

# Wildlife Program

Week of July 8-14, 2013

## **REGION 1**

### **Wolf Management**

**District 1:** Specialist Shepherd finished and submitted a depredation report concerning the Diamond M calf from July 3. The report was submitted to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the Stevens County Cattlemen's Association. Conclusions were not agreed upon. Specialist Shepherd inspected and learned the Tiger Hill grazing allotment with a contract range rider and a retired Forest Service employee who knows the area well. Many groups of cattle were observed and it was agreed they are spread out and isolated and will be difficult to monitor. The radio-collared male from the Smackout pack has recently spent significant time in the area. Specialist Shepherd attended the Wolf Advisory Working Group meeting held in Ellensburg as an observer. Specialist Shepherd deployed a remote camera in the Pinkston Creek area where a wolf was sighted near a residence. Specialist Shepherd retrieved a remote camera in the Addy area where a wolf was sighted near a residence and chased a dog. District Biologist Dana Base provided advice after a sighting of a wolf that came into a citizen's yard near Gillette Lake that was getting "very close" to the homeowner and pet domestic dog.

**District 3:** District Biologist Wik was contacted Saturday evening by Officer Vance, Columbia County, about a reported depredation of two domestic dogs on Saturday morning. The reporting party stated his two dogs were attacked on Skyline Drive at his cabin, with one dog being killed and the other injured. The reporting party stated that the event was captured by his four trail cameras. After investigation by Enforcement in Columbia County and Tri-Cities, it appears this may be false reporting. Enforcement is currently handling this.

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

### **Wildlife Management**

**Loon Banding in Ferry County:** Assistant District Wildlife Biologist (ADWB) Prince assisted with common loon banding on Swan Lake and Long Lake in Ferry County. It was a long but successful night and three chicks were captured and banded (pictures coming soon). Leading the captures was L. Savoy with the BioDiversity Research Institute (BRI) based in Maine. This banding effort was part of a long-term monitoring program led by BRI. Through the monitoring program, we hope to gain information on individual breeding performance, survivorship and mortality, migration patterns, and wintering locations.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Sherman Creek Wildlife Area (SCWA) Weed Control** – Wildlife Area Assistant Manager (WAAM) Daro Palmer discovered some unknown, isolated patches of hawkweed on SCWA last week. Those patches were sprayed this week. This is a non-native species that we don't want

established on SCWA. It is widespread in Stevens and Pend Oreille counties. WAAM Palmer has been hand-pulling hoary alyssum from a problem spot along the Bisbee Mountain Road as new plants bolted and became noticeable. This week Palmer sprayed the core area of the infestation, which was blanketed with hoary alyssum rosettes. Staff also performed spot treatments along roads in the Trout Lake area to prevent weed spread by vehicles.

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Asotin Creek Wildlife Area – Back Country Horsemen (BCH) Kid’s Camp:** Twin Rivers Back Country Horsemen conducted their annual Kid’s Camp this week at the Smoothing Iron buildings. Twenty-three kids participated in this year’s event. BCH did a number of volunteer activities during the week including boundary stock fence maintenance, trail clearing, and tree thinning. On Wednesday, Dice assisted BCH by providing some hay for the horses from WDFW fields at Iron Springs Road.

**Private Lands/Access**

**More Snake River canyon access (Whitman County):** Private Lands Biologist Lewis continued to work with landowners in the Steptoe Canyon area interested in the WDFW Access Programs. There will be at least six new accessible properties that will be either Feel Free to Hunt or Hunt by Reservation that equal approximately 6,000 acres. Lewis has completed contracts for some, working on contracts for others, and there is still one landowner working on what tracts/acres will be included.



***Access property in Steptoe Canyon***



*Access property in Stewart Canyon*

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Wildlife Area Staff assist with nearby wildfire:** On July 11 a neighbor's hay flat northwest of Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area (SLWA) caught on fire while he was running a swather. Wildlife Area Assistant Manager (WAAM) Finch was the first of the three biologists from SLWA to return from Regional meetings in Spokane that afternoon.

As he is also a local fire commissioner, Finch was notified of the event shortly after it was reported to local authorities. Upon his return to SLWA, he suited up and drove SLWA's semi and thousand-gallon tank to the staging site for the local firefighters, filling up some of their brush trucks' water tanks.

