

Wildlife Program

Week of July 29-August 4, 2013

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Nongame Migratory Bird Technical Committee - Natural Resource Scientist Joe Buchanan attended the annual summer meeting of the Nongame Migratory Bird Technical Committee. Topics of conversation included implementation of Double-crested Cormorant and American White Pelican surveys, subsistence harvest, Golden Eagle management issues across the western United States, a review of upcoming regulatory issues soon to be released in Federal Register notices, proposed revision of a blackbird depredation order, and general discussion about the Committee's evolving role and process.

Threatened and Endangered Annual Report – Biologists Gary Wiles and Derek Stinson completed revisions to the 2012 annual report. The report is going through one final review and will soon be made available.

Western and Clark's Grebe Field Trip – Biologist Gary Wiles spent a half day with Region 2 District Biologists Rich Finger and Orrin Duvuvuei touring nesting and post-nesting locations used by western and Clark's grebe on Potholes Reservoir in Grant County. Falling water levels in the reservoir, which have dropped six to seven feet since their spring peak, are considered a major impediment for successful nesting by both species. Other problems include boat wakes, boater disturbance, extensive predation by gulls and other species, and dredging of nest areas. Of particular interest during the day was visiting the central portion of the reservoir by boat and finding hundreds of post-nesting adult western grebes on the water. Quite a few birds occurred in family groups with one to three chicks, indicating that some successful reproduction is occurring despite the many threats.

Taylor's Checkerspot Conservation – Ann Potter and Loni Beyer, Diversity Division biologists, conducted surveys for Taylor's checkerspot within areas designated for habitat management for the endangered butterfly in fall 2013. Searches for Taylor's checkerspot host plants and pre-diapause larvae were completed for three restoration units within two occupied sites on the Olympic National Forest. This intensive survey work was a component of habitat management effectiveness for the State Wildlife Grant (SWG) Prairie-Oak project, and required as part of new U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Endangered Species Act (ESA) protection measures for Taylor's checkerspot.

Columbia Plateau Arids Land Initiative and USFWS Landscape Conservation Design – Spatial conservation priorities of the Arid Lands Initiative (ALI), a collaborative effort of agencies, tribes, and Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the Columbia Plateau, and the Landscape Conservation Design process of the USFWS were the topic of a two-day meeting in the Moses Coulee last week. These two efforts have joined together and during this meeting draft maps of priorities were reviewed. The spatial priorities were developed based on conservation targets of the ALI, using Marxan modeling. This modeling approach seeks to identify the most

important places on the landscape to meet identified priorities, while maximizing opportunities to include multiple priorities at identified locations. The Columbia Plateau connectivity analyses (WHCWG 2012, 1013; available at www.waconnected.org) will provide the companion connectivity piece. Mike Schroeder (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Research Scientist) and Joanne Schuett-Hames (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Connectivity Project Manager) attended this meeting.

REGION 1

Wolf Management

District 1: Specialist Shepherd, a volunteer, and a contract range rider patrolled the McKinley Mountain area of the Wedge on various nights and days.

Specialist Shepherd discussed range riding and the Smackout wolf pack on a field trip with a reporter from the Spokesman-Review.

Specialist Shepherd and a volunteer visited and observed wolf locations in the Tiger Hill grazing allotment to determine if cattle were present at the locations. Observations made by the U.S. Air Force Survival School were discussed with instructors.

Specialist Shepherd and a volunteer collected a camera at an observation of a dark object that moved into the woods northwest of Kettle Falls. Only white-tailed deer were photographed.

Specialist Shepherd discussed actions taken by a contract range rider in the Wedge with Regional Director Pozzanghera. Other issues concerning the Wedge were discussed.

Specialist Shepherd commented on a draft depredation response agenda that members of the Cattle Producers of Washington should take and actions the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) will take in response to a suspected wolf depredation. The initial draft was written by Cattle Producers of Washington.

Specialist Shepherd discussed wolf-cattle issues and cost share opportunities with ranchers in the Smackout wolf pack territory, the Huckleberry Mountains, and in the Wedge area, including getting three Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements (DPCAs) signed.

Bendixen spent two nights patrolling Mount McKinley in the Wedge for wolf activity in the vicinity of livestock operations. Assistant District Wildlife Biologist (ADWB) Prince went with Bendixen on one trip.

