

# Wildlife Program

Week of August 19-25, 2013

## **SCIENCE DIVISION**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Recent Publications:** Lori Salzer is a coauthor on Overview of Red Knot (*Calidris canutus roselaari*) migration connectivity and non-breeding distribution along the Pacific coast of the Americas. The manuscript was submitted to the Wader Study Bulletin.

Lori Salzer is a coauthor on Additional records of tree-nesting by Peregrine Falcons in western North America. The manuscript was revised and resubmitted to the Journal of Raptor Research.

Lori Salzer provided review and comment for State of the Union: Legal Authority Over the Use of Native Amphibians and Reptiles in the United States. The document is a collaborative effort under the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and is available online at <http://www.fishwildlife.org/index.php>.

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Wildlife Biometrician Position:** Interviews have been completed for filling the Wildlife Biometrician position recently vacated by Shannon Knapp. The interview panel members included John Pierce, Tim Quinn, Scott McCorquodale, and Matt Vander Haegen. The panel interviewed five excellent candidates. We hope to complete background checks soon and be able to offer the position to our top candidate within the next two weeks.

## **WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Prairie Butterfly Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) --** Ann Potter and Loni Beyer, Diversity Division biologists, conducted surveys for the Oregon Branded Skipper (OBS) to determine presence on three south Sound prairies where the butterfly has been observed in recent years. OBS was found in low numbers on each site (Mima Mounds Natural Area Preserve,

Scatter Creek Wildlife Area-South, and Scatter Creek Wildlife Area-North). A highlight was detecting the butterfly within a restoration unit that was burned and herbicide treated in 2012. Prairie butterfly SGCN are a monitoring focus in the three-year State and Tribal Wildlife Grant (SWG)-funded Prairie-Oak restoration project. In Washington, despite considerable survey effort, OBS is known from only two additional sites: one on Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) and one on Orcas Island. A few populations also persist on Vancouver Island. The larval host plants for this butterfly are unknown; additional focal surveys will be conducted in the next few weeks to collect data on plants (observe egg-laying site and species selection) with which this rare Pacific Northwest endemic associates.

## **REGION 1**

### **Wolf Management**

**District 1:** Assistant District Wildlife Biologist (ADWB) Prince participated in the bi-weekly agency staff's teleconference on coordination of wolf management issues, concerns, initiatives, and activities on Monday, August 19. These teleconferences are generally facilitated by Wildlife Section Manager Donny Martorello.

Specialist Shepherd and Wolf Biologist Becker scouted and placed cameras and looked for trapping opportunities in the Wedge. Specialist Shepherd assisted Biologists Becker and Roussin with a wolf trapping and radio-collaring effort in the Wedge. Specialist Shepherd deployed remote cameras and discussed wolf management with federal grazing allotment permit holders in the Wedge.

Specialist Shepherd met with and discussed range riding, observations, and hazing opportunities with contract and volunteer range riders. Specialist Shepherd worked with current and potential contract and volunteer range riders in order to put into place a network of riders who can patrol various areas occupied by wolves. Specialist Shepherd, Public Relations Specialist Luers, and Officer Anderson discussed an article concerning wolf management in northeastern Washington. Specialist Shepherd participated in the statewide wolf conference call.

**District 3:** Conflict Specialist Rasley received a newly signed Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement-Livestock (DPCAL) contract from a cattleman in Asotin County. Conflict Specialist Rasley was able to process four more renewed DPCAL contracts and mailed them to the cattlemen.

## **REGION 2**

### **Wolf Management**

**Lookout Wolf Management:** The Lookout Pack has likely moved to the high country for the next few months until winter snows push deer down onto the winter range. Fortunately, while

they were still at a rendezvous site several weeks ago, Biologist Spence captured some photographic documentation of the pups.

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

**Wildlife Management**

**North Cascades Wolverine Research Project:** Midterm checks are complete at most of the run-pole camera survey sites deployed earlier this summer. Several critters including the target species (wolverine) have been picked up by the cameras, and thus far no sites have been destroyed by bears. This is part of an ongoing interagency effort to develop a summer monitoring technique for wolverines.



