

# Wildlife Program

Week of August 12-18, 2013

## **REGION 1**

### **Wolf Management**

**District 1:** Assistant District Wildlife Biologist (ADWB) Prince deployed four self-activated cameras within Game Management Unit (GMU) 105 (the wedge) to document potential wolves in the area. Cameras will be checked on a regular basis and all species captured with photos will be recorded. Specialist Shepherd placed remote cameras in the Wedge and discussed wolf management with a federal grazing allotment permit operator. Specialist Shepherd met with federal grazing allotment permit operators in the Smackout wolf territory and discussed range riding, trapping, observations, and further assistance from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and volunteers to haze wolves. Specialist Shepherd worked with current and potential contract and volunteer range riders in order to set a network of riders who can patrol various areas occupied by wolves. Specialist Shepherd and Wolf Biologist Becker scouted and placed cameras and looked for trapping opportunities in the Wedge. Specialist Shepherd and Officer Anderson discussed an article both are writing concerning wolves in northeastern Washington. Specialist Shepherd participated in a regional/district conference call pertaining to a Wedge wolf issue. Specialist Shepherd collected a scat and discussed wolf sightings and calf mortalities with a Department of Natural Resources (DNR) employee on her private leased land. Specialist Shepherd discussed remote camera placement in the Wedge with ADWB Prince.

**District 3:** Conflict Specialist Rasley met with one cattleman in Asotin County regarding a new Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement-Livestock (DPCAL) contract with them. The cattleman said they would sign the contract and mail it back. The cattleman really liked the range riding option along with sanitation.

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

### **Wildlife Management**

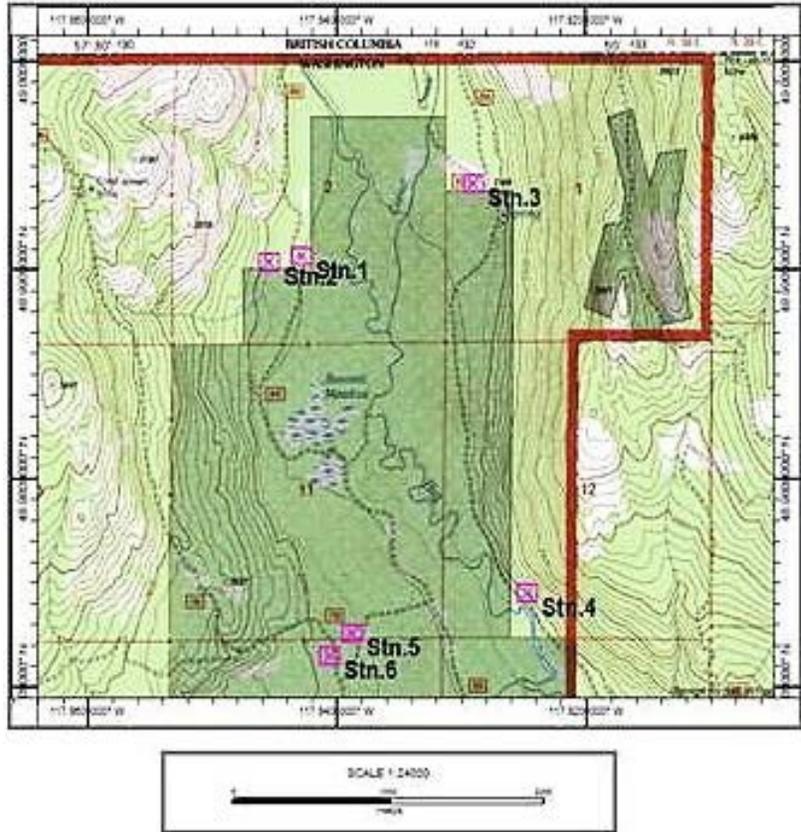
**Grizzly bear monitoring update:** In the late spring of 2012, District Wildlife Program staff deployed six hair snare stations in the Wedge (GMU 105) to obtain DNA samples from grizzly bears. Grizzly bears are a federally threatened and state endangered species. During the sampling, 33 hair samples were collected including 3 samples collected by WDNR staff from a barbed wire fence near the Washington/British Columbia border.

