakane, and the other from the Region 3's Quilomene. Biologist Volsen also worked on evaluating permit hunting seasons affected by wildfire area entry closures. Several hunts have been precluded by the wildfire closures. Volsen worked on developing alternative mule deer management strategies as a response to winter range impacts from wildfire.

Biologist Gallie released 170 pheasants on the Chelan Butte Wildlife Management Area (WMA) for the youth hunting weekend. Wildfire closures on the Colockum WMA dictated that all birds get released on Chelan Butte. Habitat in the Swakane is still recovering from a previous fire and birds are not being released in that area.



Wildlife Areas

Columbia Basin Wildlife Area Complex – Greg Fitzgerald / Brian Cole / Vacant

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

Winchester Regulated Access Area: Wildlife Area Assistant Brian Cole and Natural Resource Technician Will Carpenter retrieved the tractors and mowers from the Winchester Regulated Access Area (WRAA) after Will finished mowing for weed control.

Frenchman Ponds Regulated Access Area: Will hauled the Bobcat skidder to the Frenchman Ponds Regulated Access Area (FRAA) to mow shorelines and tall emergent vegetation to create open-water waterfowl habitat in preparation for flooding early in October. Will posted the informational signs at the parking areas on the WRAA and FRAA.

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

Fall Aerial Herbicide Application: Last week was all hands on deck for the fall aerial. Wildlife Area staff provided support for helicopter operations, weed recon, and supplied herbicides and surfactants to the applicator. A total of 1,290 acres of Phragmites was treated, focusing on the Frenchman Hills and Winchester Wasteways in the Desert and Potholes Reservoir Units, along with the managed wetlands in the Gloyd Seeps Unit. Central Valley helicopters did an outstanding job over the four long days of the application.

As follow up this week, Greg figured acreage by land ownership and funding source and sent the purchasing order and associated paperwork to Financial Services at Headquarters for payment. Brian removed the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit caution signs posted at the access sites of waters scheduled to be treated.

Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Complex - Dale Swedberg / Justin Haug

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Sinlahekin Weed Control Efforts and Equipment Maintenance: Assistant manager Haug continued to spray for Bladder Senna (*Colutea arborescens*) west of Headquarters as well as numerous other species. Natural Resource Technician Brandon Boulger worked on maintenance of a trailer, weed control, posting/updating signs, and mowing right-of-ways/trails throughout the wildlife area.

Sinlahekin Prescribed Burn Team: The Sinlahekin prescribed burn team continues to improve and build fire break lines for prescribed fires that we will begin implementing as soon as fire danger lessens. A contracted crew led by one of our team members worked on fire lines on Sherman Creek Wildlife Area and that work is nearly completed. Much of the zones where we are working are in Level II Industrial Fire Precaution (partial hootowl), so chainsaws are shut

down at 1 p.m. and the crew does hand work the remainder of the shift while maintaining a fire watch. An offer has been made and accepted to fill our last team member position and we'll get that person started as soon as possible.

Sinlahekin 75th Anniversary Celebration: Plans are being developed for the 2014 celebration with a number of local individuals interested in this effort.



Merlin near Blue Lake, Sinlahekin Wildlife Area.

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

Mobile Prescribed Burn Trailer: The Mule Deer Foundation - Washington Chapter has agreed to purchase an enclosed trailer for the hauling equipment, supplies and tools needed by the Prescribed Burn Module to conduct burns at sites away from the Sinlahekin, e.g. Sherman Creek. The trailer will be similar to the one below.



Private Lands - John Cotton / Eric Braaten / JoAnn Wisniewski

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE): Private Lands Biologist Braaten completed SAFE forb seeding area shapefiles using ArcGIS. Braaten also spent several hours on phone calls trying to get SAFE landowners to order seed. Grass seed availability is low, due to wildfires and Federal seed contracts. Several SAFE contracts will be amended to reduce pounds/acres to allow seed dealers to fill SAFE seed orders.