*Clockwise starting from top left: Wolverine – Dasher, Mountain Goat, Mule Deer, and Black Bear. Photos courtesy of U.S. Forest Service.*

**Wildlife Areas**



**Yellow Star Thistle Control on Knowles Area:** The Knowles Area is part of the Entiat Unit located between Navarre and Knapp Coulees. In the late 1960s yellow star thistle (YST) was first observed on the area adjacent to the agricultural fields that were farmed until the late 1990s.

Control efforts were sporadic for the yellow star thistle until 1998 when it was estimated that 100 acres were infested. Over the past 15 years, a great deal of progress in YST control has been achieved with seeding the agricultural fields to perennial grasses and shrubs and yearly backpack spraying of patches and individual plants on the steep hillsides adjacent to the fields. This year's control effort was expected to be different from the past since the entire area was within the perimeter of last fall's Byrd Fire.



*Knowles Area after the Byrd Fire, September 2012.*

In late June, during the first day of backpack spraying it was obvious that we no longer had the level of control in the old farm fields that was present before the fires. Nearly all of the 124 acres of fields contained individual or small patches of YST that were quite vigorous and robust due to the removal of competing vegetation from the fire. On the steep hillsides adjacent to fields the distribution and abundance of plants was the same as in the past; however, on sites with better soils some plants were the largest ever seen on the area.



*Left: Fidel Rios with a large yellow star thistle plant. Right: More typical sized yellow star thistle plants on shallow soil steep hillsides on the Knowles area.*

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Columbia Basin Development League (CBDL):** Manager Fitzgerald and District Fish Biologist Chad Jackson met the Columbia Basin Development League (CBDL) “Water Day” tour at MarDon Resort on the Potholes Reservoir to speak about the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area and fish and wildlife management within the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project. CBDL was formed in 1964 to support the completion of the Columbia Basin Project (CBP). The annual Water Day tour is organized by CBDL to help educate policy makers on issues related to the CBP, this year focusing on economic benefits, agricultural production, recreational opportunities and hydropower production.

**REGION 3**

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

**Wildlife Management**



**Goat Survey:** Biologist Moore prepared and flew the 2013 Goat Survey for the Bumping River, Blazed Ridge and Naches Pass units. The flights went extremely well in the Bumping and Naches Pass units with 133 and 158 goat observed respectively. The Manastash Block of the Blazed Ridge Survey was difficult due to the fire at Shoestring Lake. Only a small area of the block was missed, but smoke was heavy and may have reduced the number of goats observed. Only 50 goats were observed in the Blazed Ridge survey.



***Goat observed in the Bumping River Unit.***



*Eyes In The Woods volunteers (above and below) stand next to recently installed cameras in the Tieton bighorn sheep range.*

**Tieton Bighorn Sheep:** Biologist Bernatowicz and Eyes In The Woods (EITW) volunteers installed two more cameras in the Tieton bighorn sheep range. Unfortunately, communication between the base station and a preferred site (last location of two rams) was weak and sporadic, so no camera was installed. Seven EITW cameras were monitored during the week, with no pictures of sheep obtained. Biologist Bernatowicz also contacted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) pilot to arrange for a flight with the thermal imaging early next week.



### Wildlife Areas

**Colockum Tarps Fire and Floods:** Heavy rains have caused several rockslides on the Colockum Wildlife Area. The North Fork Tarpiscan Road is blocked by two slides that will have to be cleared by equipment. Mudslides and washouts have made access on the Tarpiscan road south of the wildlife area headquarters difficult, including the private access to the Carr/Harden inholding.

Forester Kuehn spent a day with Division Manager Sprague and Regional Program Manager Clausing looking at timber impacts from the Colockum/Tarps Fire. Assistant Wildlife Area

Manager Hagen spent another day with Kuehn continuing the survey. Early estimates are that there may be as much as 10-15 million board feet available for salvage. There may also be opportunities to thin unburned stands as well, taking advantage of equipment being onsite.