***Picture 1: Hair sample on barbed wire collected at a hair snare sampling station in the Wedge in 2012.***



However, 32 of the collected samples were identified as black bear and only one was identified as a grizzly. The single grizzly bear hair sample was collected at station 1 on June 4, 2012 (see Map 1 and Picture 1). The sample was identified as male by a genetics lab and they got a 21 locus genotype. A photograph of the subadult grizzly was also captured by a self-activated camera deployed at the station (see Picture 2).

On August 17, 2012, a bear with an identical genotype (the same individual) was captured 65 miles from the hair snare location, in a cherry orchard north of Creston, British Columbia (see Map 2). The bear was weighed (282 lbs.), radio collared, ear tagged, and relocated, but unfortunately returned a week later and was euthanized. This same orchard in 2011 had five grizzly bears using it and British Columbia officials installed an electric fence around the orchard. However, the orchard was sold and the new owner did not maintain the fence, thus this subadult bear got in. The new orchard owner is reportedly now maintaining the fence. In an effort to secure most of the bear attractive farms, the British Columbia Wildlife Branch has an ongoing electric fencing program.



**Map 1: Locations of six hair-snare stations set up in the Wedge in 2012.**



**Map 2: Straight line distance from the hair snare in the Wedge to the mortality site north of Creston, British Columbia.**



*Picture 2: Photograph of subadult grizzly bear taken in the Wedge by a motion activated camera deployed at a bear hair snare station.*

### Wildlife Areas

**Sherman Creek Wildlife Area/West Branch Little Spokane Noxious Weed Control** – Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Daro Palmer ordered and received two releases of *Cyphocleonus achates*, a large weevil that is a licensed biological control agent for suppression of invasive knapweed species in the United States. This insect feeds on the plant foliage as an adult and within the root as a larva. The insects were received from Jenn Andreas, Coordinator of the Integrated Weed Control Project for WSU Extension. Palmer made one release on the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area after receiving the insects. A second release will be made on West Branch Little Spokane Wildlife Area next Monday. Both releases are targeting spotted knapweed.



**Cooperative habitat management** – Before posting signs at Revere Wildlife Area, Wildlife Area Manager Anderson and Assistant Finch traveled to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM’s) Packer Creek property this week, upon request of BLM Spokane Biologist Jason Lowe. Packer Creek is very close to the Revere Wildlife Area. The two inspected a field that had been planted with barley for upland game use this year, and found it severely infested with pigweed and Canada thistle. Finch and BLM employee Glenn Paulson will be mowing the most heavily weed-infested portions next week. Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area staff work from a BLM contract when providing services to them.

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Access Area Mischief** – Access Manager Young replaced a sign stolen from the Newman Lake Access Site. A large deposit of garbage was left inside the vault toilet at Fan Lake. Vandals have severely damaged the toilet building at Hog Lake Access Site.

***Right: Trash left at the Fan Lake Access Site toilet. Below: Vandals shot up the Hog Lake Access Site toilet.***



**Vandalism at Heller Bar:** Captain Dan Hally from the Asotin County Sherriff's Office contacted Wildlife Area Manager Dice at home on the subject of suspicious activity taking place at Heller Bar. He said about 30 vehicles have had their gas lines cut and fuel tanks emptied. Most of the vehicles belong to rafters and were moved to Heller Bar by shuttle companies. Pretty much all of them have purchased Discover Passes.

### Private Lands/Access

**Hunt by Reservation Update:** Biologist Lewis mailed informational packets to all landowners with properties in the "Hunt by Reservation" program that were signed up in 2012. Packets included instructions on signing into their individual hunt properties' webpages, a detailed hunt calendar for the GMUs where hunts will be taking place, and a CRP-CP33 informational flyer. Packets will be mailed to individuals who added properties in 2013 once access codes become available.