Leahy/Barker Fire/SAFE/Grazing: Contacted SAFE landowners affected by wildfire to let them know that Farm Service Agency (FSA) emergency grazing is allowed on SAFE contracts that have not been seeded. Livestock must be taken off once fields are seeded, typically about six weeks. This will give ranchers the time they need to make grazing arrangements for the future. Ranchers were excited to hear this news.

Habitat Restoration: Private Lands Biologist Braaten started the process of looking at future restoration projects in Douglas County burned areas. Some of the ideas included critical winter habitat restoration and protection by aligning new pasture fences to protect riparian areas, pasture over-seeding, and mule deer critical winter range seeding. Good news is grasses are beginning to green up in moist areas.



REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Yakima River Integrated Management Plan: District Wildlife Biologist Livingston wrote a brief study description to assess impacts of the proposed Wymer Reservoir in the Yakima River Canyon. He proposed inventory, monitoring, and genetic sampling of shrub steppe wildlife during the pre- and post-installation of the dam. There is potential to dovetail the integrated plan

assessment with the studies being developed for ground squirrels and jackrabbits under the Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Study.

Wildlife Areas

Table Mountain Fire Complex: Regional Wildlife Program Manager Clausing and Colockum Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Schulke spent most of the week working through the fire related issues. Due to extreme fire behavior, such as the photo below, the Colockum, Quilomene and Whiskey Dick Wildlife Areas were closed to public access on Friday. U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has also closed all of their lands east of Blewett Pass and Washington Department of Natural Resource (DNR) has closed all of the Naneum State Forest. Approximately 1500 acres of WDFW lands in the upper Naneum Basin have burned in the 36,000 acre fire complex. Chelan County has also closed the roads to allow “local access only” going up Colockum Pass and in the Stemilt Basin.



The Table Mountain Fire. National Interagency Fire Center photo.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Gray Wolf Sighting Response and Web-based Reporting Tool Problem Solving: Biologist Danilson followed up on a wolf sighting in southwestern Skagit County by contacting the reporting party, conducting a field investigation, and interviewing a neighboring property owner. Deer, deer tracks, coyote tracks, and scat were viewed, but no evidence was observed to support wolf presence.

Osprey Nest Management: Acting District Biologist Anderson provided to multiple cell phone companies and their contractors, as well as U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the state requirement to seek an Osprey Nest Removal Permit. This state permit is required to remove Osprey nests, once inactive and therefore not covered under federal laws, in situations where a clear damage or safety hazard is present.

Vashon Deer Management Citizen Concerns: Acting District Biologist Anderson fielded around 100 emails from parties regarding deer population concerns on Vashon Island. Anderson worked with state Wildlife Veterinarian Dr. Kristin Mansfield, as well as Officer Mike Krenz, to educate the concerned parties to the normal population processes and resulting effects that are seen in island situations and other areas where high deer densities are likely present. These situations are commonplace throughout the lower 48 states. Deer often spike in populations and over browse occurs. Often, portions of the population become affected due to subsisting on lower quality browse. The population then trickles downward over time as the browse and landscape cannot carry such numbers. This is a natural phenomenon related to population/habitat processes, particularly in isolated deer populations such as those found on islands, or in areas where populations are increased due to human influence (e.g. direct/indirect feeding, lack of predators due to control, etc.). Staff worked together to educate the concerned parties about these factors and that what is being seen is quite normal for the situation. Anderson also asked the parties to keep tabs on any unusual situations and report back. More information on area deer and deer management techniques for property owners is available at the WDFW Living with Wildlife Deer website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/deer.html>

WA State Prohibited Aquatic Animal Species Management: Acting District Biologist Anderson was contacted by a local school teacher and private family regarding an African clawed frog that they had obtained over the internet and had shipped into Washington.