*Above: North Fork Tarpiscan Road blocked by rockslide. Below: Burned WDFW timber in the Little Brushy Creek area.*



## **REGION 4**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**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. Tracking activity this week has resulted in finding pigeons dispersing from known nesting and feeding areas and beginning their migrations. Another transmitter has become inactive and plans are made to recover the transmitter next week. Several pigeons that have disappeared from the survey areas and have been undetectable for weeks via air or ground have returned to their nesting areas. Pigeon activities began to change around mid-August and patterns of behavior are still evolving.

**Waterfowl Trapping and Banding:** Biologist DeBruyn continued 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 30 mallards at one site, but the other two were not productive for a number of reasons.

**American Pika Lowland Survey:** Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued surveys for American Pika at a low-elevation naval installation in the Cascade foothills when Navy activity permitted. Surveys were completed on the remaining habitat patches within the survey area, with no further detections. Follow-up surveys were conducted in areas of previous detections and Pikas were again detected, with the strong possibility of two separate individuals detected. While the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) declined to list the American Pika under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), it was determined that climate change was the leading likely cause of Pika population reductions in other parts of the country. With increasing temperatures, low elevation populations while rare, may be at increased risk in the future.

**Tufted Puffin Status Review:** Assistant District Biologist Cyra began reviewing the draft Tufted Puffin Status Review for internal comments.

**WDFW Wolf Update Web Video conference:** Assistant District Biologist Cyra reviewed the recent Web conference hosted by the Wildlife Program on Wolves and Big Game featuring Wildlife Managers from Idaho and Montana.

**State Listed Common Loon Efforts:** Biologist Anderson and Smith checked on the active territory at Calligan Lake. The territorial pair was observed and continues to exhibit behavior indicative of care for chicks and territoriality; oddly, for this late in the season. However, the suspected chick from earlier nesting activities would be approximately 11 weeks old and visible on the lake. We suspect this chick may have been predated. It is possible the pair has attempted an additional late brood and is keeping a young one under close wraps in cover, based on behavior of adults. Further efforts to ascertain if the pair is attempting a late nest will be attempted as time permits.

**Osprey Management:** Biologist Anderson worked with ATT representatives and USFWS to remedy a nest removal need near the SODO Sound Transit Light Rail hub.

**Bat Monitoring:** Biologist Anderson assisted Bats Northwest volunteers in monitoring bats at the long-term Bat Grid site at Swamp Creek near Snoqualmie Pass. This effort is in line with the WDFW Bat Management Plan. It was an opportunity to keep area volunteers and Anderson up on handling and identification of bats, while continuing to collect data at this site. Multiple bats were caught. Anderson also set up an automated acoustic monitor in the area, per protocol. Upon walking out of the forest, there were some fresh ice and voices in the area who would not show themselves when asked to by Anderson. Seeing as this equipment is about \$2,000, essentially worthless to those who don't monitor bats, but nonetheless curious to others and stolen in the past – it was removed to avoid potential loss. Those are the breaks in use of wildlife equipment in heavily populated areas, even up in the mountains.



*Photo by Jen Ross, Bats Northwest*

**Priority Species Survey – Great Blue Herons:** Biologist Anderson worked with a volunteer in regards to reports of new heron nesting activity in District 12.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Skagit Wildlife Area – gate work:** Wildlife Area staff constructed and placed two gates at the Samish River Unit. The gates are part of the Restoration Project.

**Skagit Wildlife Area – reed canary grass control:** Natural Resources Technician (NRT) Curran Cosgrove sprayed herbicides on the Firemen's 2 and 3 fields on the Island Unit to control reed canary grass, cattail and alders.

**Skagit Wildlife Area – Wildlife Crop work:** Natural Resources Specialist (NRS) Greg Meis and NRT Curran Cosgrove monitored crop conditions at the Samish, Island and Johnson/Debay's Swan Reserve units.

**Skagit Wildlife Area – Fir Island Farm Final Design Project:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Planner Williams and The Nature Conservancy staff met to review a preliminary draft and continue developing on the project Adaptive Management Plan.

