

Wildlife Program

Week of June 3-9, 2013

REGION 1

Wolf Management

District 1: Conflict Specialist Shepherd met with Regional and local Conservation Northwest members and federal grazing allotment permit holders to discuss assistance with range riding, hazing, and other objectives targeted at reducing wolf – livestock conflicts. The outcome was productive and a field trip was arranged.

Conflict Specialist Shepherd received a signed Damage Prevention Contract – Livestock from two grazing allotment permit holders in the Smackout wolf pack territory. Discussion of obtaining devices to receive wolf location information occurred and various proposed ideas will be tested in the first part of June. Conflict Specialist Shepherd produced maps of Smackout wolf locations and discussed them with officers, a range rider, and a rancher throughout the week. Conflict Specialist Shepherd discussed a plan to detect wolves with the District and new assistant district biologists.

District Wildlife Program Staff Prince and Base met with Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jay Shepherd who provided briefing on the wolf rendezvous site habitat model to narrow down search area for camera deployment. Shepherd also transferred additional self-activated cameras to Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Prince. Base and Prince had various communications with stakeholders and volunteers for planning camera survey efforts over the summer.

District 3: Assistant District Biologist Vekasy placed three trail cameras in areas with occasional wolf sightings, and checked on one deployed camera. A good variety of wildlife was on the Eckler Mt camera, including a bobcat, pair of cougars, mule and white-tailed deer, snowshoe hare, and various birds, but no wolves.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Survey of Breeding Common Loons: District Wildlife Program Staff Annemarie Prince and Dana Base carried out surveys of district lakes that have historical breeding season records of Common Loons. Lakes surveyed included Big Meadow, Ferry, Fish, Long, North Skookum, Pierre, South Skookum, and Swan Lakes. Adult pairs of Common Loons were observed on Big Meadow, Ferry, Long, Pierre, and Swan Lakes with juvenile loons seen on Long Lake (two) Pierre Lake (one), and Swan Lake (two).



Photo by Ginger Gumm and Dan Poleschook

Wildlife Areas

Wildfire at the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area:

Wildlife Area Manager Bob Dice was contacted on Saturday by a landowner who owns property near the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area. He wanted to report a fire burning on the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area north of the Grande Ronde River. Dice responded along with Blue Mountains Fire District Firefighters. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) called in air support from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and from private helicopter vendors. The fire had expanded to 1,000 acres by Sunday and is continuing to burn mainly in rangeland.



Note the burned post on the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area sign.



Above: Fire District Crew working the fire. Below: Air support.



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

Wildlife Management

Spokane County No Shooting Advisory Board considers shooting ban on two DNR parcels in Spokane County: Biologist Atamian attended the public hearing on two DNR parcels petitioned by neighboring landowners to become “No Shooting with Restricted Shooting.” There were approximately 24 people in attendance including DNR staff. Almost everyone gave testimony and all spoke in support of the measures. They gave lengthy descriptions of the amount of gunfire, explosions, debris left behind, destruction of trees, and bullets flying overhead, across roads, and into buildings. After the public hearing the advisory board met and decided to recommend to the County Commissioners to make the parcels “No Shooting with Restricted Shooting.” Restricted Shooting will allow for shotgun hunting to occur during any game season in which shotguns are legal to use.

Wildlife Areas



Toilet installation at Sacheen Lake: Access Manager Scott Young and Wildlife Area Manager Juli Anderson visited the access site at Sacheen Lake on Friday. They met with WDFW engineering staff and the installation crew who replaced the old fiberglass toilet with a new prefabricated concrete CXT model.

New toilet installed at Sacheen Lake. The old toilet is the horizontal cylinder to the right.

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

Private Lands/Access

Deer Damage Report led to Feel Free to Hunt Access: Biologist Lewis followed up on an email he received from the WDFW Region 1 office regarding a disgruntled landowner who was reporting deer problems with crops in southern Whitman County. Lewis also completed a site visit and meeting with the landowner and one of the neighboring farmers to discuss access and damage programs. Landowners were very appreciative with the quick response and the

landowner who contacted the regional office will be signing up for the Feel Free to Hunt program with approximately 1,500 acres. The other landowner is interested in the Hunt by Reservation program and Lewis will follow-up with him next week. There was also another farmer in the area that wanted to make the meeting, but was unable to attend. Lewis provided literature on the access programs for the farmer that was unable to make the meeting.



New Feel Free to Hunt property in Whitman County.

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

Wildlife Management



New Assistant District Wildlife Biologist (ADWB): After completing graduate school studies in wildlife ecology and management in North Carolina, Annemarie Prince joined the Colville District Team this week as the “new” Assistant District Wildlife Biologist. Coincidentally Annemarie is a former employee of the WDFW, having previously held the same position on the St. Helens District in Region 5. We are delighted to have Annemarie reconnect with the Wildlife Program and begin work in the Colville District.

New ADWB Annemarie Prince carrying out a survey for breeding Common Loons.