## **REGION 2**



*Bald Eagle observed above the Okanogan River, McLoughlin Falls Unit. Photo by Justin Haug.*

### Wolf Management

Nothing to report.

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

### **Wildlife Management**



***Research Scientist Becker, DeMay, and Gallie work with volunteers to process and sample rabbits.***

**Enclosure Assessments and Pygmy Rabbit Releases:** Research Scientist Penny Becker, graduate student Steph DeMay, Scientific Technician Erin Duvuvuei and a team of staff and volunteers worked on July 30 to capture and release pygmy rabbit kits from the Dormaier breeding enclosure to the wild at Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area. Twelve kits were caught this week. These kits, along with another four that were kept in the nursery to give them time to grow, were released. In all, 238 have been released this season. From August 13-15 we will attempt to capture all rabbits in each enclosure to apply flea treatments and sample any individuals not yet caught this year.

**Northern Leopard Frogs:** Biologists Duvuvuei and Dougherty along with a group of other WDFW employees surveyed for northern leopard frogs in the Northern Potholes Unit of the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area. Although northern leopard frogs are endangered, there appears to be a marked increase in the population this year. The group surveyed nearly half of the intended ponds and counted approximately 200 leopard frogs. The last time the surveys were conducted was in 2011 and biologists counted just over 100 total



***Leopard Frog – Photo by Steph DeMay.***

leopard frogs during the entire survey. Additionally, Biologists Finger, Duvuvuei, and Dougherty searched for the presence of leopard frogs in areas of the Potholes that are typically not very productive; although they did not find many, they did locate a few in these low production areas. Biologist Duvuvuei will survey the remaining ponds next week.

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

**Private Lands/Access**

**Hunter Access:** Biologist Dougherty has continued to update and renew hunter access agreements and was successful in renewing one contract that consisted of approximately 1,600 acres. There are still 13 contracts that have to be renewed, so Biologist Dougherty will continue working to renew them.

Biologist Dougherty assisted a private landowner with ensuring the overall safety of his home by delivering “Safety Zone” signs. The landowner was concerned because of the proximity to other Hunter Access Program property.

***GOAL 3: PROMOTE A HEALTHY ECONOMY, PROTECT COMMUNITY CHARACTER, MAINTAIN AN OVERALL HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, AND DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE***

**Wildlife Areas**

**McLoughlin Falls Unit Clean-up** – Manager Haug with the assistance of the prescribed burn team began finishing the clean-up efforts started by the outgoing landowner. The crew, along with a small contingent of Okanogan County Trustees, removed a total of eight tons worth of steel and approximately two tons of garbage and other debris. In addition to removing steel and garbage, manager Haug and county trustees dug and bagged puncturevine and wild four o'clock from within the unit.



**North ½ Access Program** – In addition to routine access site servicing, a new reader board was installed at Cougar Lake (see photos) and renovations begun on the Driscoll Island access reader board (see photos).



*Cougar Lake Access Site before and after reader board installation*



*Driscoll Island Access Site reader board*

## **REGION 3**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Duck Banding:** Biologists and Wildlife Area Managers started trapping ducks on the Sunnyside/Snake River Wildlife Area. Three traps in Franklin County captured 155 ducks. Of these, 154 were mallards and one was a lesser scaup. This is a very high capture rate for the District and the crew is hoping the success will continue.



*Above: Seventy mallards wait to be banded at the Sunnyside/Snake River Wildlife Area.  
Below: A lone lesser scaup captured with about 40 mallards.*



Trapping was also successful in Yakima County, where 168 mallards and 13 wood ducks were banded this week with help from local students.



*Above: Duck banding crew on the Sunnyside Wildlife Area. Left: Success.*

**Deer and Elk Damage:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand responded to a deer and elk damage complaint near Benton City by deploying two propane gas cannons in a new planting of high density apple trees. Hand also developed a plan with the orchard managers to haze the animals and to issue permits to hopefully reduce deer and elk activity near the orchard.