**Snoqualmie Wildlife Area – Ebey Island Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm installed a steel bollard to the north of the West Lobe parking area. This will allow access to the parking area off of Home Acres Road, which is currently blocked by three bollards. Washington State Department of Transportation approved the installation and will remove the three bollards that block the WDFW parking area entrance. Additionally, at the east parking lot under the Highway 2 trestle, Manager Boehm noted that vandals destroyed the recently replaced “Discover Pass Required” sign. Manager Boehm also removed a load of rubbish that someone dumped in the parking area.

**Snoqualmie Wildlife Area – Stillwater Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continued the invasive weed management plan at the Stillwater Wildlife Area this past week. Manager Boehm was joined by three staff members from the WDFW Noxious Weed Program to treat approximately 1.5 acres of knotweed with backpack sprayers and herbicide. A large patch has been growing under the forest canopy along the Snoqualmie River. Additional treatment will be required to eradicate this patch, which covers approximately 2.5 acres.

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Game Management Unit (GMU) 418 Elk Hunt Coordination:** Biologist Danilson and Conflict Specialist Griffith made contact with antlerless elk tag holders to direct them to areas and landowners where there are current ongoing conflicts with elk. All but four or the five permit holders were contacted. It is the first year that this area has been open to these tag holders and Wildlife Program and Enforcement personnel are encouraging hunters to harvest bulls in this area.

**Snipe Breeding Surveys:** Assistant District Biologist Cyra assisted Biologist Anderson with preparing data and documents for use in the final report on Snipe in Region 4.

**Wildlife Areas**

**Skagit Wildlife Area – purple loosestrife control:** The North Sound Weed Crew sprayed herbicides and cut seed heads of purple loosestrife plants within the Wiley Slough Restoration area and on the Island Unit.

**Skagit Acquisition Team:** The team began outreach to stakeholders and potential partner groups on a proposal that involves replacing waterfowl forage and recreational hunting lands that are displaced by estuary restoration projects in the Skagit Delta.

**Whatcom Wildlife Area – Intalco Archery Range 3D Shoot:** The Custer Sportsmen’s Club hosted the last 3D Archery Shoot of the summer on the Intalco Unit. The two day event was well attended by about 70 participants. The archery range will be closed for the fall and winter starting August 31 and will re-open in March.



***Intalco Archery Range 3D Shoot***

**Whatcom Wildlife Area – First Annual Run With The Chums Fun Run:** Manager Kessler coordinated with the Whatcom Conservation District manager planning the first annual “Run With The Chums” Fun Run to be held on the Intalco Unit on September 7.

**Snoqualmie Wildlife Area – Lands 20/20 Applications:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw met with Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Boehm and Lands Agent Iris to plan next steps for developing a Lands 20/20 Application to acquire a property that improves access to the Ebey Island property. Staff will work together to complete an application by September 4.

### **Private Lands/Access**

**Blind Building Supplies:** Purchased various supplies needed for upcoming blind building projects and delivered back to shop.

**Debay Slough Tour:** Visited Debay Slough swan reserve site with staff from Skagit Wildlife Area and District 14. The tour was to establish locations for potential public waterfowl blinds for the 2013/14 season.

**Organize Shop and Trucks:** Tech Deyo and Otto cleaned and organized the shop area for the upcoming busy season. They also inventoried truck equipment and supplies along with organizing truck tool boxes.

***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:** All hands from District 14 (i.e., Danilson, DeBruyn, and Griffith), as well as Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Regional Wildlife Program Manager Link prepared for and attended the first meeting of the North Cascades Elk Management Group on the evening of August 22. In addition to the 30 or so Work Group members, about another 50 members of the public also attended the meeting. Danilson also spent much of the week coordinating with Mill Creek and Olympia staff regarding responses to a letter from the public about elk issues and follow up from the August 22 meeting.

**Spotted Owl Report:** Biologist Anderson received a credible report of spotted owl in an area where they are known to exist. Anderson passed the reporting party along to representatives with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and WDFW data management. DNR will follow-up on this report since WDFW does not survey for spotted owls. Depending on where the sighting is, a timber private consulting biologist may be the follow-up. It was appreciated that this information was passed along as it may be a good lead for those who manage this species on the ground.