The winds were out of the southwest, so SLWA was not in danger, and the fire was contained by about 9 p.m. Preliminary estimates are of 300 or more acres of hay flat and shrub-steppe burned. One downside is that sharp-tailed grouse have been tracked to this area in the past.

## **REGION 2**

**Wolves:** No activity is being reported in the Wenatchee pack. Biologist Becker has been searching areas along the Kittitas and Chelan County borders to no avail.

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Caspian Tern Supplemental Feeding Project:** Biologist Finger and District Fish Biologist Jackson visited the Frenchmen Ponds Project searching for accessible areas to launch a shock boat for future fish sampling. Some accessible launches were found. The shock boat will be used during late-summer to determine relative composition and size class of fish species within the system prior to wintering. Six Caspian terns were observed foraging within the wetland system that now supports a super abundant population of carp fry. It is currently unknown whether planted perch, bluegill, or rainbow trout are still in the system and surviving, but this is something we hope to better understand after some late-summer sampling.

**Twenty-five Mile Fire:** Mop up work is being done on the 25 Mile fire following last week's more intensive efforts. The fire has been mostly contained at 2,098 acres, and is not expected to grow any larger. The fire is thought to have been started by recreationist during a Fourth of July fireworks celebration. U.S. Forest Service (USFS) authorities are actively investigating the fire start and are searching for the persons responsible.

#### **Wildlife Areas**

**Lloyd Ranch Irrigation:** Methow staff met with Lee Hatcher (irrigation engineer) and Rick Lewis (Head Ranger at Pearygin State Park) to discuss modifications and improvements for the irrigation system that serves both Parks and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) property. At present the system must be carefully adjusted to serve both users at the same time, or pressure irregularities will damage the pump and screen. Proposed changes would make the system much more useable for both agencies.

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Bighorn Sheep:** Biologist Gallie conducted a survey on Chelan Butte to assess productivity for the year. As usual, this herd is very cooperative and productive. A total of 110 sheep were observed, 63 ewes, 22 lambs, and 25 rams. About half of the rams were not observed as well as a group of ewes (about 15-20) that has dispersed to the north of the usual herd range was also missed. Due to high temperatures, attempts at surveying the Manson and Swakane herds have been unproductive and will try again as time allows.



*A portion of the Chelan Butte Herd, Chelan County*

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

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Similkameen River weed survey:** Jim spent one day floating the upper Similkameen River through the new Similkameen – Chopaka Wildlife Area with Larry Hudson, Okanogan County weed control, and Craig Tomlinson, commercial pesticide applicator. We mapped and treated locations of Leafy Spurge, a Class A noxious weed, that is beginning to show up along the banks of the river. We located a large patch of Leafy Spurge on DFW land, on an island across the main channel. Scotch Creek staff has already visited the site, treated it and will monitor annually.

### **REGION 3**

None

## **REGION 4**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Snoqualmie Bear Project:** Biologist Smith assisted Bear and Cougar Specialist Beausoleil and Carnivore Specialist Maletzke with bear captures and collaring throughout the week. A total of three bears were collared this week, and nine over this session. This brings the season total to 17 bears (9 female and 8 male) captured on the west side of the state.



***Biologist Smith with a young female bear fitted with a GPS collar on the last day of the Snoqualmie Bear Project.***

**WDFW-BioDiversity Institute-Loon Lake Loon Association-Colville Confederated Tribes Common Loon Capture Effort:** Biologists Anderson (District 12) and Prince (District 1) worked with BioDiversity Research Institute (BRI), Loon Lake Loon Association monitors, U.S. Forest Service college interns (Colville National Forest), Hancock Timber, and Colville Confederated Tribe biologists to capture, band, take blood and other samples, as well as record morphometrics on young of the year and adult state listed Common Loons.

