Wildlife Program
Week of August 26-September 1, 2013

REGION 1

Wolf Management

District 1: Assistant District Wildlife Biologist (ADWB) Prince and Conflict Specialist Shepherd checked self-activated cameras deployed within Game Management Unit (GMU) 105 (the Wedge) and within GMU 101 (Ferry County). Cameras were mainly deployed for the detection and documentation of wolves. Animals “captured” on the cameras included black bear, bobcat, mule deer, white-tailed deer, forest grouse, and turkey.

Specialist Shepherd, Regional Director Pozzanghera, Sergeant Taylor, and Wolf Biologist Becker attended the Stevens County Commissioners monthly meeting to discuss wolf issues. 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 discussed range riding and wolf observations with federal grazing allotment permit operators within the Smackout wolf territory.

Specialist Shepherd and Officer Anderson discussed an article concerning wolf management in northeastern Washington with the editor of the Colville Statesman Newspaper. Specialist Shepherd discussed several issues with regional and state level department employees such as range rider training, payments, and technological assistance.

District 3: Biologists Wik and Vekasy collected trail cameras prior to the opening of hunting season. A good variety of wildlife was detected, including bull elk, elk cows and calves, deer, black bear, cougar and a flying squirrel. Also found a cougar-killed elk calf near one of the cameras. No wolves detected on cameras all spring or summer. Conflict Specialist Rasley received three newly signed Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement–Livestock (DPCAL) contracts. The contracts consisted of one landowner in Asotin County and two landowners in Walla Walla County.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Pre-Season Deer Surveys District 1: District biological staff completed this year’s deer classification counts for the month of August. Both standardized and traditional transects were accomplished within GMU’s 101, 105, 108, 111, 113, 117, and 121. Altogether 20 standardized deer transects were surveyed which included the 6 traditional “long-term” transects that have been run consistently since 2003. Surveys will continue next month (September), however, on fewer transects than in August, and count results will be compiled and compared with previous years.
White-tailed deer observed on traditional transects in August surveys within District 1, 2003-2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transect Name</th>
<th>Length, miles</th>
<th>Mean (for 2003-2011)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flat Creek</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep Creek</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clayton</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunn Mountain</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy - Maud</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Miles:       | 73.1          |
| Total White-tails: | 717 767 660 804 694 641 471 462 379 502 431 622 |
| Average Total:     | 120 128 110 134 116 107 79 77 63 84 72 104 |
| Mean per mile:     | 9.8 10.5 9.0 11.0 9.5 8.8 6.4 6.3 5.2 6.9 5.9 8.5 |

White-tailed doe and fawn (left) and mule deer buck (right) from pre-season deer surveys.

District 2 Preseason Deer Composition Surveys:
Biologist Atamian completed the Union Creek and the Crab Creek deer survey routes for August. Buck numbers were high on the Union Creek route and were extremely high on the Crab Creek route (more bucks than does). Fawn numbers look good for mule deer and white-tails.
Blue Mountains Deer Surveys: Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Vekasy continued with deer surveys across the western side of the District. To date, 17 routes have been counted District-wide, with a total of 1,683 deer classified, 1,050 Mule Deer and 634 White-tailed Deer. Total fawn:doe:buck ratios were 37:100:38 for Mule Deer and 33:100:37 for White-tailed Deer. Fawn ratios are typically low this time of year, as some are still difficult to detect, and hopefully will improve during September surveys. Buck numbers are looking good for the upcoming season, with many legal bucks being sighted.

Wildlife Areas

Chief Joseph Wildlife Area – Grande Ronde Fire: A storm passing through last Thursday afternoon and a lightning strike sparked a fire in a remote section of land between the Grande Ronde River and Joseph Creek Canyon known as Black Butte. Land ownership in this area is predominantly Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), and private. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) made the call early on that the only way to fight this fire was aerially due to no public road access and very steep terrain. Although the fire did not start on state lands, DNR also made the call that it was threatening state lands so that they can proceed with control action. Not wanting this to turn into another Cache Creek incident they requested heavy resources early in the game which were approved. They requested two helitac units which were dumping water by early Friday morning and some fixed wing retardant drops.
As of Friday afternoon the Incident Commander (IC) was close to having the fire contained and he estimated the burned area size at 1,300 acres. Hand crews spent the weekend verifying and securing the burn area and extinguishing any internal hot spots. Of these 1,300 acres less than 500 acres of state land burned with the other portion being BLM and private.

A map of the burned area – Biologist Woodall.