**Urban Wildlife Interview:** Biologist Anderson was interviewed about urban wildlife for the local Seattle paper, The Stranger. Anderson discussed what urban wildlife deal with in general in the “concrete jungle,” promoted some area Seattle sites to see urban wildlife (our native band-tailed pigeons in particular), and answered questions about the non-native rock pigeon – a common city wild animal that many enjoy, or spend quite a bit of money to haze away...the front cover article ran last week.

**Wildlife Conflict – Elk Damage:** Specialist Griffith responded to six landowners in Skagit County who are experiencing elk damage. Griffith issued a few permits and discussed modifications to existing fences to minimize damages caused by elk crossing them.

Griffith met with a landowner in the Day Creek Area in response to a letter they had sent to Director Anderson. Griffith documented the interaction and provided that documentation to leadership. Griffith continues to work with this landowner by issuing permits and attempting to work with him to begin the process to filing a damage claim. Griffith continues to discuss fencing options and the landowner continues to reject them. Griffith will be spending more time in the Day Creek area to get a better count of herd numbers/composition and haze elk.

Griffith attended two teleconference meetings, one wolf related and the other conflict related. The conflict meeting was centered on information sharing, equipment needs, and planning the agenda for the September 11 conflict training at a location to be determined in Ellensburg.

**Wildlife Conflict – Carnation Area Elk Damage:** Biologist Smith met with Officers Capelli and Stevens and landowners to inspect agricultural fields in the Carnation area for elk damage.

Landowners were given suggestions on actions they may take to help minimize future damage to crops.

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

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Skagit Wildlife Area – Samish River Unit – Welts Wetland Restoration Project:** Project Coordinator Brokaw responded to questions regarding the upcoming public Open House on August 28 from 6:30–8:00 p.m. at the Braezeale Padilla Bay Reserve large meeting room. Details on the Open House can be found at [http://www.goskagit.com/calendar/public\\_meetings/samish-river-unit---welts-property-wetland-restoration-project/event\\_6bea0b72-0042-11e3-9afa-101f742cecf.html](http://www.goskagit.com/calendar/public_meetings/samish-river-unit---welts-property-wetland-restoration-project/event_6bea0b72-0042-11e3-9afa-101f742cecf.html).

### **Private Lands/Access**

**2014 Barley Order:** Tech Otto contacted and met with a local seed grower checking on availability for 2014 barley seed. Otto will follow up this week with a confirmation with an OPF form for purchase.

**Field Mowing:** Tech Otto mowed vegetation at four quality hunt site fields in Skagit County.

**Whidbey Island Diversity Viewing site:** Tech Otto responded to calls inquiring about this new viewing site. Otto will follow up this week with emails. This site is becoming quite popular and is receiving increased use from locals along with individuals from King, Snohomish and Skagit counties.

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

### **Wildlife Management**

**North, Central, and South District Inter-program Team Meeting:** All appropriate Region 4 Wildlife Program staff attended north, central, and south inter-program meetings per their assigned work areas. Staff met with people from the Habitat, Fish and Enforcement Programs to explore areas where we could be served by better communication between programs. Many areas of common interest were discussed and a framework of an annual meeting (or more if needed) was agreed upon.

**Wildlife Conflict Vehicle and Equipment Outfitting:** Biologist Danilson continued to work on getting the new vehicle for Wildlife Conflict Specialist Griffith set up for his needs. Currently, this involves working with Information Technology staff to address the needs for a printer for issuing permits while in the field.

**Radio Training:** Assistant District Biologist Cyra assisted several staff in providing instruction on radio training, radio use requirements, and assigning radio call numbers.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Snoqualmie Wildlife Area:** Manager Brian Boehm distributed a task list and request for local volunteers to assist with field work that is needed to be completed for this coming hunting season. Through numerous Citizen Advisory Group meetings targeting specific user groups, Manager Boehm explained that volunteer labor needs to be a part of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager's "tool box." Manager Boehm was pleased to hear from four different groups or individuals so far, who are interested in volunteering at the Wildlife Areas.