District Wildlife Biologist Base fielded two telephone calls with a local cattle rancher regarding potential conflicts from wolves to her family livestock operation. Base retrieved recent information on telemetered wolf locations, coordinated with Wolf Biologist Trent Roussin on doing a field investigation for wolf sign, and worked with Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jay Shepherd to remain in contact with the producer. ADWB Prince checked and removed two of the

self-activated cameras deployed within the Kellyhill Game Management Unit (GMU) 105 (the Wedge). Cameras were deployed for detection and documentation of wolves in the area. The two cameras removed will be redeployed next week in new locations. Animals “captured” on the cameras included red squirrel, coyote, snow-shoe hare, and many cows. ADWB Prince checked foothold traps set for wolves with Wolf Biologist Trent Roussin. Nothing was captured.

District 3: Conflict Specialist Rasley met with one cattleman in Asotin County regarding a new Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements (DPCA) and a Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements-Livestock (DPCAL) contract with him. After our second meeting the farmer/cattleman signed both of our contracts. He also stated that he “really likes the direction WDFW is going dealing with elk and wolf damage.”

Conflict Specialist Rasley met with another Cattleman in Columbia County who runs his cattle operation on Jasper Mountain south of Dayton. The cattleman liked what we had to offer and agreed to sign our DPCAL contract.

Conflict Specialist Rasley continues to enter new DPCA and DPCAL contracts into CAPS.

Assistant District Biologist (ADB) Vekasy checked a trail camera near Table Rock, an area with recent wolf reports. No wolf activity detected on camera and no sign on trails or roads; only elk, deer, and cougars on camera. Road tracking conditions were good in Jasper Mountain area, no wolf sign detected during elk surveys.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Columbia Basin Jackrabbit Project: Biologist Ferguson met with the other project biologist involved in the second year of the Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative (GNLCC) grant. We did receive the grant, but less than half of what was requested, so we discussed how best to allot the budget to the tasks and what is needed to cut out. Biologist Ferguson also worked on getting the Yakima Tribal Lands surveyed working with David Blodgett of the Tribe and Ted Nelson of WDFW. Biologist Savannah Walker had volunteers survey three days this week and covered 10 points; talked with Jon Gallie and coordinated surveys in Douglas County; talked with Sidra from USFWS who took over for Ellen Myer and got her up to speed on survey protocol details and received samples and data sheets from her; updated maps to reflect previous week's surveys; and lastly, distributed new maps to volunteers, and contacted private landowners in Lincoln and Douglas counties.

Bighorn Sheep Capture Attempt: An opportunistic capture was attempted over last weekend for bighorn sheep at the Hall Mountain area. ADWB Prince and Wildlife Capture Specialist Jim Kujala deployed two clover traps on private property (with Landowner permission plus assistance) where a group of three ewes and three lambs had come to a salt lick. Apparently, these bighorn sheep only came to the salt lick on one day last week and did not return after the clover traps were deployed. Hence on Monday, July 29 the crew dismantled the two clover traps. If the bighorn sheep become more habitual at this site, a future capture attempt can be made.

Mourning Dove Banding Project NE Washington: Project cooperater Scott Fisher reported capturing and banding eight mourning doves to date along with getting two recaptures of doves banded in 2012. He has Kniffin welded wire funnel traps deployed at his residence in the North Basin of GMU 121 and has volunteered time to this project almost every year since 2008.



Left: Kniffin welded wire funnel traps used to capture mourning doves. Right: A mourning dove set to be released after leg banding.

Wildlife Areas

Provide technical assistance: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Finch visited a Ducks Unlimited (DU) upland restoration site near Cheney this week with DU Biologist Chris Bonsignore. The field is in the early stages of preparation for restoration. Bonsignore requested Finch's professional opinion on how to proceed after a recent wide-spectrum herbicide application, performed by a contract operator, failed to kill the existing vegetation. Finch recommended the site be re-sprayed and tillage used to smooth the site for a late fall 2014 seeding.



Ducks Unlimited planned restoration site near Cheney. Note the green in the lower portion of the photo. Herbicide application failed to kill all the vegetation, so it will have to be reapplied.