WT Wooten Wildlife Area – Rock Dam: Assistant Wildlife Area Manager (AWAM) Dingman found a rock dam across the Tucannon River near the Cow Camp Bridge. Someone put a lot of effort into building the dam, as there were logs and rocks in it to create some deeper water for the campers. AWAM Dingman was able to knock the top layer of the dam down and open some holes in it to allow water to flow and fish to move upstream.

Rock dam found across the Tucannon River near Cow Camp Bridge
GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL EXPERIENCES

Private Lands/Access

Hunt by Reservation: Private Lands Supervisor McCanna was interviewed by Rich Landers, outdoor writer for Spokesman Review, on the Hunt by Reservation program. McCanna received seven phone calls from hunters inquiring about open dates for different hunting seasons and the process of the online system. McCanna explained to the hunters that this is a quality opportunity and rest periods are built into the overall hunting seasons to insure all species hunted will be present during a hunt. McCanna also explained hunters will only be able to make reservations three weeks in advance and can cancel reservations at the latest one week prior to the hunt. McCanna discussed with hunters they may only have three reservations at one time. After the first hunt is over, hunters will be able to register for one additional hunt.

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

Horse injury misreported as a possible Cougar Attack: Conflict Specialist Rasley and Officer McQuary received a phone call from a lady regarding a possible cougar attack on a horse. After completing the investigation it was clear the horse had been kicked by another horse over the past two days and had sustained injuries from some wire fencing. The owner of the horse took some convincing, but we were finally able to convince her with what really happened.

Left: Horse kicked by another horse. Right: Wire fence damage.

REGION 2

None
REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Duck Trapping: Trapping continued at two locations on the Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area. Three traps captured 166 ducks. Of these, 165 were mallards and one was a wood duck. There were 109 new ducks banded and 57 were previously banded. So far, a total of 331 ducks have been captured this year. One final day of trapping is planned for next week.

Tieton Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Bernatowicz organized another effort in the Tieton to find the remaining sheep. A total of 12 observers (Wildlife Program, Enforcement, contract hunters, and Eyes In The Woods volunteers) were stationed throughout the Tieton canyon at sunrise as Sergeant Grant flew with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in a plane equipped with FLIR. A shipment of urine soaked shavings was received from Washington State University (WSU), packaged in mesh bags and hiked into camera stations with the help of a contract hunter. At least one contract hunter was out most days of the week, often camping and observing sunrise/sunset. Cameras were also monitored all week. Despite the significant effort, no bighorn sheep or sign was observed.

Deer and Elk Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand responded to a deer damage complaint from an orchardist in North Franklin County. Approximately 20+ deer are browsing and raking on the newly planted cherry trees even as multiple non-lethal were implemented. Active hazing with workers patrolling on ATV, LP gas cannons, and guard dogs worked well initially, but lately provided only minimal results. A DPCA contract has been signed and two DPP permits have been issued.
**Hanford:** Biologist Gregory met with biologists from the Hanford site for a tour. This was an initial orientation and many wildlife issues were discussed.

*An underground reservoir at Hanford has been converted to a roosting site for bats.*

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Wenas Wildlife Area:** Manager Confer Morris and Regional Director Livingston met with County Commissioner Gary Berndt to discuss target shooting issues and potential solutions on the Wenas Wildlife Area. Commissioner Berndt was supportive and provided several thoughts on proceeding forward.

**REGION 4**

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

**Wildlife Management**

**2012 Oregon Spotted Frog Surveys Final Report:** Biologist Danilson completed a draft final report for the Oregon spotted frog survey project. The surveys were conducted in March and April of this year. Danilson summarized data, prepared maps, tables, and figures, and drafted the text for the report which will be circulated for review prior to being submitted to the USFWS, which funded the work.

**Bald Eagle and Osprey Conflict Management:** Biologist Anderson coordinated with property owners and USFWS regarding conflict nesting and disturbance needs regarding eagle and osprey occurrences.
Jim Creek Pika Project: Biologist Milner attended a presentation by Dr. Erik Beever at the USFWS office in Portland, Oregon on research on low level pika populations in the Columbia River Gorge. These populations are believed to be the lowest elevation sites in the species range, with some sites as low as 125 meters. After the formal presentation, Milner discussed ideas about the Jim Creek pika project with the researchers working in the Gorge.

Biologists Milner and Cyra conducted a pika survey at Jim Creek. No animals were seen, but one was heard vocalizing below ground in an area that was previously documented this summer.