Overall seven birds were captured; six chicks and one adult male. The chicks were captured using a night-time spotlight capture technique that BRI has developed and used over the years for these purposes in collaboration with all of the above entities. Anderson actually led the daytime capture technique since collaborators were unfamiliar with it – as he had been taught it earlier this year by other BRI biologists who have used it up on the North Slope in Alaska for

Yellow-billed Loons. It was used in similar early season, pre-nesting west side efforts which resulted in the Calligan Lake territorial pair being captured and banded, blood taken for analysis, etc. The diurnal technique resulted in the adult territorial male at Ferry Lake being captured. This bird is very light-shy and has not responded to night capture efforts. Collaborative efforts have tried to get this guy for the past 10 years!

Overall, for 2013, nine Common Loons were captured and banded. One unviable egg from a new territory in King County was retained for contaminant analysis. A very successful collaborative effort amongst many entities to mark and monitor this state listed species of greatest conservation need, as well as retain samples for contaminant analysis and deploy geolocation units on select birds to track wintering areas.

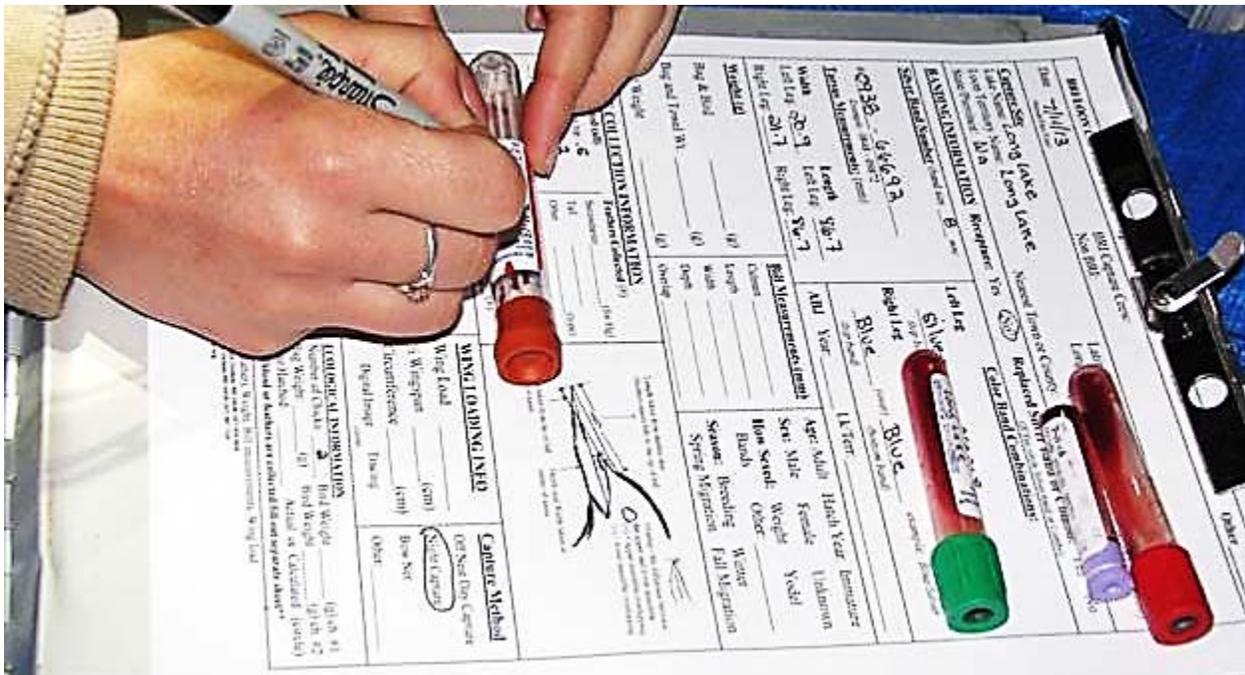


*Above: An unviable egg from a new Common Loon territory in King County was retained for contaminant analysis. Below: A close-up view of the same unviable egg.*





*Above: WDFW-BioDiversity Institute-Loon Lake Loon Association-Colville Confederated Tribes Common Loon Capture Effort. A decoy and two loons are shown here. Below: Blood was taken from six chicks and one adult male Common Loon.*



More information on Common Loon management in Washington, as well as state listed wildlife, can be found at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/endangered/> and <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/loons/>.