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

Private Lands/Access

Disabled Hunter Access in Ferry County: Bendixen worked with members of the Inland Northwest Wildlife Council and a Colville National Forest Agent to install two wheelchair accessible hunting platforms in the Betty Creek Disabled Hunter Access area in Ferry 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

W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area – Fire: Lightning strikes caused two small fires in the Tucannon on Thursday morning. One fire was on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands and one was on WDFW. The fire on the wildlife area measured 0.0053 acres and was located on the west side of the Tucannon Road across from Waterman Canyon. A helicopter was called in to drop buckets of water on the fire and the fire was extinguished the same day.



This helicopter dropped water on the fire caused by lightning strikes on the Wooten Wildlife Area. The fire was extinguished later that same day.

4-O Ranch Wildlife Area – Phase 2 and other activities: Cuevas Winegeart removed “No Trespassing” signs from phase 2 lands along Cougar Creek Road on Monday. Other signs indicating “Elk and Deer Hunting by Permit Only,” which were installed as part of the original Landowner Hunting Permit (LHP) before acquisition were left in place. Wildlife Area Manager Bob Dice was in contact with Mike Odom this week over a missing 500 gallon stock tank on WDFW land along the Grande Ronde River. The tank was originally thought to be stolen, but

was later found by Mike over the weekend. The wind apparently blew the empty plastic tank into a nearby ditch. Dice and Odom also discussed the management plan with Mike suggesting that he'd like to see it completed by the end of the month and is willing to work on it. Dice and Odom agreed to meet next week sometime.

Private Lands/Access

Elk Lure Crops: Conflict Specialist Rasley met with two farmers on Wilson Hollow in Walla Walla County "regarding no elk damage." Both farmers said, "This is the first time in over 20 years we have not had 60 plus head of elk in our garbs." They asked what the reasoning was and Rasley showed them both where all 68 head of elk are living now; in our newly planted lure crops some five miles up the road.



Left: This is where the elk are; not eating Hummus. Right: Some of the 68 head of elk not causing crop damage.

REGION 2

None

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Tieton Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Bernatowicz checked cameras and discovered the two rams and one ewe, missing since May, have been visiting salt locations recently. An unsuccessful effort to locate and remove the two rams was made with four contract hunters and three WDFW personnel. On Saturday, two contract hunters found the ewe, but were unable to remove her.



North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) Grant: Biologist Gregory along with Biologists Bjornstrom, Buser and Ross of the Sunnyside/Snake River Wildlife Area toured a Department of Natural Resources (DNR) parcel north of Mesa that may be a candidate for application of potential North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant funds. The parcel could provide increased value for waterfowl through reduction of tall emergent vegetation and a simple water control structure.



Waterfowl habitat located on a Department of Natural Resources parcel north of Mesa.

Osprey Nest: A Richland construction company reported that two osprey had recently built a nest on an infrequently used construction crane in their yard (see photo below). The nest had appeared recently. Usually this time of year reproducing birds will have young that are very close to leaving the nest. Therefore, it was likely that, this far into the season, this nest did not contain eggs or young. However, Biologist Gregory decided to investigate to make sure the nest could be removed without endangering any young birds. The company manager was kind enough to provide a lift up to the nest and it was confirmed to be empty.



Above: A Richland construction crane with an osprey nest. Right: Inside the osprey nest at the top of the crane.

Wildlife Areas

Oasis Springs Project: Engineering continued work on the Oasis Springs road improvement project. They are using two off-road dump trucks to haul materials into the site.



Off-road dump truck used for the Oasis Springs road improvement.

Colockum Tarps Fire: Shana worked with Colockum Wildlife Area Manager Lopushinsky, DNR and IC fire staff throughout the week regarding coordinated resource protection as the fire moved south.



Above: Colockum Tarps Fire around homes in upper Parke Creek drainage. Below: Colockum Tarps Fire across Parke Creek Road.



REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Canada Goose Mortality Event: Biologist DeBruyn collected another dead goose (the fifth) at the Anacortes Shell refinery. All geese recovered have been emaciated. This goose was the first acquired in reasonably fresh condition and was sent to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) National Wildlife Health Center in Madison, Wisconsin for necropsy.

Band-tailed Pigeon Study: Biologists DeBruyn and S. Anderson flew to locate nine pigeons with transmitters. Eight of the nine remaining band-tails were located. The missing pigeon is thought to have suffered transmitter failure. Follow-up tracking by Anderson confirmed the locations of the eight and failed to find the missing pigeon.