Sick black-tailed deer: Biologist Anderson received two reports of sick and dying black-tailed deer in Redmond – all in the same area. Anderson and State Wildlife Veterinarian Kristin Mansfield responded to the reporting party outlining that in localized situations like this it is often inappropriate feeding of deer and resulting effects to their digestive system, parasites or other common illnesses. Please don’t feed deer corn or other large amounts of unnatural food in big pushes. These animals can’t switch to one diet that quickly and often it results in death. It is best to provide natural plantings to support their populations and keep them spread out in a natural manner to observe their natural behavior. Anderson is in touch with the reporting parties to keep tabs on if visibly ill deer start to show elsewhere outside the immediate area.

Wildlife Areas

Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project: The WDFW cross-program District Review Team met to update each other on current status and plan next steps for the project. The team reviewed a draft communications and outreach plan, and made a list of tasks to be completed prior to hosting a public meeting. The team will begin completing those tasks immediately, including contacting groups known to be interested in the project, updating the WDFW Leque Island webpage with project-related materials, and planning details for the first public meeting.

Lake Terrell Dam: Manager Kessler checked the Lake Terrell dam to make sure there is continued flow into Terrell Creek. The beavers have not yet rebuilt their dam on Terrell Creek.

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm completed the installation of 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 (WSDOT) approved the installation and will remove the three bollards that block the WDFW parking area entrance.

Additionally, Manager Boehm met with the grazing leaseholder, Everett Alexander, to discuss the upcoming hunting season, changes to parking access areas, and plans for the removal of the cattle at the end of the grazing lease which is September 15.

**Crescent Lake Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm worked with agricultural leaseholder Werkhoven Dairy to discuss harvest plans for the corn that was planted on the unit. The crop is ready to harvest, which should be completed prior to the upcoming pheasant and waterfowl hunting season.

**Cherry Valley Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reported a theft had occurred on the unit to Region 4 Administration and Enforcement staff. The tractor mower had broken down in the field earlier in the week. Manager Boehm left some wrenches, and replacement parts with the tractor to complete repairs the following day. When Manager Boehm returned to the unit, the tools and parts were missing.

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

**Wildlife Management**

**GMU 418 Elk Hunt Coordination:** Biologist Danilson continued to provide guidance and direction to tag holders who were drawn for the antlerless elk hunt in Elk Area 4941. District 14 staff is coordinating closely with all hunters who can hunt in Elk Area 4941 to direct them to areas and landowners where there are current ongoing conflicts with elk.

**Waterfowl Trapping and Banding:** Biologist DeBruyn continued trapping mallards as part of the western flyway modeling work. Low water levels forced DeBruyn to establish two new trap sites closer to the permanent ponds where resident ducks are hanging out. Both new trap sites were successful over the Labor Day weekend. DeBruyn has trapped over sixty ducks this season, but the dry conditions and predators around the traps have made things difficult.

**Band-Tailed Pigeon Study:** Biologist S. Anderson finished out his project employment documenting areas used by pigeons with radio transmitters. Biologist DeBruyn visited some nest sites and a potential mineral spring that Anderson discovered in the course of the study. Anderson also completed a report on the results of the study.

**Private Lands Access Program:** Biologist Milner reviewed existing contracts and began developing renewals for expired contracts that will continue in 2013/2014.

**North Cascades Elk Management Group:** Wildlife Program staff drafted letters to the North Cascades Elk Management Work Group and volunteers for the Damage Committee to outline next steps for the group, including upcoming meeting dates. The Damage Committee will meet on September 10 and the Work Group will meet on September 26.
Region 4 Fire Hunt Access Restriction Needs: Biologist Anderson worked with Region 4 Wildlife Staff to compile a Regional Fire Hunt Access Restriction spreadsheet. This will be used for regional staff to update known fire restrictions that may affect hunt areas, as well as work with Olympia to provide hunt alternatives, etc.

2015-2021 Game Management Plan – Initial District Comments: Biologists Anderson and Smith worked together to submit initial issues and changes that they felt should be addressed in the 2015-2021 WDFW Game Management Plan. This is a very early stage and comments, ideas, and direction will surely develop as more discussion is had amongst regional peers and section leaders.

2013 District 12 Hunts: All district biologists continue to respond to hunt inquiries regarding this 2013 season.

Wildlife Areas

Skagit Acquisition Team: The Skagit Acquisition Team has completed a draft Lands 20/20 application to request internal approval to pursue outside funding opportunities for acquisition of waterfowl hunting lands in the Skagit Delta. The application is currently under regional review and the team is continuing outreach until submittal on September 16.