## **REGION 5**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**



**Non-native Tortoise:** An unusual red foot tortoise was observed and photographed by a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) fisheries biologist at the mouth of the Klickitat River. Biologist Anderson conducted a follow-up site visit to attempt to locate and capture the animal as it's not considered native wildlife in Washington. It was most likely someone's pet and they decided to release it in the wild. The animal appeared to be healthy and hopefully we can relocate it again and bring it in to captivity.

**Pacific Flyway Winter Shorebird Survey:** Biologist Bergh met with Khara Strum of Point Blue Conservation Science (formerly PRBO) and Julia Butler Hansen National Wildlife Refuge Biologist Paul Meyers to discuss a winter survey for shorebirds on the lower Columbia River. These winter shorebird surveys are coordinated by Point Blue and currently cover habitat in California. The surveys are now being expanded to include potential habitat in Oregon and Washington. A one-day effort in November or December will attempt to count and classify shorebirds and their habitat along the shore and on islands in the lower Columbia River. Volunteers with experience in shorebird identification are needed and are encouraged to contact Point Blue: <http://www.migratoryshorebirdproject.org/>.

**South Rainier Elk Herd Survey:** Biologists Bergh and George joined Deer and Elk Specialist

McCorquodale for the annual South Rainier Elk Herd aerial survey. The survey focuses on the summer range of this herd that is within Mount Rainier National Park and is conducted cooperatively with the National Park Service and the Puyallup Tribe of Indians. Raw counts and classification of elk is done in the air along with collection of covariates such



as lighting, cover type, and vegetation obstruction. These covariates are used in the sightability portion of the model, which also includes a double-observer component. This model will take the raw counts and correct them for elk that may have been missed to provide an estimate of the number of elk in the survey area.



*South Rainier elk herd high elevation summer range.*

**Mountain Goat Survey:** Biologists Bergh and Stephens joined Section Manager Harris for the annual Goat Rocks area mountain goat aerial survey. This survey is comprised of seven survey units that cover the Goat Rocks/Teton River hunt area. A raw count of 308 mountain goats was seen. The raw count, along with covariates such as vegetative obstruction and terrain obstruction, will be entered into a sightability model to come up with a



*Mountain goat group with nannies and kids*

corrected estimate of the number of goats in the survey boundary. Despite smoke from the Conrad Lake fire to the east, the weather was good and the survey went well.

## Wildlife Areas



**Klickitat Wildlife Area:** A nest box at the Klickitat Wildlife Area Headquarters is home to a family of Douglas squirrels. The female has been foraging near the Klickitat Wildlife Area office frequently, but until this week Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven didn't know where the nest was. The young are now old enough to venture out to explore.

The nest box was built and installed by Bob Davies, a WDFW project worker who specializes in eagle and hawk research.

*Douglas squirrel kits*

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Klickitat/Skamania counties:** Biologist Anderson has been getting an increasing number of phone calls from hunters getting ready for the upcoming hunting seasons. Most calls to date have been about our knowledge of elk herds for early archery. Most hunters are interested in hunting those portions of Game Management Units (GMUs) 560 and 572 primarily in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

**Private Lands/Access**

**St. Helens Land Access Program Orientation:** Biologist Stephens and Technician Sample conducted a mandatory orientation in Olympia for individuals interested in participating in the St. Helens Land Access Program. Two more orientations are scheduled this year, one in Vancouver on September 25, 2013, and another in Longview on October 24, 2013. Details about the program can be found at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/news/aug1413a/>. Volunteers can sign up for an orientation or for dates to volunteer at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/about/volunteer/sainthelens/>.

**REGION 6**

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

**Wildlife Management**

**North Rainier Elk Survey:** Biologists Tirhi, Schmidt and Hoenes conducted the North Rainier Elk sunset survey for 2014. Weather and flight conditions were excellent. The survey was successful with high numbers of branched bulls, cows and high calf ratios suggesting that the health of the North Herd continues to improve.