Iron Goat Bat Survey: Several years ago, Townsend' big-eared bats were thought to be using abandoned snow sheds on the Iron Goat Trail as a possible maternity colony. The technology for determining bat species and presence has advanced a great deal since this sighting and the area has not been re-surveyed. Biologist Milner conducted a reconnaissance visit to see if the area still seemed plausible as a site for bats. Follow-up surveys using exit surveys and detectors will be planned and conducted, if time permits.



Townsend's big-eared bats observed from a previous survey in eastern King County.

Golden Eagle WDFW Survey: Biologist Anderson completed forms to submit for documentation of the active Golden Eagle nest in King County. Anderson also finalized survey

efforts of District 12 and assistance from District 11 to cover territories in the statewide effort to monitor known territories and update knowledge of this species status in this state.

Waterfowl Trapping: Biologist DeBruyn began preparing for waterfowl trapping by checking out and baiting a few potential sites. Yearly mallard banding is done in cooperation with western flyway managers to assess survival and recruitment of these important ducks.

Wildlife Areas

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with agricultural lessee Alexander to discuss the vegetation management plan for August and preparation for the fall hunting season. Approximately 60 acres of pasture has been mowed by the lessee. Manager Boehm will mow grass and invasive weeds on approximately 100 additional acres.

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with members of the Northwest Retriever Club to plan for the dog trials event that occurred this past weekend. The fields were in good condition for the event, a honey bucket was delivered and parking areas defined for the multi-day event.



Northwest Retriever Club helped plan the dog trials event at the Cherry Valley Unit of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area.

Stillwater Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with staff from Wild Fish Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited and a neighboring landowner for the Stillwater Revetment Project pre-construction meeting. Access, constraints and the construction timeline were discussed as all parties toured the construction site. Construction is scheduled to begin August 5.

Additionally, Manager Boehm coordinated an invasive weed management work party with staff from King County Noxious Weeds, Sound Salmon Solutions, WDFW, and a volunteer field crew from Earth Core. Targeted weeds included purple loosestrife, tansy ragwort, teasel, and

blackberry. Over the course of two days, all of the fields were walked and any weeds discovered were treated by clipping and bagging flower tops, mowing, digging or herbicide application.

Crescent Lake: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm initiated the vegetation management plan at Crescent Lake this week. Access roads, walking trails, and overgrown fallow fields were targeted for treatment of invasive vegetation. Two volunteers joined manager Boehm as they prepare the unit for the fall hunting season. Vegetation management will continue into the next week due to equipment breakdowns and the extensive volume of work that is required.

Lake Terrell Dam Adjustment: Manager Kessler and Natural Resource Tech Deyo adjusted the water level at the bypass valve at the Lake Terrell Dam. They also cleared a new beaver dam at the mouth of Terrell Creek where it leaves Lake Terrell.

Private Lands/Access



Duck Trap Locations:

Natural Resource Techs Otto and Deyo showed District 14 staff a potential trap location near the La Conner office. Otto is following up with the landowner to secure permission for the site. A variety of waterfowl were present, mostly mallards.

New sign at Faber's Ferry South letting the public know not to drive out onto the gravel bar in the Skagit River.

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

Wildlife Management

Private Timberlands Meeting: Biologist Danilson and Technician Otto met with representatives from Sierra-Pacific Industries to discuss logistics for the upcoming elk and deer hunting seasons. Items discussed included contract language, signage, key administration, and proposed alternatives for managing a limited entry deer hunt on Sierra-Pacific's land for the first time. On Saturday, August 10 WDFW and Sierra-Pacific are hosting a coordination meeting for the GMU 418 bull elk hunt as has been done in previous years. The purpose of the meeting is to

meet with tag holders to administer access agreements, begin issuing keys, discuss landowner rules, provide maps and contact list, and host a general question and answers session.

Master Hunter Volunteer Service: Biologist Anderson assisted a Master Hunter who was working on required volunteer hours by constructing and donating bird nesting boxes for use in the Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary Program. More information on the Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary program and wildlife stewardship activities one can do on their own property is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/backyard/>. Information on the Master Hunter program is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/masterhunter/>.