**Growth Management Assistance – Great Blue Heron Colony Due Diligence-University of Washington (UW):** Biologist Anderson continues to field various information and management assistance requests from representatives at UW, concerned citizens, and now private consulting biologists regarding proposed changes to the Rainier Vista area, adjacent to the UW heron colony. Other concerns are out-of-ordinary use of the area for events such as concerts during the breeding season. Anderson has continued to provide resources and refer requesting entities to our Priority Habitats and Species management guidance document on Great Blue Herons. Anderson sent a recommended heron management plan out to a Seattle property owner as part of their local code referring to WDFW for assistance for this species in development situations and per the state Growth Management Act. Information on management of herons can be found at [http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/phs/mgmt\\_recommendations/](http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/phs/mgmt_recommendations/).

**Skagit Delta Land Acquisition Meeting:** Region 4 staff participated in the Skagit Delta Land Acquisition Meeting with the Regional Team. The purpose of the meeting was to continue ongoing discussions and strategy development related to WDFW potentially acquiring farmable lands in the Skagit Delta to provide hunting opportunities in lieu of department lands that have been (or will be) restored for salmon recovery purposes.

**North Cascades Wolf Monitoring:** Biologist DeBruyn reviewed hundreds of images from trail cameras retrieved last week from northeastern Whatcom County. No new wolf images were recovered, but lots of wildlife and recreational use was documented.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Ebey Island Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm initiated weed control on the west lobe parking lot near Homeacres Road. Manager Boehm replaced the signage and post at the east parking lot under the Highway 2 trestle. Someone tossed the previous sign into the slough, which was retrieved by Manager Boehm. The lessee completed mowing approximately 60 acres of grazing land where invasive thistle has established. Weeds were cut prior to flower development in an effort to control further establishment. Additionally, Manager Boehm provided access and technical assistance to a team of professionals who were taking soil samples of the unit. EarthCorps and Restore America's Estuaries are working in partnership with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to complete a Coastal Blue Carbon project here in the Snohomish estuary.

This is the first project to demonstrate carbon sequestration rates of tidal wetlands and develop a methodology for a national program to bring coastal wetlands into the carbon markets. Samples will be taken from estuaries around the United States.

**Crescent Lake Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm and the Sky Valley Tractor Club continue to mow a portion of the leased field to provide a groomed area for dog training. Over an acre of grass is kept short for users to enjoy, as well as an adjoining walking trail. On the other agricultural fields within the unit, approximately 80 acres of corn and 20 acres of barley are growing very well.

**Cherry Valley Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm worked with Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) member Mark Ryder and a local farmer to continue mowing at the unit. Approximately 40 acres have been mowed despite equipment failure and repairs. Additional mowing will take place while the sun shines and the equipment is working.

Additionally, Manager Boehm met with the Fish Passage Project Planting Manager Jenni Dykstra to walk the site and monitor site conditions and survival of the native plants installed earlier this spring. Herbicide application has slowed the growth rate of the reed canary grass allowing ample sunlight for the new plants to grow.

**Lake Terrell Dam Water Release:** Manager Kessler and Natural Resource Tech Deyo met onsite with the Whatcom Conservation District Bios to measure how much water to release from the Lake Terrell dam to provide stream flow throughout the summer. Measurements were taken, and the dam bypass valve was opened to allow 1cfs flow which will provide flow for 83 days. This will help fish that are in Terrell Creek survive the dry summer.

**Rainbow Pond Water Control Repair:** Natural Resource Tech Deyo measured and prepared to repair a water control device on Rainbow Pond at the Lake Terrell unit. The water control device has a large hole in it which is allowing too much water to drain out of the pond. The repairs will be performed next week.

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

### **Wildlife Management**

**Citizen Science Collaborative Bat Monitoring on Lower Snoqualmie WDFW Wildlife Management Units:** Biologist Anderson coordinated citizen acoustic encounter efforts on Stillwater Wildlife Management Unit for the second survey of the maternity and pupping season. Volunteer ran acoustic encounter surveys during the protocol span of survey established by the U.S. Forest Service Bat Grid effort (3.5 hours from sunset). Volunteers are now training other citizens to increase pool of volunteers to assist with surveys, allowing for folks to have some personal time and share monitoring and data collection duties.