African clawed frog is an exotic frog species that is invasive in other areas of the United States. It is considered a state Prohibited aquatic animal species (RCW 77.12.020). These species are considered by the commission to have a high risk of becoming an invasive species and may not be possessed, imported, purchased, sold, propagated, transported, or released into state waters except as provided in RCW 77.15.253; which allows for the transport of prohibited aquatic animal species to the department, or to another destination designated by the Director, in a manner designated by the Director, for the purposes of identifying a species or reporting the

presence of a species. The unlawful release of a prohibited aquatic animal species is a gross misdemeanor. A second violation within five years is a class C felony. After doing research, the reporting party learned the above facts and turned the frog over to Anderson.

This highly aquatic frog, which attains the size of a human fist, eats everything when released into a non-native habitat – there have been huge issues with this species in e.g. areas of southern California. Establishment of this species in Washington would be a tragedy to our native species and aquatic ecosystems – akin to Burmese python or Cuban tree frog issues in e.g. Florida.

WDFW urges citizens to educate themselves about management efforts, ecological issues, and legalities regarding state Prohibited Species. WDFW works with citizens to manage these exotic invasive species in order to conserve native species and habitats, as well as contact e.g. vendors that may not be knowledgeable of the illegality of promoting these species in Washington. More information can be found at WDFW Aquatic Invasive Species websites:

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/ais/>

http://wdfw.wa.gov/ais/xenopus_laevis/

<http://nas.er.usgs.gov/queries/factsheet.aspx?SpeciesID=67>

Wildlife Areas

Lake Terrell Dam Remodeling Project: The Whatcom Conservation District and the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association coordinated large groups of volunteers from Alcoa's Intalco Works, students from the Lummi Tribe and Western Washington University planting native trees and shrubs along the Terrell Creek channel. They also manually removed a beaver dam upstream of the project, and placed large rocks in the creek channel. The contractors have completed the lake water control gate and just need to install blockage screens on the water control culverts. The project will be complete later this week.



Lummi Tribe and Western Washington University students planted native trees and shrubs along the Terrell Creek channel of the Whatcom Wildlife Area.



Native trees and shrubs were planted along the Terrell Creek channel by volunteers.

Cherry Valley Unit Waterwheel Creek and Fish Passage Projects: Wild Fish Conservancy construction crews completed the digging of Waterwheel Creek. Most of the dirt work has been hydro-seeded and will have willows planted in the next few weeks.

Fish passage project construction crews have been installing abutments and pouring concrete for the bridges that go over Waterwheel Creek and Lateral A. Construction of the bridges will take a few weeks. The Cherry Valley Unit will be open for pheasant hunting on the weekends starting October 6.

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

Wildlife Management

Lesser Snow Goose Project: Biologist Danilson coordinated with other WDFW staff and project partners. Danilson also contacted a local veterinarian and rehabilitation facility, purchased supplies, and helped schedule a coordination (first week of October) and training session for those involved with the project.

WDFW-Woodland Park Zoo-Point Defiance Zoo-Northwest Trek Citizen Amphibian Monitoring Program: Acting District Biologist Anderson provided outreach, in collaboration with Woodland Park Zoo education staff, in an end of season presentation and close-out for participants in the D12 citizen amphibian monitoring pilot effort. WDFW, Woodland Park Zoo, and Amphibian Ark provided outreach, summary of season, and promotion of next season's efforts. While there, citizens toured the captive breeding facilities for the state endangered Oregon spotted frog. See the Woodland Park Zoo Backyard Wildlife Habitat webpage for information on this effort at <http://www.zoo.org/backyardhabitat>. For information on Amphibian Ark please visit <http://www.amphibianark.org/>



Citizens toured the captive breeding facilities for the state endangered Oregon spotted frog.