*LP gas cannon deployed close to a new block of apple trees near Benton City.*

Conflict Specialist Hand also inspected two winter wheat fields on Rattlesnake Mountain. Both fields incurred elk damage from trampling, bedding and consumption; though the damage is less than what these fields historically receive.



*Wheat damage from summer elk use*

### Wildlife Areas

#### **Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation**

**Volunteers:** Oak Creek Wildlife Area Manager Huffman, Assistant Manager Berry and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Forester Matt Dahlgreen worked with 26 Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) volunteers on Friday. Twelve volunteers went with Berry to the Cowiche and Thornton Units and removed old stock fence for the day. The remaining 14 volunteers went with Huffman and Dahlgreen to work on the Oak Creek Forest Restoration Project, where conifers were removed from an aspen stand and the trees were cut to length and stockpiled to build a buck and rail fence at a later date. In another unit, the stand was thinned and all materials were piled for burning.



*Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation volunteers with Assistant Manager Berry removing old stock fence on the Cowiche Unit.*



*Above: RMEF volunteers removed small and medium sized conifers from the stand to allow the aspen to expand. Below: Poles and fencing material were cut to length and stockpiled so a buck and rail fence could be built around the aspen stand at a later date.*





*Manager Huffman (above) and The Nature Conservancy Forester Matt Dahlgren (below) posed with RMEF volunteers in the thinned stand after a hard day's work.*



## **REGION 4**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Oregon Spotted Frog Project:** Biologist Danilson worked with Section Manager Thompson to prepare a spending plan for the remaining funds from a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) grant for the District 14 Oregon Spotted Frog Project. The remaining funds are sufficient for the salary dollars Danilson will need to prepare the final report for surveys conducted during the spring of 2013. The contract termination date is August 31.

**Waterfowl Trapping and Banding:** Biologist DeBruyn began trapping at three sites to capture and band mallards to provide data on survival for population modeling work for western flyway breeding populations. DeBruyn trapped 10 mallards at one site, but the other two were being marauded by a skunk, a family of raccoons and a (feral?) dog making trapping problematic.



***Banded mallard, note that this drake is emerging from eclipse plumage***

**Highway 20 Elk Crossing Project:** Biologist DeBruyn met with a graduate student from Western Washington University who is studying issues related to elk highway mortality on

Highway 20 in the Skagit Valley. DeBruyn also met with GIS Analyst Treg Christopher in Olympia to work on the development of a smart phone app to facilitate the reporting of elk crossing and road kill data. DeBruyn also had conversations with Managers Pierce and Duff regarding the project.

**Elk-Vehicle Collisions on State Route 20:** Biologist Danilson was alerted to an injured elk on SR 20 and worked with Officer Ludwig to coordinate the carcass retrieval by tribal members.

**Bald Eagle Management:** Biologist Smith documented the location of several nests in Medina, Mercer Island, Kent, Auburn and the Maple Valley areas. These locations will be added to the database as time permits. Biologist Anderson received reports of active and successful nests, as well as directed folks to the USFWS for permitting needs.



*A juvenile Bald Eagle observed near a nest on Mercer Island.*

**Band-tailed Pigeon Study:** This week as part of the band-tailed pigeon project Biologist S. Anderson has continued ground based searching for mineral springs and nest locations as well as documenting pigeon activity. One pigeon was tracked back to a feeder where it was trapped in June. This shift from the nest area to a communal feeding site indicates the breeding season is winding down. Two pigeons have left breeding sites and their whereabouts are currently unknown. Biologists Anderson and DeBruyn will continue ground based searches for the remainder of the project as well as investigation into at least one potential mineral site.

**Lower Snoqualmie Valley Bat Monitoring:** Biologist Anderson assisted WFDW volunteers with Bats Northwest in a survey for bats at WDFW properties in August. Anderson and

volunteers conducted night acoustic monitoring at the Cherry Valley Wildlife Management Unit. Bats were recorded and data will be compiled and analyzed. This was the final survey of August and the pupping season.