**North Cascades Elk Herd Management:** Biologist Danilson met in the field with graduate student Anna Yost and Sierra-Pacific Industries Forester Doug Sand to assist Ms. Yost initiate her field data collection for the season. Ms. Yost is using elk habitat models developed by U.S. Forest Service staff at the Pacific Northwest Research Station to develop refined habitat models for the North Cascades elk herd.

Additionally, she will evaluate potential habitat management scenarios that could be implemented to address ongoing elk related agricultural conflicts and/or elk-vehicle collisions on State Route 20 between Sedro Woolley and Concrete. Biologist DeBruyn initiated a series of conversations with cooperators about how to improve the quality of elk road kill information gathered from incidents on Highway 20. Danilson and DeBruyn met with the North Cascades

Elk Steering committee to discuss next steps in the public process to advance the completion of the herd plan.

**Band-tailed Pigeon Study:** Biologist S. Anderson did ground tracking of 10 radio-equipped Band-tailed Pigeons. Biologists DeBruyn and S. Anderson also flew to obtain transmitter locations. A transmitter previously thought to be mortality was tracked to a cliff above the trap site. The mortality is probably due to an avian predator. The remaining nine signal locations were pinned down precisely and seem to be operating normally on live birds.

**Band-tailed Pigeon Mineral Springs Surveys:** Biologist DeBruyn surveyed a mineral spring in southern Skagit County. He documented the arrival and departure of 106 pigeons during the eight hour observation period.



*Band-tailed Pigeons at a Mineral Spring in Skagit County*

**Game Management Unit (GMU) 418 Nooksack Bull Elk Hunt:** Biologist Danilson coordinated and scheduled the landowner coordination meeting with Sierra-Pacific Industries (SPI) and all GMU 418 bull elk permit holders. The purpose of the meeting (scheduled for Saturday, August 10) is to discuss hunt logistics and rules, have hunters sign their access agreements, and distribute gate keys. Coordination included discussions with SPI Forester Doug Sand, Enforcement Rules Coordinator Preuss, Section Manager Calkins, and Biologist Milner. Danilson also drafted and sent letters to each hunter, fielded phone calls related to this hunt, and drafted the hunter access agreements.

**Mountain Goat Biological Sampling WebEx:** Biologists Danilson, DeBruyn, and Milner participated in a WebEx conference hosted by Section Manager Harris. The purpose of the conference was to provide information to regional staff on working with mountain goat permit

holders to coordinate biological sampling of harvested goats. Harris is working with regional biologists that have mountain goat hunt units in their areas to validate harvest information, age mountain goats, and collect samples for disease detection.

**Region 4 Mountain Goat Surveys:** Biologist Danilson made arrangements with various parties for the upcoming mountain goat surveys for the Mount Baker and Darrington areas. The goat survey flights for both areas are tentatively scheduled for the week of July 22.

**North Cascades Elk Management Group:** The North Cascades Elk Management Facilitation Committee met to review comments and questions from the public meeting on June 26 and plan next steps for the development of the group. The committee also reviewed the list of people who volunteered to be part of the North Cascades Elk Management Work Group and brainstormed additional groups and contacts to be invited.

### Wildlife Areas

#### **Skagit Agricultural Enhancement and Lease Program**

**Island Unit:** Manager Belinda Rotton continued to check on the Island Unit ditch cleaning permit application status with the Corp of Engineers and Skagit County. Applications have been received; the county has started initial review and is determining if a Shoreline permit is needed. The Corp has logged the Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA) into the system.

Volunteers completed the corn planting on the site and Natural Resources Specialist (NRS) Greg Meis and Natural Resources Tech (NRT) Curran Cosgrove continue assisting with field prep and planting additional areas to millet. Plantings should be completed early next week.

Volunteers and wildlife area staff cleared the dike tops of down trees and limbs and began mowing some of the areas.

**Samish Unit:** Staff checked status of herbicide treatment on plantings at Samish and developed plans for mowing next week.

**Fir Island Farm Final Design Project:** Restoration Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Planner Williams, and Jenny Baker from The Nature Conservancy outlined the structure and parameters to measure in the Adaptive Management Plan for the project. They will begin drafting the plan and will reconvene in the first week of August to identify next steps.