REGION 2

Wolves

Lookout Wolves: Biologist Fitkin assisted the crew attempting to trap and radio-collar members of the Lookout Pack. The trapping crew has had significant activity at the trap sets, but has had no captures to date. This trapping effort will likely wrap up this coming week.

Wenatchee Wolves: Biologist Volsen worked with Conflict Section Manager Simek on the compensation package for the Hurd Ranch for measures taken to minimize potential depredations.

Colt killed by Cougar: Biologist Volsen followed up with a local family whose newborn foal was attacked by a cougar on May 31, 2013. The foal eventually succumbed to the injuries inflicted by the cougar several days following the attack. The family is understandably upset about the attack and the foal's death. Following the conclusion of the investigation and the death of the foal, the family has suggested that wolves were involved. The two biologists and one officer on the scene during the investigation all concurred that the only evidence of carnivores at the site was that of a cougar and that the pattern of the attack indicate cougar as well. Wolf Biologist Scott Becker and retired Carnivore Biologist Dr. Gary Koehler were consulted and both agreed that the sign and injuries were the result of a cougar and not wolves. No evidence of wolves was found anywhere on the property, nor did injuries to the foal indicate the presence of wolves.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management



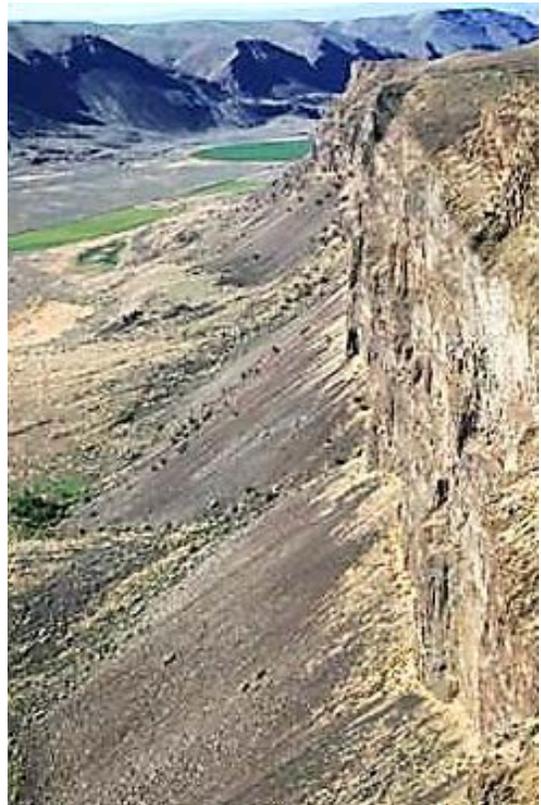
Golden Eagle chick spotted along Rufus Woods Reservoir, Douglas County. Photo by Gallie.

Golden Eagle: Biologist Gallie and Finger conducted a helicopter based survey of golden eagle nest productivity across Chelan, Douglas and Grant Counties. We visited a total of 16 territories determined to be occupied from earlier ground-based surveys this spring. Results were pretty disappointing as we detected chicks in only three territories. Ages were approximately 7 weeks for one set of three chicks, and about 4-5 weeks old for the other two nests.



This cliff habitat in Douglas County was surveyed for golden eagle nests. Photo by Gallie.

Golden Eagles – Ephrata District: Biologists Finger and Gallie conducted an aerial survey of golden eagle nest sites through Grant, Douglas, and Chelan counties. Three of the four priority sites in the Ephrata district were checked. Two nests have chicks ranging from 4.5 weeks (Lake Lenore) to 8 weeks (Park Lake) of age and the other (Three Devils) was unoccupied with two unrepaired nests. Sentinel Gap will be checked this week by ground.



Above: Golden Eagle territory in palisades. Left: Nest with three 8-week old chicks at Park Lake site. Photos by Finger.

Wildlife Areas

Chesaw Wildlife Area Weed

Control: Natural Resource Technician Topping chemically treated ~15.5 acres of noxious weeds on the Chesaw Wildlife Area. The main target weeds consisted of Hounds Tongue, St John's wort, and Musk Thistle. The major portion of the spray acreage covered the first two weed infestations, but he was also able to locate, spray and obtain GPS coordinates on 195 Musk Thistle sites. These sites ranged from three-to-four-inch rosettes to plants that were already two feet tall by two feet in width. With the warm weather the Musk Thistle plants are starting to bolt, at least in the lower elevations of the wildlife area.



When DFW purchased the Scotch Creek Wildlife Area in 1991, the hillsides were covered with a blanket of Diffuse Knapweed. It was difficult to know where to start on this huge noxious weed problem. This week Manager Olson searched several areas on Scotch Creek for the release of the bio control and could not find any Diffuse Knapweed. After 22 years of rest and selective weed control, the native shrub-steppe has completely recovered and is in great condition. Several native forbs have been blooming this spring, and the bunchgrass healthy and plentiful. What a stark contrast from 1991.