**Great Blue Heron Management Assistance to City of Kenmore:** Biologist Anderson conferenced with consultants representing Kenmore regarding construction proposed near the Kenmore Park and Ride. Anderson referred them to the planning department and reiterated that WDFW is available for project specific management consultation for this Priority Species and Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Lake Terrell Dam Adjustment:** Manager Kessler adjusted the water level at the bypass valve at the Lake Terrell dam and cleared the beaver dam at the mouth of Terrell Creek where it leaves Lake Terrell.

**Lake Terrell Purple Loosestrife Control:** The regional weed control crew controlled purple loosestrife on the Lake Terrell Unit.

**Ebey Island Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm conducted a Grazing Evaluation and Report for the grazing areas on the unit. This report is required for the grazing permit and is one of three reports that are required each grazing season. Overall, the grass is well-grazed with the majority of the grass short and somewhat brown. There are few bare spots and most of the normally wet areas are dry due to lack of rain.

Additionally, Manager Boehm has spent most of the week mowing the West Lobe area in preparation for the upcoming hunting season. Portions of approximately 50 acres have been mowed so far. Mowing and invasive weed control will continue throughout the unit in the coming weeks.

**Cherry Valley Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm and volunteer assistance continued field mowing in preparation for the coming hunting season. Due to equipment failure, mowing has temporarily ceased while the brush hog and tractor are in for repairs. Manager Boehm also replaced the “Discover Pass Required” sign that had been removed recently.

**Crescent Lake Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm and local volunteers completed trail and road maintenance along with field mowing at this unit. Approximately 30 acres of understory pasture and non-tilled areas were mowed and brush removed. This will improve the pheasant release program access and increase huntable land on this unit.

**Stillwater Revetment Removal Project:** Restoration Projects Coordinator Brokaw updated that the contractor working for Wild Fish Conservancy continued project construction and is excavating and hauling revetment materials offsite. Construction is advancing on schedule and should be completed by the end of August. When complete, over 2,000 linear feet of rock revetment will be removed and the river bank of the Snoqualmie River will function more naturally to benefit fish and wildlife.

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

### **Wildlife Management**

#### **Wildlife Tree Importance in**

**Urban Landscapes:** Upon arriving to the Region 4 office in the morning, Biologist Anderson noted a Pileated Woodpecker, a state Priority Species and Species of Greatest Conservation Need, feeding on one of the created snags that WDFW has outside of the regional office. These snags were created for demonstration and to assist in our network transmitting signal which had been blocked by the full grown trees. The snags or “Wildlife Trees” were created in 2009, saved the department money since we did not have to fully remove the trees, created wildlife habitat, and remedied our transmission signal conflicts.



***Pileated Woodpecker observed on a created snag or “Wildlife Tree” that is a demonstration for public viewing and outreach at the Region 4 Headquarters.***

More information on the creation of Wildlife Trees and enhancing properties for wildlife can be found at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/snags/index.html> and <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/attracting/>.

**North Cascades Elk Information:** Biologist Danilson provided information to Section Manager Nelson and Program Manager Link who are preparing information for legislative aids and responding to letters related to the North Cascades Elk Herd. Danilson also worked with Link to prepare the draft of a response letter to the Skagit Farm Bureau and Washington Cattlemen’s Association.

**GMU 418 Bull Hunt Coordination:** Biologist Danilson followed up with one of the GMU 418 bull permit holders who inquired about landowner contact information for elk hunting opportunities in Elk Area 4941. This Elk Area is in the Skagit River Valley bottom lands within GMU 437 where elk related agricultural conflicts are a growing problem. It is the first year that this area has been open to these tag holders. The Wildlife Program and Enforcement personnel are encouraging hunters to harvest bulls in this area.