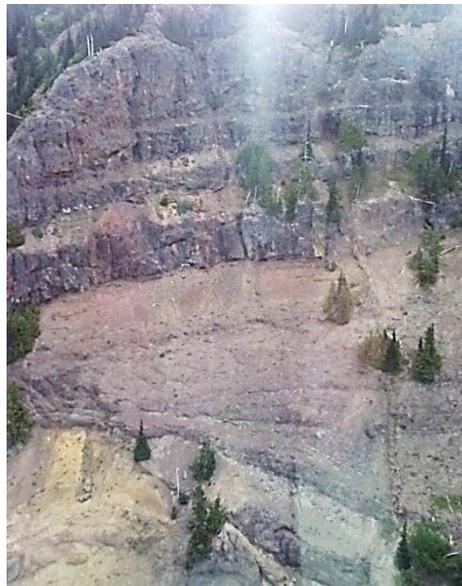
***Branched antler bulls from the air, North Rainier Elk Herd Survey***



*Group of elk from the air, North Rainier Elk Herd Survey*

**Mountain Goat:**

Biologists Tirhi and Moore conducted the Norse Peak/Fifes Peak Mountain Goat helicopter survey for 2014. Survey conditions were excellent for this sunrise survey with the following results:  
158 goats total  
broken down as  
Fife's East (60)  
Fife's Peak (23)  
Union Creek (0)  
Gold Hill (0) Norse  
Peak (48) Castle Mt.



*Goat Country from the air.*

(26) and Raven's Roost (1). The Muckleshoot Indian Tribe contributed funding towards the flights in co-management collaboration.

Tirhi had arranged the helicopter reservation with NW Helicopters to maximize use with minimal taxi charges as follows:

- 8/19 – am goat survey Norse Peak/Fifes Peak area/Bumping; pm elk survey North Rainier Herd
- 8/20 – am goat survey Norse Peak/Fifes Peak area/Bumping; pm backup elk survey North Herd
- 8/21 – am goat survey Norse Peak/Fifes Peak area/Bumping; pm elk survey South Rainier Herd
- 8/22 – goat survey South Rainier area; pm backup for South Rainier Elk Herd Survey

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Wildlife Conflict:** Biologist Harris fielded multiple calls regarding deer and elk issues. The most challenging issue was the report in the Wynoochee Valley. Biologist Harris contacted the farmer, discussed their issues, and suggested that they work together to minimize the problem. The landowner agreed. Thus starts what is expected to be multi-year project in understanding the landowner issues in the valley and understanding the dynamics of the multiple groups of elk.

**Wildlife Conflict – Willapa Valley:** Master Hunters (MH) with designated permits maintained an almost constant presence on the problem areas in the Willapa Valley. One more adult non-lactating cow elk was harvested. MH reported that she had a severe limp. When it was looked at, it was determined that there was no hoof deformity. The cow elk had apparently had the misfortune of stepping too close to a porcupine. She had a large number of quills as proof. Another hunter has been deployed. Landowner is happy and feels the Department is trying to help him. Landowner is also happy at the performance of the Master Hunters. The landowner stated that the hunters assigned to the effort are really trying. This is a drastic improvement from his original comments. This shows how important WDFW staff involvement in the process puts the MH in a better position to meet landowner expectations.

**Wildlife Conflict – Skookumchuck:** Biologist Harris received a call from one of the largest landowners involved in recent elk hazing efforts. Apparently the elk have been back, but it's the large flock of geese that have been hanging around that are causing most of the damage. He stated he was not that concerned with the geese as before he had elk and geese camped out in his fields. When he inspected the fields he was shocked to find that the geese had helped themselves to a lot of his forage. He called to request further assistance from Master Hunters with a goose issue. Yes, that is correct. A landowner called to request Master Hunters. Biologist Harris contacted the team lead for the project, which quickly sent out a request to haze geese. MH's have been hazing geese regularly and the goose hunters in the group are planning on switching to a more aggressive form of hazing once goose season opens. As for the elk they are occasionally using the fields. They do not stay long and the landowner feels that the amount of use is acceptable. We will address with MH permits once they decide to move back for long term visits.