WDFW-Critter Zoom Eagle Camera Updates: Acting District Biologist Anderson provided wildlife monitoring and assistance regarding updates to the current WA eagle camera. Work provided for these needs. WA now has a new pan-tilt-zoom camera, which will be utilized for changing views and zooming in and out on eagles and eaglets, as well as an infrared camera for night viewing. See the WDFW Eaglecam website for more information and eagle viewing during the nesting season! <http://wdfw.wa.gov/wildwatch/eaglecam/index.html>



Washington now has a new pan-tilt-zoom camera, which will be utilized for changing views, zooming in and out on eagles and eaglets, and includes an infrared camera for night viewing.

Living with Urban Herons Presentation to Heron Habitat Helpers (HHH) Annual “Big Cranky” Open House: Acting District Biologist Anderson provided a presentation to citizens at the annual HHH open house, titled the “Big Cranky,” which is a nickname for the great blue heron. HHH is a local nonprofit that engages with citizenry to provide outreach and collaborative efforts to conserve urban herons in Seattle. HHH is particularly involved in the management of the largest heronry in Seattle found at Kiwanis Ravine – at around 90 nests.

HHH, along with Seattle Parks and Recreation, Critterzoom, and other collaborators have all been actively involved in the state heron cam that is located in this colony. Anderson provided a summary of heron biology, urban heron colonies, how to assist in providing for herons and other urban wildlife, as well as sharing video and pictures from the heron cam. Please see our Wildwatch Heron Cam for an opportunity to watch herons nesting right on the internet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/wildwatch/heroncam/index.html>.

For more information on how you can help through Heron Habitat Helpers, please visit <http://heronhelpers.org/>

Private Lands/Access

2012 Westside Pheasant Release (New) Location: Region 4 private lands and Skagit Wildlife Area staff finished preparations of new Bow Hill pheasant release site. Additionally, Region 4 staff addressed concerns from neighboring landowners about the site.

Whidbey Island Pheasant Release: Region 4 private lands staff prepared Arnold Farm pheasant release site for the youth opener. Biologist Roozen, Technician Otto, and Technician Deyo posted access and safety signage on the property, and evaluated cover quality on site.

Wildlife Areas

Samish Unit: Natural Resource Specialist Greg Meis and Natural Resource Technician Curran Cosgrove mowed cattail and other perennial emergent vegetation in the Samish ponds. This mowing should create more open water habitat for waterfowl and shorebird access, along with improving hunting opportunity.

Island Unit: Natural Resource Specialist Greg Meis and Natural Resource Technician Curran Cosgrove disked additional portions of the Island Unit to control cattail and reed canary grass that is encroaching agricultural fields.

Pheasant Release: Manager Kessler and volunteers released 510 pheasants for the youth and senior hunting season. The youth pheasant and waterfowl hunting were very well attended at the Lake Terrell and Intalco units. Many pheasants were flushed and just about every hunter got at least one bird.

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Pheasant Hunting: Pheasant hunting on the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area (Stillwater, Crescent Lake and Ebey Island Units) started with the youth hunt. Volunteers released over 300 birds for the youth.

Stillwater Pheasant Hunting Prep: Manager Paulson mowed trails through the reed canary grass and opened up large areas in the blackberry patches on the Stillwater Unit.

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

Wildlife Management

Pigeon Guillemot Colony Database: Assistant District Biologist Cyra finalized proofing the 6,000 plus records of the Pigeon Guillemot survey database, and can now move on to report preparation.

Private Lands/Access

GMU 418 Elk Hunting Access: Region 4 private lands staff surveyed the unit for hunter activity, logging operations, and unwanted activity. Additionally, Biologist Roozen spoke with multiple permit holders over the telephone regarding their hunt, access, and any problems and/or concerns thus far.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Biologist Roozen drafted Contracts, Agreements, and Payment Systems (CAPS) agreements and created multiple hunt unit maps. Biologist Roozen and Technician Otto continued discussions with potential partner landowners. Preparations for the upcoming waterfowl season are on schedule, with hunt unit layout and blind construction to begin next week.

Wildlife Areas

Leque Island: Natural Resource Specialist Greg Meis and Natural Resource Technician Curran Cosgrove installed additional foot bridges to improve hunter access on Leque Island Unit.