Wildlife Areas

Skagit Agricultural Enhancement and Lease Program

Island Unit: Natural Resources Specialist (NRS) Greg Meis and Natural Resources Tech (NRT) Curran Cosgrove monitored plantings and corn weed treatment on the Island. Mowing equipment in need of repair and spray equipment were transferred to and from the Island with the assistance of volunteers.

Samish Unit: NRT Cosgrove mowed problem weed areas on the Samish Unit to improve habitat and hunter access conditions.

Manager Belinda Rotton, NRS Meis, and Restoration Projects Coordinator Loren Brokaw attended a site visit with Ducks Unlimited Engineer Steve Liske, Coast and Harbor Engineering hydrologists, and commissioners from Dike and Drainage District #5 to discuss the proposal for wetland enhancements for the Samish Unit. Coast and Harbor will be modeling the design to determine if the proposed berms and water control structures will alter flood flows in the area.

DeBay Slough: Manager Rotton, NRS Meis, District Biologist Chris Danilson, Wildlife Officer Jeff Lee, Captain Mike Hobbs, Waterfowl Section Manager Don Kraege and Regional Wildlife Program Manager Russell Link met with Trumpeter Swan Society Representative Martha Jordon to discuss the acquisition history of the site to include the activities of the stewardship group. A proposal has been forwarded to modify and expand watchable wildlife access on the site. The group will examine this proposal and consider other potential access improvements to be reviewed by the Skagit Citizen Advisory Group and other interested public.

Lake Terrell Gates: Natural Resource Tech Deyo painted seven of the gates on the Lake Terrell and Intalco units.

British Petroleum (BP) Safety Zone: Manager Kessler and Natural Resource Tech Deyo laid out and posted the new Safety Zone signs on the BP Unit. The new Safety Zone is needed due to a new rail off-loading yard being built adjacent to the BP refinery.

British Petroleum Farm Field Coordination: Manger Kessler and Natural Resource Tech Deyo met with one of the farmers who work the fields on the BP Unit. They discussed the new

Safety Zone signs which are being placed in the farm fields, and also the planned crops to be planted and fields to be hayed.

Lake Terrell and Intalco Units Mowing: Natural Resource Tech Deyo mowed paths in fields at the Lake Terrell and Intalco units.

Private Lands/Access

GMU 418 Elk Hunt: Tech Otto continued work on the GMU 418 hunt packets with updated maps and other inserts for upcoming hunter orientation meeting on August 10.

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

Wildlife Management

Big Game Hunting Inquiries: Biologist Danilson fielded calls from multiple special permit holders including GMU 418 bull permit holders, Mount Baker mountain goat tag holders, and calls from the general hunting public. Most calls pertained to access (e.g., gated road systems, trailheads), as well as guidance related to terrain and hunt area boundaries. The statewide mountain goat raffle tag holder called to inquire about whether he would be able to hunt in hunt units that do not have more than two goat tags allocated for the current season, which Danilson discussed and reconciled with Section Manager Harris.

North Cascades Elk Management: Throughout the week, Biologist Danilson and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Griffith met and talked to the local volunteer master hunter coordinator, multiple landowners, hunters, and Enforcement Captain Hobbs to coordinate the various permitted hunters and landowner tag holders in the Skagit River Valley. This included a coordination meeting with a private landowner, and two master hunters on a property in Day Creek. The landowner agreed to allow public archery hunters onto the property during the upcoming hunting season to potentially harvest bull elk that have overwintered on his property.

Danilson and Griffith met with another landowner in Birdsvew to discuss potential options to reduce fence damages on the property and long term solutions to the elk complaint. Hunt options and fencing options were discussed and Griffith made arrangements to follow up with specifics in the future. Danilson and Griffith both received follow up calls from this landowner about new fencing damage and a report that the assigned Master Hunter had harvested an elk the previous evening. Danilson notified the volunteer master hunt coordinator to get another hunter assigned.

Master Hunter Permit Holder Assistance: Biologist Anderson provided Master Hunter contacts to property owners, managers and volunteers that are coordinating various permit hunts with WDFW. This will provide for coordination of hunts and ability to provide hunt access and hunt information for special access areas, such as GMU 485, prior to any permit hunt.