**Diversity site:** Natural Resource Technician (NRT) Deyo toured a diversity access site on Whidbey Island. Deyo performed trail maintenance and retrieved the trail sign-in sheets, where 30 people have used the access over the past month and have viewed a wide variety of species.

**Site access:** NRT Deyo completed vegetation control at multiple Waterfowl Quality Hunt parking areas to prepare for the upcoming hunting season.

**Bow Hill Pheasant:** NRT Deyo contacted and scheduled a fencing company to install a fence around the Bow Hill pheasant release parking area.

### Wildlife Areas

**Lake Terrell ADA Accessible Hunting Blind:** The Whatcom County chapter of the Washington Waterfowl Association finished the work on the new ADA Accessible Hunting Blind on the Lake Terrell Unit. A packed gravel pad for the blind was laid down, and the blind was camouflaged with grass and branches. This blind will be used specifically for handicapped access and will not be available for the general public to use.



*New ADA accessible hunting blind at Lake Terrell with gravel pad in foreground.*

**Skagit Delta Acquisition Team:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw completed a first draft of a Lands 20/20 proposal to increase winter waterfowl forage areas and hunter access in the Skagit Delta. The cross-program acquisition team will begin contacting local stakeholders and groups within the next month to recruit partners and refine the proposal.

***GOAL 3: PROMOTE A HEALTHY ECONOMY, PROTECT COMMUNITY CHARACTER, MAINTAIN AN OVERALL HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, AND DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE***

### Wildlife Management

**North Cascades Elk Management Work Group:** Biologists Danilson and DeBruyn along with Conflict Specialist Griffith participated in a planning session for the upcoming North Cascades

Elk Management Working Group meeting. The planning meeting was primarily focused on agenda preparation and determining roles of the different staff that will attend the meeting. Danilson worked on preparing presentation materials and followed up with Washington Department of Transportation personnel to determine whether they would be attending the meeting on August 22.

**Skagit Valley Herald Article on the North Cascades Elk Herd:** Biologist Danilson, Specialist Griffith, Sergeant Phillips and Officer Valentine met with a reporter from the Skagit Valley Herald on Tuesday. The interview was focused on elk management and damage issues in Skagit and Whatcom counties as well as to introduce Griffith to the local community.

**Wildlife Conflict Conference Call:** Specialist Griffith and Biologist Danilson participated in the first wildlife conflict management/transition conference call on August 13. The purpose of this regularly scheduled conference call is to identify important issues, provide updates and share information between Olympia staff and regional staff working on wildlife conflict issues throughout the state. Future conference calls will occur on Tuesdays every other week.

**Wildlife Conflict Response:** Specialist Griffith spent the majority of the week responding to elk damage calls in the Skagit River Valley and around Acme. In addition to working independently, Griffith rode with Sergeant Phillips, Officer Valentine and Biologist Danilson. Phillips and Valentine gave Griffith an extensive tour of the area and introduced Griffith to the local landowners. Griffith responded to eight elk damage calls and made well over a dozen contacts with local producers in Skagit and Whatcom counties. A number of permits were issued and five additional hunters were assigned.

**Tree farm signs:** Technician Deyo posted signs at all access gates into a Sierra Pacific Industries tree farm reminding hunters to yield to all logging activity along with other rules and regulations.

**Wildlife Conflict – King/Snohomish counties:** Biologist Smith worked with Sergeant Maurstad to address issues with deer damaging a local raspberry crop. The farmer plans to experiment with scarecrows before potentially moving to a more expensive fencing option. Smith also coordinated with Officer Moszeter regarding elk damage complaints near Snoqualmie and toured elk damage areas with Officer Capelli.

Biologist Smith participated in a bi-weekly conference call discussing issues related to the transfer of conflict duties to the Wildlife Program.

**Westside Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary Data Review:** Biologist Anderson QA/QC'd five data summaries from National Wildlife Federation (NWF) and found data previously not submitted from them. This was due to changes in their data management query system. Anderson is working with Customer Service Specialist Laura Wilson and NWF to remedy these requests. Anderson and Wilson are also working with the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) to review and obtain new backyard program signage.