Skagit Headquarters: Natural Resource Specialist Greg Meis and Natural Resource Technician Curran Cosgrove controlled woody vegetation growing on the new dikes at the Wiley Restoration site. Alder seedlings are growing on the dike above the mean high tide mark.

Waterwheel Creek Tour: Manager Paulson and Wild Fish Conservancy showed Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) officials the Waterwheel Creek Project. Wild Fish Conservancy gave a PowerPoint presentation on the history and the hydrology of the project. The site visit gave the group a feeling on how extensive the project is and how well it is turning out.

Citizens Advisory Group Steering Committee: Manger Kessler participated in a conference call on the recommendations for the Citizens Advisory Groups we will use in the management planning process. Manager Rotton, Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Regional Wildlife Program Manager Russell Link hosted a Skagit Wildlife Area Citizen Advisory Group meeting. The plan update was discussed and suggestions on initial priority projects outlined.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Wildlife Management

Employee Flight Safety: Assistant District Biologist Cyra provided flight following for Wildlife Program employees performing mountain goat surveys in the eastern Olympic Mountains.

Following up on some recently completed research, Assistant District Biologist Cyra rewrote the flight following procedures document used for the winter waterfowl flights to reflect issues raised during investigations of aircraft accidents. These changes should speed the response to any aircraft incident. This document could be used as a template for any flight using the SkyTrax flight following system.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Black-tailed Deer Annual Productivity Surveys: Biologists Stephens and George conducted two evenings of spotlight deer surveys on DNR land in GMU 568 Washougal. Only 21 deer were seen and classified during the two night effort (six hours total). Data will be compiled for inclusion in the annual Pittman-Robertson report and incorporated into the Regional Sex, Age, Kill population estimation model for black-tails.

Black-tailed Deer Research Project: Only one of the nine fawns captured this spring in the Coweeman study cluster is still alive. The latest fawn mortality appeared to be predator related, although all that was found was a well chewed radio-collar.

Wildlife Areas

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Fence Corner Reconstruction: Manager Van Leuven began rebuilding the fence corner that was damaged by a cow last spring. Because the soil is shallow there, posts can't be set to the necessary depth even during the spring. Van Leuven built rock jacks to support all five posts for this corner. Horizontal braces still need to be installed between the posts before the fence wires are put back up.



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

Wildlife Areas

Shillapoo Wildlife Area

Hunting Season Preparations: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Hauswald posted signs for the upcoming youth and senior pheasant hunts. Signs were posted indicating that only youth and seniors can train their dogs during their respective seasons and that they must have a valid Western Washington Pheasant Permit and Small Game License to do so. Signs also indicated that no trap or target shooting is allowed on the Shillapoo Wildlife Area during upland bird and waterfowl seasons. Hauswald also mowed portions of pastures and trails to help facilitate hunting opportunities for the upcoming pheasant and waterfowl seasons.

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

Wildlife Management

Fire Danger Closures and Hunting Prospects: Most industrial forest lands remain closed to public entry due to fire danger. Portions of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest and Mt. Adams Wilderness are closed and fire restrictions are in effect for state DNR and WDFW lands. Biologists Bergh and Anderson answered many calls about these closures as well as elk hunting prospects in District 9 and 10.

Hoof Disease Public Meeting: Regional Wildlife Program Manager Jonker gave a presentation on the latest research and management strategies regarding hoof disease affecting elk in southwest Washington. WDFW is working with Washington State University to develop research on the cause of the disease, which does not match any known livestock or wildlife hoof diseases. Approximately 60 citizens attended the meeting and WDFW Veterinarian Mansfield, Regional Program Manager Cope, and Biologists Hoenes and Bergh were also there to help answer questions. The public can help WDFW by reporting their observations of elk with hoof disease by using the online reporting tool on the agency's website:

http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/hoof_rot/



Hoof disease public meeting.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Wildlife Areas