**British Petroleum Security and Farming Meeting:** Manager Kessler met with officials from British Petroleum and the farmers who plant barley and cut hay on the unit to discuss this year's activities.

**Lake Terrell and Nooksack Units Farming:** Manager Kessler met with a manager from the Whatcom Conservation District to discuss current and future farming on the Lake Terrell and Nooksack units.

**Blackberry Mowing:** Natural Resource Tech Deyo mowed fields with large patches of blackberries to improve hunting opportunities.

### Private Lands/Access



*Wheelchair access was improved at the Goss Lake Access Site on Whidbey Island.*

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

### Wildlife Management

**Master Hunter Response:** Biologist Anderson provided information and explained the process of King County master hunts to permit holders. Anderson fielded questions regarding the North Bend Master Hunt, hunt choice 2701, and the South Region 4 Master Hunt (King and Snohomish counties) hunt choice 2710. Hunters were interested in the process of these damage-response hunts, contacts, and where we have had reports thus far of damage. WDFW and volunteer hunt coordinators will continue to keep in contact with permit holders to utilize this important skilled hunter resource to assist in reducing damage by resident elk and altering spatial patterns of area elk out of conflict zones.

Anderson also requested annual data from the Muckleshoot tribal wildlife management group regarding annual deer and elk survey for collaborative management data sharing and use in updating state Annual Status and Trend reports. Thanks to MIT biologists for providing this data.

**Problem Wildlife Conflict Reduction Requests:** Biologist Anderson discussed damage request needs with Officer Capelli for a farm in the lower Snoqualmie Valley. Officer Capelli and Biologist Smith will follow-up with the request for assessment of damage and assistance in conflict-reduction, where appropriate. This is in line with the WDFW Damage Claim process and Wildlife Interaction Rules for reducing conflict on private property. More information and how these rules apply regarding Departmental assistance for commercial private landowner wildlife conflict situations can be found at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/damage/> and <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/rules/>.

**Bald Eagle Management:** Biologist Anderson fielded requests for bald eagle management. Anderson referred requests to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Migratory Bird Division. A number of Bald Eagle nestlings are now fledging and the public is concerned about grounded birds. Grounded young of the year eagles are normal! Over 50% of nestlings, when they fledge, go to the ground, not to another tree. Please leave them be and let nature take its course. Educate the local community to keep away, keep dogs and other pets away and controlled, and work with property owners to let the birds do their thing to gain flight strength and make it up in a tree. The adults will feed them. If there are injured or orphaned eagles, contact a local state wildlife rehabilitator. More information can be found here on eagles, management with USFWS, and what to do for injured and orphaned wildlife: [http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/bald\\_eagle/](http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/bald_eagle/) and <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/rehabilitation/>.

**Pet Wildlife Request for information:** Biologist Anderson had a long and tactful discussion with a parent regarding a captive native northern alligator lizard that had been retained from the wild locally. Apparently another sibling wanted to have one and Anderson was contacted regarding habits, ecology, where to find them. Anderson outlined that there are laws that are in place to keep these animals in the wild and that it would be a good opportunity to use this as a “conservation and stewardship” education session with the children about returning the captive animal to the area it was found in to assist in keeping wild populations healthy and look into appropriate pet trade lizards such as bearded dragons or blue-tongued skinks.

**Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary:** Biologist Anderson worked with Region 4 Customer Service staff to acquire Outreach and Education materials for the WDFW Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary and Living with Wildlife education programs. Anderson could not attend the Mill Creek Festival due to a conflict in schedule. A big thanks to the Customer Service Group in providing materials to the public and promoting education regarding wildlife habitat enhancement, how to keep wildlife wild, legalities of wildlife, conflict reduction, and where to find these resources. Thanks Carol, Ericka, Laura and Heidi!

**Wildlife Conflict Management:** Biologist DeBruyn advised citizens and local law enforcement regarding options for dealing with problem river otters and an ostensibly orphaned deer fawn.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Leque Island Unit:** Manager Rotton toured the planting areas on Leque Island and gathered a soil sample for testing. Some of the planting area is not responding as well as others.