**Bat Conflicts:** Biologist Anderson answered a number of calls concerning bats in houses or bats being found dead. In all cases it appeared that situations involved either single bats that had accidentally flown in open windows or doors, or cats getting to bats in areas of regular feeding travel. Anderson referred folks appropriately to the WDFW Living with Wildlife website, as well as the local health department in one situation. More about the value of bats and potential situations where there may be a conflict with this and other wildlife species can be found at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/species/>.

**Owl Conflicts:** Anderson received multiple calls on “aggressive owls” – barred owls – which annually will show a bit of their “oats” at this time of year since we have roughly the same amount of light, which affects their hormone levels. This period will subside quickly. It is generally understood that these are younger owls that don’t quite “get it” when they have this hormone spike. See our Living with Wildlife website on owls to see how to avoid situations with owls dive-bombing people.

**Osprey Conflicts:** Biologist Anderson consulted with Mercer Island High School maintenance staff regarding a long-term nest that had been moved five years back with advice given by Anderson. The nest had been on a light-ballast, right over the sports field seating – and that area didn’t have folks using that seating.

A platform was made and erected over a building that protected sports observers from debris, while allowing an existing security camera to focus on the nest for student education. This building is slated for demolition to install ADA accessible sports seating. Mercer Island school staff is looking at nest removal, WDFW nest removal permitting here in the fall, and potential alternative platform sites to retain the birds while eliminating conflict.

**Black-tailed Deer Auto Strike Public Concern:** Biologist Anderson dialogued with citizens in the Redmond area regarding recent deer-auto collisions. Anderson explained that there are some limited deer populations, particularly doe and young of year currently, in these suburban areas and that we get a few calls on this annually. It is of concern. Anderson recommended reporting the hit by car incidence to the local transportation entity. Working with these communities and transportation entities in the long-term to find these occasionally used areas where deer tend to traverse the roadway will provide information valuable for transportation management and reduction in wildlife conflict strikes, ultimately increasing the safety on these roadways.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Friends of Tennant Lake & Hovander Park:** Manager Kessler attended the monthly meeting of the non-profit group, Friends of Tennant Lake & Hovander Park.

**Leque Island Public Outreach and Alternatives Analysis Project:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw completed a first draft of the project outreach and communications plan and sent to the project District Review Team for review. The draft plan involves various points for public and stakeholder involvement in the alternatives analysis process.

The Stanwood Camano News wrote a newspaper article about the recent Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) determination and recent history of Leque Island. The article is available at [http://www.scnews.com/news/image\\_33ceb0ca-0467-11e3-a067-0019bb30f31a.html](http://www.scnews.com/news/image_33ceb0ca-0467-11e3-a067-0019bb30f31a.html).

**Samish River Unit -- Welts Wetland Restoration Project:** Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton emailed invites to the Skagit Wildlife Area Citizen Advisory Group for an upcoming public Open House for the project. There is also an announcement in the Skagit Valley Herald calendar at [http://www.goskagit.com/calendar/public\\_meetings/samish-river-unit---welts-property-wetland-restoration-project/event\\_6bea0b72-0042-11e3-9afa-101f742cecfe.html](http://www.goskagit.com/calendar/public_meetings/samish-river-unit---welts-property-wetland-restoration-project/event_6bea0b72-0042-11e3-9afa-101f742cecfe.html). The Open House is scheduled for August 28 from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. at the Braezeale Padilla Bay Reserve large meeting room.

**Snoqualmie Wildlife Area:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm attended the August 13 Sustainable Land Strategy meeting at the request of the Sustainable Land Strategy Executive Committee. Manager Boehm was asked to give a brief presentation on agricultural updates at the Ebey Island Unit. Approximately 300 acres of the unit could be utilized for agricultural production that would also enhance food and forage for wildlife and waterfowl.