Mt. St. Helens/Shillapoo Wildlife Area Complex

New Manager: Daren Hauswald accepted the Wildlife Area Complex Manager position and will start in this new capacity on October 1, 2012. Daren comes to this position with a wealth of land management and game species knowledge and seven years of experience working on these Wildlife Areas in Southwest Washington. We are very excited to have him on board as the new Manager and look forward to his capable and dedicated management of these diverse areas.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Mazama Pocket Gopher (MPG): Biologist Tirhi made phone contact and sent permission packets to all 58 corporate/government/multi-parcel landowners that were assigned to District 11. As instructed by Headquarters, Tirhi will await several weeks to allow for access permissions to be returned to WDFW and then will make follow-up calls to landowners who have not returned forms if/when directed to. Biologists Tirhi and Schmidt also completed all Wave 3 surveys assigned to the district, as well as a few opportunistic surveys. Tirhi located gophers on two survey plots and Schmidt located gophers on seven.



Mazama pocket gopher mounds located at one plot as part of current distribution study (Tirhi 2012).

Biologists Anthony and Skriletz conducted gopher surveys, both directed and opportunistic. Most gopher survey sites in the district were closed to access this week due to fire danger.

Biologist McMillan contacted Olympic National Park (ONP) staff to secure a permit for MPG searching within ONP. She contacted DNR Biologist John Fleckenstein by email to encourage him to respond to several inquiries back in August to coordinate surveys within ONP and Olympic National Forest.

ONP staff wanted WDFW to coordinate with Fleckenstein prior to them issuing WDFW a permit. Biologist Ament contacted Fleckenstein in September and Fleckenstein had indicated he didn't think a permit was necessary unless WDFW staff was going to trap MPG, but that was an incorrect assumption as ONP has policies that require a permit for any wildlife studies within ONP boundaries. Biologist McMillan is following up on this confusion to secure a permit for WDFW work in ONP.

Biologist Ament conducted a MPG search last week along roads located along the Sol Duc River just west of Olympic National Park on September 21. She travelled along the #2918 USFS Road and all spur roads located in the lower portion of the road. 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 various 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. She will likely continue search efforts in the area this week and may plan some treks in higher elevation.

Mountain Goats: With funding provided by the USFS, Biologists Rice, Murphie and Skriletz along with Pilot Hagermann conducted a goat survey within designated survey blocks along the eastern edge of the ONP and within Olympic National Forest Service wilderness areas. An approximate total of seven and a half hours were flown over a two-day period.