Ebey Island Acquisition: Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Lands Agent Iris, and Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Boehm continued to work on a Lands 20/20 application for acquisition of a property that would improve public access to the Ebey Island Unit. The team will have a complete draft done this week that will go under regional review next week prior to submittal on September 16.

Tennant Lake Hunting Blinds: Manager Kessler coordinated with a Master Hunter who completed work on one of the Tennant Lake hunting blinds. He will be using the blind on opening day of the waterfowl season.

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.

British Petroleum (BP) Farming: Manager Kessler coordinated with the farmers’ haying fields on the BP Unit. He advised them on the best way to mow the fields to provide cover for pheasants in the release areas.

Wildlife Area Reader Boards: Manager Kessler updated the reader board with hunting and access information for this year’s hunting seasons. The new maps and information will be posted this week.

Nooksack Unit Dike Mowing: Manager Kessler mowed the dike top trail on the Nooksack Unit. He also mowed hunting access trails on the unit.
Skagit Agricultural Enhancement and Lease Program -- Island Unit: Natural Resources Specialist (NRS), Greg Meis disked the Barn and Fireman’s fields at the south end of the Island. Natural Resources Technician (NRT), Curran Cosgrove coordinated and assisted volunteers with a ferry operation to move spray equipment and a tractor off the Island. NRT Cosgrove removed downed alder and cottonwood trees from dike tops and field roads.

Manager Belinda Rotton continues to coordinate and provide information to the Skagit County Planning Office and the Army Corp of Engineers regarding the permit request for the Ditch Maintenance Project on the Island Unit.

Skagit Agricultural Enhancement and Lease Program -- Samish Unit: Manager Rotton and NRT Cosgrove monitored crop and field conditions on the Samish Unit. NRT Cosgrove installed hunting season signs on this and other units. NRS Meis coordinated with Washington Waterfowl Representative Art Kendall about the installation of shell receptacles and additional blind improvements prior to the hunting season.

DeBay Slough: Manager Rotton talked in more detail with Trumpeter Swan Society representative Martha Jordon regarding the proposal for access improvements and previous management history.

Private Lands/Access

Bow Hill Pheasant: Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo cleared and sprayed vegetation at the parking area preparing the site for a boundary fence installation.


Natural Resource Technician (NRT) Brad Otto mowed vegetation at two quality hunt sites while NRT Chad Deyo concealed the blinds with vegetation.
Natural Resource Technician (NRT) Brad Otto mowed vegetation at two quality hunt sites while NRT Chad Deyo concealed the blinds with vegetation.

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) prepared for and attended the first meeting of the North Cascades Elk Management Group on the evening of August 22 that was led by Program Manager Russell Link. In addition to the 30 or so work group members, about another 70 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 letters from the public about elk issues and follow-up from the August 22 meeting.

Wildlife Conflicts: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Griffith spent the entirety of the week responding to elk complaints in the Skagit River area. Griffith conducted two new damage investigations and issued three Landowner Damage Prevention Permits in conjunction with signed Damage Prevention Agreements. Following last week’s North Cascades Elk Management Work Group meeting, Griffith continued to work daily with five particular landowners in the Day Creek area in response to elk damage. Over the past couple of weeks a number of permitted hunters were successful in harvesting cow elk and the Day Creek landowners reported to Griffith that the elk have not been seen at all this week. Hunting pressure will be continual in this area as many public draw hunters have secured permission to hunt some of these properties. In addition, Tribal hunters and individual landowners still have unfilled antlerless permits.
**General Wildlife Conflict Assistance:** Biologist Anderson provided specific advice to citizens regarding bat colony issues and raccoon habituation, inappropriate feeding and resulting issues. Anderson referred parties to the Living with Wildlife website and also proposed the raccoon issue reporting party to discuss rat infestation (due to raccoon feeding) issues with their local city. Information on Living with Wildlife is available at [http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/species/](http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/species/).

**Westside Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary:** Biologist Anderson worked with Customer Service Specialist Wilson to provide for 86 requests that had been missed by National Wildlife Federation (NWF) due to data issues. Anderson collaborated with NWF and Wilson to ensure customers received their registration materials.

**Wildlife Areas**

**Samish River Unit -- Welts Wetland Restoration Project:** Project Coordinator Brokaw, Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton, and Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) staff hosted a public Open House for the Samish River Unit Wetland Restoration Project. Staff presented information about the project, collected contact information for people who would like to receive project updates, and answered questions. Approximately 25 local residents attended the Open House.