**Wiley Slough:** Manager Rotton and Regional Wildlife Program Manager (RWPM) Russell Link hosted a conference call with Capital and Asset Management Program Engineers (CAMP) Glen Gerth and Ray Berg to discuss next steps for Wiley Slough pump station and tide gate repair. The tide gate repair funding was approved in the capital budget. Glen explained the timeline of when funding becomes available to begin scheduling work on these projects.

**Pheasant Release Program:** RWPM Link, District Biologist Ruth Milner and Manager Rotton met to discuss the upcoming pheasant season as it relates to the management of the Bow Hill Road hunting site. The annual regional pheasant meeting is scheduled for next week.

**Snoqualmie Wildlife Area:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm attended the monthly Sustainable Land Strategy meeting hosted by Snohomish County. Various agricultural and salmon recovery issues were discussed. Manager Boehm expressed to the attendees that agricultural plans for Ebey Island are still advancing, but due to an abundance of field work required on all of the units, there is no major news to announce.

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Wetland and Waterfowl Workshop:** Manager Rotton began coordinating with Waterfowl Program Manager Don Kraege and Dr. Leigh Fredrickson to schedule a Wetland and Waterfowl workshop early this fall. Dates have not been finalized.

**REGION 5**

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Columbian White tailed Deer Capture Debriefing:** Staff from WDFW Region 5 and Science, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Cowlitz Tribe, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) participated in a review of the recently completed translocation of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed deer from Julia Butler Hanson (JBH) National Wildlife Refuge to Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and from Puget Island to Cottonwood Island in response to a threatened dike breach on JBH. USFWS staff completed a review that documented the capture techniques, movements of relocated deer, and mortality of the animals during and post capture. The capture was successful at moving over 50 deer to three locations on Ridgefield Refuge and one location on Cottonwood Island. Deer have not remained on Cottonwood Island in numbers that might be considered adequate to create a new population. Deer on Ridgefield NWR are mostly staying on the Refuge with a few moving north to Woodland and a few moving east to Louse and Sauvies Island. A discussion on future actions

was initiated but final decisions will be made after the Status Review Report for this species is finally released by USFWS.

**Western Gray Squirrel Survey:** Biologist Bergh assisted Habitat Program Biologist Fornes with a western gray squirrel survey in Klickitat County. The only nests found were some that had been found on the last survey to the area and no live squirrels were observed. The area had a good mix of mature pine, fir, and oak forests that provide these threatened squirrels with both nest sites and forage. The wildlife area manager also surveyed for western gray squirrel activity on a project site north of Goldendale, with Habitat Program Biologist Bell. During the survey a long-eared owl and a porcupine as well as a western gray squirrel were observed on the property.

**Band-tailed Pigeon Surveys:** Biologist George began the 2013 band-tailed pigeon surveys this week. A total of 245 pigeons were observed over a seven hour period arriving at a known mineral site near the Kalama River. A total of three sites will be surveyed throughout the region from July 10-20. These surveys will contribute to an official index of the population that will be used by the Pacific Flyway Council to set management thresholds for upcoming seasons.

## Wildlife Areas

### **Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area**

**Hawkweed Control:** Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald, Assistant Manager Loomis, and Technician Sample met with Cowlitz County Noxious Weed Control as well as Forest Service and several volunteers from Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) to spend a day on the east end of Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area and along a bordering area of Mount St. Helens National Monument to survey for remaining mouse-ear hawkweed plants. This area has previously been sprayed for this weed, but many small newly germinated plants were found and treated with a broadleaf herbicide. This plant forms dense mats and aggressively outcompeted other native forbs and grasses. A total of about 20 acres was surveyed thanks to the help of RMEF volunteers.



*Above: Applying herbicide.*

*Left: Newly germinated mouse-ear hawkweed.*

## Klickitat Wildlife Area



*Klickitat River Canyon understory of poison oak.*

**Grazing Lease:** Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven checked the grazing permit areas in the lower Klickitat River Canyon. The cattle were gone according to the terms of these permits. Both of these properties have an extensive understory of poison oak, which turns vivid shades of red during the heat of summer. These plants were gorgeous against the backdrop of the green oak trees and blue sky.