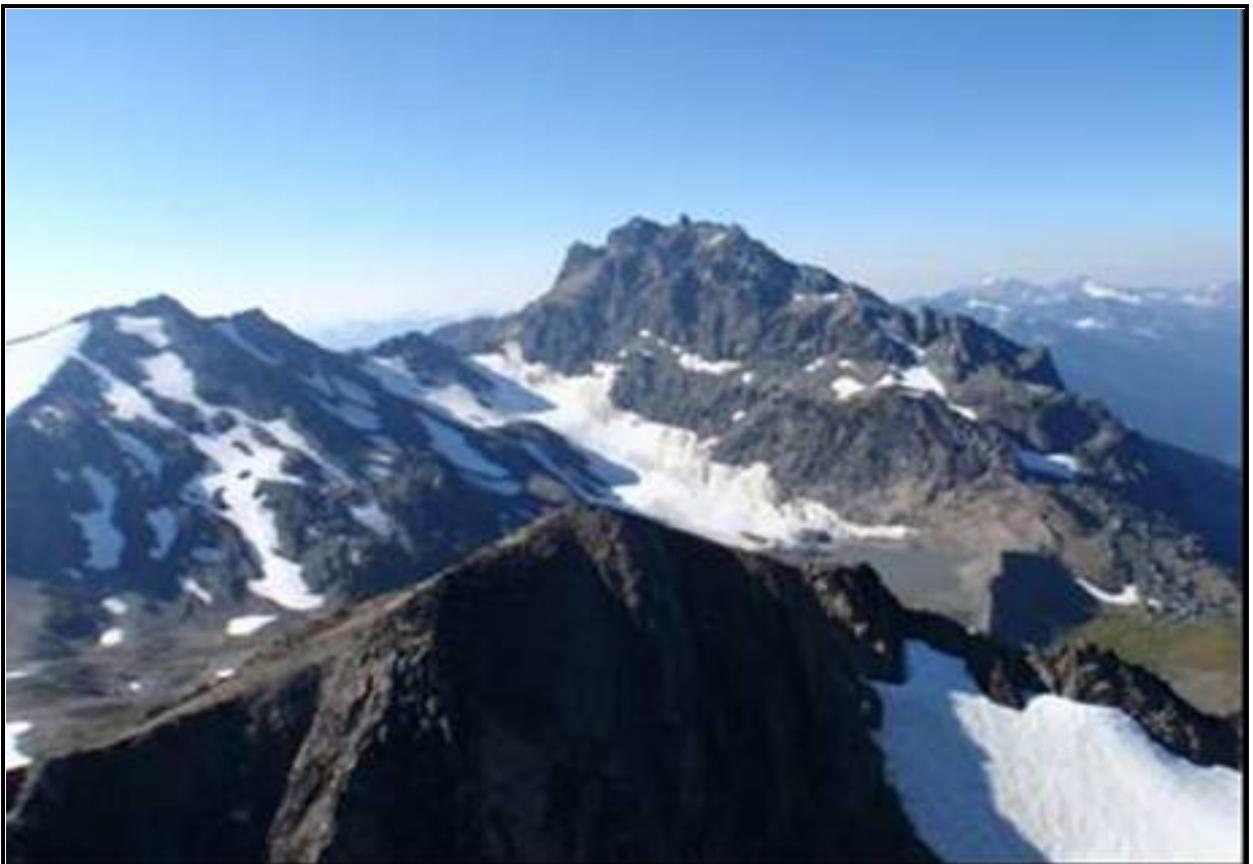
On day one, we surveyed four blocks and counted a total of 36 goats: 31 in the Mt. Washington block and five in the Brothers block; no goats were seen in either Harrison Lake or Mt. Jupiter. Of the 36, there were 22 adults, three yearlings, and 11 kids.

On day two, we surveyed 16 blocks thoroughly and took a cursory look only at four blocks (Royal Creek, Royal Lake, Mt Fricaba, and Bretherton). A total of 15 goats were counted: 11 adults and four kids.

Goats were observed in the Copper Mt. (two adults), Flapjack (one adult), Mt. Skokomish (two adults, three kids), Charlia Lakes (two adults, one kid), Warrior (one adult), and Mt. Constance (two adults in and one adult just outside the boundary) blocks. No goats were observed in the remaining blocks. In addition, three golden eagles (uncommon in District 15) were counted, one in the Mt. Washington area and two in the Mt. Baldy/Tyler Peak area.



Goats spotted in the east Olympics outside the National Park (above) and a view of their habitat in the east Olympics (below). Bryan Murphie photos.



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

Wildlife Management

Pheasant Hunting: Biologist Skriletz worked with headquarters' staff, the game farm manager, Chris White, and volunteers to get out information concerning temporary closure of two of the district's three pheasant release sites due to fire closures.

Private Lands/Access

Quality Waterfowl Hunting: Biologist Skriletz continued working with two Washington Waterfowl Association Chapters and a Ducks Unlimited Chapter to erect or repair waterfowl blinds for public hunting in Mason and Jefferson Counties.

Forest Land Access: Biologist Harris worked closely with various private timber companies to make sure WDFW has up-to-date information about public access to their property during this time of high fire danger. Most, if not all, private forest landowners have closed their property to public access to prevent forest fires. These closures will likely remain until significant rainfall is seen.