Private Lands/Access

Sierra Pacific Meeting: Biologist Danilson and Tech Otto met with staff from Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) to complete contract agreement signing and discuss the upcoming GMU 418 elk hunt. Otto will tour the site with an SPI forester this week to determine signage for a small road closure area. Private Lands staff will also install some informational signs (see photo) with SPI logos on them prior to the hunt starting.

Wildlife Areas

Fir Island Farms Final Design Project: Restoration Projects Coordinator Brokaw continued working on a draft of the Adaptive Management Plan for the project.

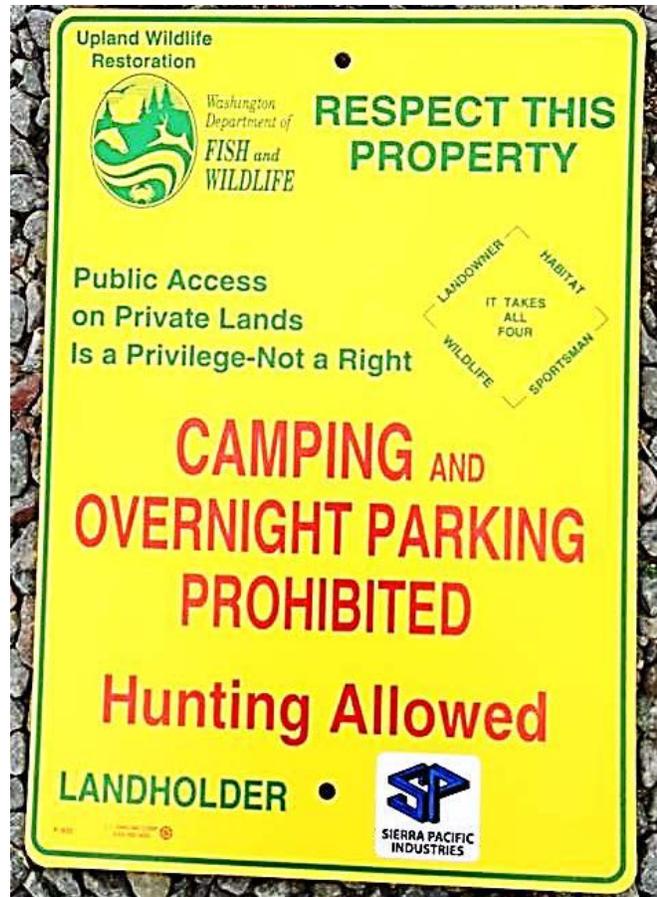
Leque Island Groundwater Study

Determination: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has completed their “Determination of Impact of the Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project on the Camano Island Sole Source Aquifer.” The determination letter is posted on their project webpage at http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/water.nsf/Sole+Source+Aquifers/camano_island.

The letter states, “The EPA has determined that the Leque Project does not create a significant hazard to public health by contaminating the Camano Island sole source aquifer.” WDFW will now begin a process to develop a preferred plan for Leque Island. As part of this process, WDFW will ask for public input to help with development of the preferred design. To be added to the email contact list to receive updates, send a request to Loren.Brokaw@dfw.wa.gov.

Samish Unit Restoration Projects: Restoration Projects Coordinator Brokaw attended a meeting with Skagit Wildlife Area staff and Ducks Unlimited to discuss potential designs for the Samish West-90 wetland restoration project. After that meeting, WDFW discussed preparations for an upcoming public Open House for the Welts wetland restoration project.

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with consultants from the Snohomish County Sustainable Land Strategy (SLS) and WDFW staff to continue discussions about Ebey Island and the agricultural plan that is being developed by Manager Boehm. Updates of relevant information were shared by all parties. The meeting ended with an invitation for Manager Boehm to prepare a short presentation for the SLS Executive Committee at the August 13 meeting.



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

Wildlife Management

Conflict Specialist Orientation and Training: District 14 Conflict Specialist Brandon Griffith began work on Thursday. Griffith and Biologist Danilson completed hiring paperwork, worked on general orientation, and started the process of introducing Specialist Griffith to landowners in Skagit and Whatcom counties. Danilson continues to work with the Section Manager Simek and staff from the HR and IT departments to get his truck, field gear, uniform items, internet network connectivity, and hiring paperwork assigned, purchased and completed.