***GOAL 4: BUILD AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT ORGANIZATION BY SUPPORTING OUR WORKFORCE, IMPROVING BUSINESS PROCESSES, AND INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY***

**Wildlife Management**

**Natural Resources Technician 2 Recruitment:** Biologist Danilson revised and forwarded the recruitment materials for the Natural Resources Technician 2. This position will be shared between the Wildlife Program (working on wildlife conflicts) and the Skagit Wildlife Area.

**Wildlife Conflict Vehicle and Equipment Outfitting:** Biologist DeBruyn and Technician Deyo travelled to Olympia to pick up a new vehicle for Wildlife Conflict Specialist Griffith. The vehicle outfitted with a cargo area storage system compliments of Truck Vault Inc. in Sedro Woolley. This free promo (arranged by Olympia staff) was worked out with Truck Vault assisting them in marketing. Conflict Specialist Griffith will later meet with marketing staff at Truck Vault for pictures/video on how the system is being utilized.

**Explosives License Testing:** Biologist DeBruyn took and passed the exam for a blasting license. The license is necessary for anyone shooting off rocket nets used to capture waterfowl.

**Warehouse organization:** NRT Deyo cleaned and organized the Private Lands area in the Warehouse.

**GMU 418 elk hunter data:** NRT Deyo compiled hunter information into spreadsheets, which was provided at the GMU 418 Nooksack access meeting.

## **REGION 5**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Resident Dark Geese:** Biologists from WDFW Waterfowl Program, USFWS Migratory birds, USFWS Refuge, and Region 5 staff conducted surveys to document location and collar re-sightings for the Resident Dark Geese (RDG) population in the lower Columbia River. One crew launched on the Columbia near Astoria and focused work on Miller Sands Island, where most of the birds breed. The survey effort was hampered by electrical issues that shut down the depth finder and areas in shallow water were not examined. Another survey party looked at the areas where geese normally winter in local pastures along the floodplain. The boat crew observed 178 RDGs, read nine visual collars, and heard one radio transmitter (out of four installed this summer). No birds were observed in the pastures of Wahkiakum County. Additional surveys were conducted in Region 6 by WDFW and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) along the south side of the Columbia River and fields near Willapa Bay. These surveys will be repeated in two weeks and the data will be used to generate a population estimate of this population of resident geese that resemble the migratory Dusky Canada Goose.

**Odd-colored Mole:** A landowner near Castle Rock reported catching an orange mole in a trap. While in the area for other work, Biologist Bergh stopped to pick up the specimen. After consulting with staff at University of Washington's Burke Museum, the specimen will be sent there for their collection. They advised that the orange coloring is most likely due to the same spontaneous gene mutation that causes the calico color pattern in cats and dogs as well some rodents.



***Odd-colored Mole***

**Bat Mortalities:** A landowner on Silver Lake reported finding eight dead bats over the course of a few days. After consultation with the Department's veterinary staff, Biologist Bergh went to retrieve a bat for identification. The bats are believed to be little brown bats (*Myotis lucifugus*), but the cause of death is uncertain. The bats were not fresh enough to be sent into a laboratory

and disease was not believed to be a factor in the mortality event. This is the time of year when young bats are leaving the roost and can be susceptible to various sources of human-caused and predator mortality.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Klickitat Wildlife Area:** Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven met with Biologist Merg to consider the feasibility of trying a new biocontrol agent on undesirable grasses in a field along the Leidl Grade section of the Glenwood Highway. They discussed a couple of possibilities for controlling medusahead and other invasive grasses. Biologist Merg will send a more detailed project suggestion for further consideration.

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

### **Private Lands/Access**

**Oneida Access Site:** Access staff Spangler and Rhodes hauled the tractor to the Oneida Access Site and mowed the lower field for parking and the upper loop road across from the boat launch to maximize parking during the high use period for this ramp as a result of the peak fishery opportunity. They met with the WDFW construction crew onsite as they began to deliver material needed for the boat ramp upgrade.

## **REGION 6**

None.