**Snoqualmie Wildlife Area:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm received numerous calls and emails in response to the request for volunteers that he sent out the previous week. Hunters, neighbors and families have chosen tasks and Wildlife Units they would like to work on in preparation for the upcoming hunting season. Manager Boehm will work with the anxious volunteers to coordinate a work schedule.

**Headquarter Unit:** Manager Rotton maintained photo monitored points on the Wiley Slough Restoration project site.

**Samish River Unit:** Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Natural Resource Tech Cosgrove completed the gate installation project on the field entries to the Samish River site.

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Seasonal Swan Technician Recruitment:** Biologist Danilson prepared the Position Description and HR Action Form for the seasonal swan technician position and shared with Section Manager Kraege and Manager Link for their review and approval. As in past years, the term for this position will be for five months, running from November 15, 2013, to March 15, 2014.

**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.

**First Aid Training:** Approximately 25 Region 4 staff attended CPR/First Aid/AED Training provided at the Mill Creek office by WDFW.

**Problem Wildlife Conflict bi-weekly call:** Biologists Anderson and Smith participated in the bi-weekly Regional Program Manager and Conflict staff call. Good discussion was had with all concerning documentation of complaints and permit issuance and where/how to compile such.

**Wetland Ecology and Management training:** Manager Rotton continued coordinating with Waterfowl Program Manager Don Kraege and Dr. Leigh Fredrickson in preparation for the Wetland Ecology and Management training workshop early this fall.

**REGION 5**

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Hoof Deformity:** A team from Region 5 Wildlife Program including Biologists Bergh, George, Hauswald, and Holman and Enforcement Program including Sergeant Weaver and Officers Marthaller and Martin, along with WDFW Veterinarian Mansfield participated in the collection of elk calves. The young elk were needed to provide samples for analysis in an attempt to gain a better understanding of the cause of the hoof deformity problem in elk in southwest Washington. Elk were collected in GMU’s 505 (Mossyrock) and 530 (Ryderwood) from private agricultural lands and industrial forestlands. All the elk were taken in areas where elk have been observed limping or displaying some evidence of hoof disease. Samples were taken from the elk for extensive analysis in a very comprehensive examination. We want to express our appreciation for all the help we received in conducting this complex project including the private landowners who facilitated access to their lands for the collections. We are expectant that this effort will provide further information and insight to the issue of hoof disease in southwest Washington and guide future management efforts. We await the results from this effort to share with the public and sportspeople alike who are very concerned about the limping elk they see. Individuals interested in learning more about the hoof disease condition in western Washington elk, or reporting cases of elk with the condition, should visit the WDFW website at [http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/hoof_disease/](http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/hoof_disease/).

**Western Pond Turtle:** Biologist Anderson met with biologists from the USFWS Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) to discuss western pond turtle management in the Columbia River Gorge. Biologist Hallock, from our Olympia Headquarters, also attended the meeting and provided valuable insight into current population monitoring and disease issues in Washington. The majority of the meeting was devoted to discussing western pond turtle habitat management at Pierce National Wildlife Refuge, a satellite of the Ridgefield complex. Pierce NWR is one of four areas in the Columbia River Gorge supporting a western pond turtle population. The
USFWS has been an important supporter of our project and has committed to assisting WDFW with enhancement of refuge habitat for recovery of the western pond turtle.

**Wildlife Areas**

**Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area -- Hoffstadt Wildlife Unit Field Mowing:** Natural Resource Technician Sample began mowing tall grass and vegetation growth in several fields this week in the Hoffstadt Wildlife Area Unit. Cutting and mulching the tall standing dead grass will promote better regrowth this fall and next spring, providing additional forage for ungulate species. This mowing effort also reduces Himalayan blackberry from resprouting and spreading into the fields. There are four separate fields in this wildlife unit which totals about 20 acres. Several species of wildlife were observed while mowing including a cow elk, a coyote, garter snakes, red-backed voles and numerous insects.

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Shillapoo Wildlife Area -- Watchable Wildlife:** Water birds are beginning to concentrate in the last few areas of open water on the Shillapoo Wildlife Area. Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Loomis recently saw Pied-billed Grebes, Great Blue Herons, Least Sandpipers, Dowitchers, Killdeer, and various waterfowl in the South Unit in a single day. These are the first small flocks of shorebirds Assistant Manager Loomis has noticed this season and a sign that fall migrants should begin arriving. This could be the last opportunity to find juvenile Ospreys being provisioned by parents and returning to nesting platforms. The Ospreys have been fledging their chicks from nesting platforms around Shillapoo and the juveniles will likely stop returning to the platforms soon as parents stop providing food and force juveniles to begin fishing for themselves.
REGION 6

None