Natural Resources Technician 2: Biologist Danilson met with Manager Link and Wildlife Area Manager Rotton to determine whether two seasonal positions in northern Region 4 could be combined as a full time position and meet the needs of the both the wildlife program and wildlife area needs. The position would be split between wildlife conflict resolution and duties at the Skagit Wildlife Area. Upon agreement, Danilson prepared (with assistance from Rotton) the position description and HR Action form and provided to Link and Rotton for review.

Wetland Ecology and Management training workshop: 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.

Private Lands Biologist Position: Biologist Milner completed a second round of interviews for the Private Lands Biologist and spent two days with Technician Otto touring some of the access sites and learning about field operations for the program. We have decided to re-open the position recruitment process to seek additional applicants for the position.

Staff Enhancement: Natural Resource Tech Deyo returned to Private Lands after completing his seasonal duties at Whatcom Wildlife Area.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Western Pond Turtle Management -- Skamania Forest Youth Success (FYS) pond turtle habitat enhancements: Biologists Holman and George oversaw a week of work on various habitat enhancement tasks at the Bergen Road western pond turtle site. The work was performed by a seven-member crew from the Skamania Forest Youth Success Program. During the week, the crew removed invasive plants, de-constructed turtle exclosures surrounding the locations of old burn piles, and constructed and installed turtle basking structures.

FYS employs high-school students during the summer to conduct natural resources related work at a variety of locations throughout the county. This is the fourth year that WDFW has teamed with FYS to conduct habitat work at Bergen. Other projects that the crews worked on during the summer included setting property boundaries (surveying), planting fish, and constructing trails. FYS crews work closely with natural resource professionals during their week-long assignments to learn about many aspects of the work related to each project. Thanks to all the crew members for this year's hard work.



Forest Youth Success (FYS) crews in action and the turtles using the habitat that they created within hours of installation.

Western Pond Turtle Management -- Annual Release of western pond turtles at Pierce National Wildlife Refuge: Biologists Holman and George facilitated the release of 10 western pond turtles to Pierce National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The event was well-attended with participants from the Oregon Zoo, Skamania Forest Youth Success Program, Gorge Refuge Stewards, and interested individuals. Biologist Holman gave a “turtle talk” describing the history of western pond turtle management in the Columbia River Gorge, turtle biology, etc. The 10 turtles from this event, the 14th year of releases, will join the entirely introduced population of western pond turtles at Pierce NWR. Thanks to the Oregon Zoo and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for their on-going commitment to western pond turtle management in the Columbia River Gorge.

Following the release of the animals, environmental education continued for the FYS crews with lessons on turtle trapping, turtle characteristics, turtle habitat, and radio-telemetry taught by Biologists George and Holman. Two FYS crews totaling 14 members were able to participate in these activities. Please see the attached photos from the turtle release, and environmental education throughout the day at Pierce Refuge.



Turtle release and environmental education events occurred throughout the day at Pierce National Wildlife Refuge.

Golden Eagle Reports: Biologist Anderson worked on finalizing data reporting for golden eagle surveys conducted this spring and summer. Preliminary results indicate a poor nesting season for golden eagles in District 9 with low occupancy rates and productivity.

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

Private Lands/Access

Toledo Elk Area Hunts Begin: Biologist Stephens and Technician Sample met with youth hunters who possessed permits to hunt the Toledo Elk Area 5029 prior to their hunt. Stephens

and Sample provided maps to the hunters depicting areas owned by Weyerhaeuser that are open to hunting access at this time.

Private Lands Access Meeting: Wildlife Program Manager Jonker, Biologist Stephens, and Technician Sample met with staff members of the Weyerhaeuser St. Helens Tree Farm to discuss the future of hunting access on their tree farm. WDFW is attempting to work with private industrial timber companies to find ways to keep access to these lands open to hunters.

Wildlife Management/Conflict -- Damage hunt season begins: Biologist Stephens began scheduling Master Hunter hunts on private lands where agricultural damage caused by deer and elk is taking place. In addition, Biologist Stephens has been working with Region 5 Enforcement to learn more about the options for addressing wildlife damage on agricultural lands. The responsibility of responding to deer and elk damage is shifting from Enforcement Program to Wildlife Program and the recruitment to hire staff in Region 5 to handle these duties is currently underway.

Hand Access Site: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes cleaned silt off the boat ramp at Hand access. The silt was hauled to an upland site and disposed of using the dump trailer.