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

#### **Private Lands/Access**

**Access Sites:** Access staff Spangler and Rhodes cleaned up after the Fourth of July weekend. There was no serious damage, but the sites were heavily used and many were left quite a mess. They hauled many bags of firework remnants and trash. Many Discover Pass signs have been removed and need to be replaced.

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Hunter Calls:** Biologists are starting to receive many calls from general season and special permit hunters who are preparing to scout big game for this fall and winter. There are many questions about access to private industrial forest as well as access to Department of Natural

Resources (DNR) lands and WDFW Wildlife Areas. Hunters from outside the region are also calling to familiarize themselves with Region 5 Game Management Units (GMUs). The following are a few helpful resources for hunters:

- GoHunt online tool: <http://apps.wdfw.wa.gov/gohunt/>
- Hunting access on both public and private land: [http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/hunting\\_access/](http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/hunting_access/)
- WDFW Wildlife Areas: [http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife\\_areas/](http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/)
- WA DNR recreation information: <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/RecreationEducation/Recreation/Pages/Home.aspx>
- Weyerhaeuser access hotline and website: 1-866-636-6531 and <http://www.weyerhaeuser.com/Businesses/RecreationalAccess/Washington>

## **REGION 6**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Band-tailed Pigeons:** Biologist Tirhi conducted the 2013 band-tailed pigeon survey at Mud Bay, Thurston County mineral site. In total, 123 band-tails were counted over this seven hour survey, including 117 adults and 6 juveniles. The survey conditions were ideal and Tirhi was well concealed inside a camouflaged blind chair, stationed before sunrise so arriving birds were not aware of her presence. This was obvious when, on several occasions, band-tails were perched in trees directly next to the observation location. Counts at the location have fluctuated over the years with the 2013 counts approximating the five-year average.



***Band-tailed Pigeons – Photo by Greg Gillson, 2006***

**Western Snowy Plovers:** Biologists Sundstrom and Michaelis conducted weekly monitoring of snowy plover nesting activity at Midway Beach. To date, there have been 15 nests located and monitored at Midway Beach; 5 are currently active and only 2 have hatched. Depredation by corvids (e.g., crows and ravens) continues to be the primary cause of nest failures at Midway

Beach. However, during their monitoring efforts, Sundstrom and Michaelis observed a chick with a banded male they did not know had a nest. In addition, they observed tracks that indicated there might be two additional broods in the area, but have yet to be seen by biologists.

Biologist Sundstrom and Shoalwater Bay Tribal Biologist Spencer continued to monitor nesting snowy plovers at the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) dune restoration project site at Graveyard Spit. No new nests were observed this week, but of the three known nests, two hatched and there are now five chicks on the ground with the third nest of three eggs expected to hatch any day now.

Monitoring efforts at Leadbetter Beach are being coordinated by Willapa National Wildlife Refuge biologists and as of last week, they reported a minimum of 10 chicks on the ground. Between all three nesting sites, this equates to a minimum of 16 chicks currently on the ground (soon to be more) and 2 chicks that have already fledged. Up to this point, this has been the most successful plover nesting season Washington has seen for a long time.

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

**Willapa Hills Elk Herd Plan:** Biologist Hoenes made some minor additions and edits to the Willapa Hills Elk Herd Plan and then sent it out for cooperator review. Cooperators included the USFWS, DNR, Natural Resource Conservation Service, timber companies, and Tribes that have hunting rights in the Willapa Hills elk herd area.

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

### **Wildlife Management**

**WDFW Wildlife Area and Predator Control:** Biologist Tirhi hired a wildlife control operator to trap mink that have been killing state endangered Western Pond Turtles at the Pierce County recovery site. At least three adults have been killed by mink and likely several more, yet unconfirmed, turtles. Site managers have no way to control mink and other predators at the wildlife area other than trapping. Thus, a trapper was hired to trap only mink. At the nearby state hatchery, mink and other predators have been taking excessive numbers of fish stock. It's likely that mink are specializing on fish, but when those are not available they are simply moving over to the turtle ponds. The hatchery has hired the same trapper to remove mink and other predators responsible for taking excessive fish. Predator trapping will only be conducted, as needed, to bring predator rates down and will not be a continual occurrence considering this is a wildlife area on which wildlife of all kinds are promoted.