Hand Access Site

Vancouver Lake, Langsdorf Landing, Shillapoo North, and Kress Lake Sites: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes contracted a vendor to pump 3,500-4,000 gallons of trash and liquids out of the restroom vaults at Vancouver Lake, Langsdorf Landing, Shillapoo North, and Kress Lake. This is necessary to do every three to five years so the vaults don't fill up with trash, including items such as coats, boots, etc.



Vac Truck

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Western Pond Turtle: Biologists Tirhi and Skriletz along with WDFW and Woodland Park Zoo interns and staff processed juvenile Western Pond Turtles in preparation for their release to the wild on August 9. Seventy-seven juveniles originating from the Pierce County Recovery Site, 14 originating from the Mason County Recovery Site, and 13 originating from a Columbia River Gorge Recovery Site were weighed, measured and notched in preparation for release. Western Pond Turtles are a Washington State endangered species. Eggs and/or hatchlings are collected from the wild each summer during the nesting season and taken to either Oregon Zoo or Woodland Park Zoo where they are reared for 10 months to one-year as part of a recovery head-start program. Prior to release back into the wild, staff check each individual for health, weigh and measure each individual, and file a series of marks into the outer shell that uniquely identifies each individual (called notching). After a one week recovery at the zoo, the juveniles are taken to one of the three recovery sites and released. There they join the larger population and contribute to the population recovery. The 2013 processing day was featured in Seattle Times and the Sunbreak. The Western Pond Turtle recovery program is now in its 22nd year.



Biologist Tirhi and others mark turtles prior to the pending turtle release.

Fisher Surveys: Olympic National Park (ONP) is leading a sampling effort to determine distribution and relative abundance of the fisher population. Staff was excited to announce that they have the first positive result from the Fisher Surveys started this year from a hex inside ONP on August 1.



Sampling Design and Field Protocols for Non-Invasive Fisher Surveys on the Olympic Peninsula, Washington (Version 2013-1)

Administrative Report to Olympic National Park

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Remote camera image of a fisher visiting a sample site

Taylor's Checkerspot (TC) Butterfly -- Ticks and Lyme Pathogen: The TC sites west of the Elwha River have high numbers of *Ixoides pacificus* ticks. Washington Department of Health (DOH) has been conducting tick specimen testing to study the tick disease pathogens in the state. In 2012 Biologist McMillan submitted six ticks from these sites and one tested positive for the Lyme pathogen *Borrelia burgdorferi*. Biologist McMillan submitted 14 ticks collected from these sites in 2013 and four of them tested positive for *Borrelia burgdorferi*. DOH staff involved in the tick testing has suggested that this Clallam County site may be a Lyme Hotspot. More investigation will be done by DOH. District 16 and Olympia WDFW staff are assisting DOH with further information gathering.

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

Wildlife Management

Elk/Deer Monitoring Meeting – Wildlife Biologists from all four Region 6 districts along with Regional Program Manager Cope participated in a meeting to discuss deer and elk monitoring methods within the region. Staff reviewed past survey methods and data, discussed desired goals and objectives, and deliberated on developing improved sampling designs. Additional work will be done with a goal of implementing new, long-term strategies in the spring of 2014.

Private Lands Access

Chehalis Valley Waterfowl Access: Biologist Harris talked with a landowner about entering into a “Hunt by Reservation” agreement for waterfowl hunters. The landowner has verbally agreed and the paperwork is in progress. Biologist Harris also met with Washington Waterfowl members previously on this site for assistance in setting up and managing. This site will be a little unique as the landowner requested some emphasis on youth hunting. Washington Waterfowl members also suggested giving some rest days for the site. The site will have two hunt areas and will be available for reservation on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday with Saturday having an additional requirement that one hunter per area has to be a youth hunter. Additionally, the landowner wants to maintain fishing access for the late winter plunking that occurs and asked for assistance in keeping clean and signing.

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

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Conflict: Biologist Harris worked hard on multiple deer and elk problems, primarily in Grays Harbor and Pacific counties. His work is the first in transitioning wildlife conflict issues to Wildlife Program from Enforcement. As of August 1, Biologist Harris has begun deploying Master Hunters with designated permits where applicable. Some of the problems are because of bull elk groups, and Master Hunters are not used. Biologist Harris is successfully building relationships with landowners and developing this program.