North Central Washington Prescribed Burn Team: After cleaning firelines and installing fittings and sprinklers to a hoselay, Wednesday the crew was able to begin burning the Blue 6 Unit on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area (see pictures below). Once again, due to heavy residual

slash fuel loads from logging the crew worked to minimize fire intensity and protect legacy trees by using methodical ignition techniques outlined in the burn plan prescription. Thursday, due to weather predictions, the command staff Leuschen and Guse elected to start ignitions late in the afternoon to take advantage of downslope winds, shading and higher relative humidity, which reduce fire behavior. The crew finished igniting the unit at 11:30 pm then continued



securing and mopping up the lines for another hour. Friday brought a frontal passage with gusty winds and low humidity so the crew continued to mop-up and patrol of the unit. Saturday the crew anticipates weather conditions that will allow us to burn the Blue 7 Unit. Next week we hope to be back at the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area to accomplish more burns there.

After a cold front passage brought gusty winds and dry air put firing operations out of prescription Friday, more favorable conditions arrived Saturday and the team was able to resume burning the Blue 7 Burn Unit and the burn plan for all the scheduled Blue Units has been completed. Monday, after a contracted crew completes mop-up the team will pull all the needed equipment and prepare it for transport to the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area where we will resume burning for the remainder of the season.



Crews burning Blue #6 burn unit near Blue Lake on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area.

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

Wildlife Management

New Wildlife: The first deer fawns of the year in the District are being reported.



Above: Mule Deer does in fawning habitat. Photo by Heinlen. Right: New fawn – Photo by Fitkin.



While spraying weeds one early morning this week, Natural Resources Technician Topping was on hand to observe the birth of an elk calf (photo to the right) on the Chesaw Wildlife Area. Topping said, “I got to see the calf being born - about 30-40 feet away. She was giving birth as I drove up and would not leave once the calf was born.”



Common Loon Management: Assistant District Biologist Heinlen monitored the pair of loons nesting on Lost Lake and Beaver Lake. Lost Lake is one of the most productive loon nesting lakes in the state. The pair started nesting in mid-April and is still on the nest. Bald Eagles have already been harassing the adults on the nest. This is a concern for the survival of the young after they hatch. Beaver Lake had its first documented loon nest last year. Unfortunately it failed. This



year, two mud mounds were observed near the old nest site. These mounds appear to be loon nests due to the large size. Both adult loons were near the mounds but were not observed on either. Beaver Lake will continue to be monitored throughout the season.

Common Loon nest at Lost Lake - Photo by Julie Ashmore.

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

Wildlife Management

Wetland/Beaver Restoration Project: The project is off to a great start this year with six beavers already in the holding facility at the Winthrop Hatchery. All did their part as project/wildlife ambassadors during national fishing day this Saturday. This is always a great opportunity to showcase beavers and their importance to natural systems to several hundred people over the course of the day.



Wildlife Ambassador – Photo by Fitkin.

Wildlife Areas



Well Decommissioning: Manager Olson completed decommissioning of two wells on the Happy Hill Unit of the Scotch Creek Wildlife Area. With the help of the Capital and Asset Management Program (CAMP), we awarded the bid to Fogel Pump of Colville, Washington. All casings and liners were pulled, and the drilled hole then filled with Bentonite. Both abandoned wells were about 200 feet deep, causing potential ground water contamination.



Bull Moose in Forde Lake Sinlahekin Wildlife Area headquarters – Photo by Haug.

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Burrowing owls: Biologists Gregory and Ross along with members of the Global Owl Project, Boise State University, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) trapped burrowing owls in the Pasco area. Seventeen adults (6 males, 11 females) and 17 young (including 8 almost grown owlets in one burrow!) were marked with leg bands. Five of the adults had been captured in previous years. One female was fitted with a GPS transmitter that will provide real-time movement information as she migrates between summer and winter locations. She is one of only 10 burrowing owls in the U.S. wearing one of these unique transmitters.



Burrowing owl siblings in Pasco - June 2013

Tieton Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Bernatowicz spent most of the week searching for the remaining Tieton bighorn sheep. Bernatowicz installed two more cameras, contacted local residents and business owners and hiked known sheep trails. An extensive search of ram habitat was also conducted with five people hiking different ridges. No bighorn sheep or fresh tracks were encountered during the week.

Wildlife Areas

Wenas Wildlife Area Fire: The Wenas Wildlife Area had another fire over the weekend, again started by target shooting. It occurred Saturday morning on the north end of the wildlife area at the “Durr West” target shooting area and burned ~five acres. The fire started at 10:40 am, just before the target shooting timing restriction went into effect (target shooting on the wildlife area

during fire season is only allowed from sunrise to 11:00 am). We had two rotors and ~10 Department of Natural Resources (DNR) fire personnel on scene to contain it.



Durr Road West Fire – June 8, 2013

Pine Canyon Acquisition: Wenas Wildlife Area Manager Confer Morris toured Cleman Mountain and the Pine Canyon inholding with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) staff. RMEF is working to acquire the inholding from Western Pacific Timber Company and needed some good spring photos of the project. The weather and the flowers cooperated, making it a great day to be out on the mountain.



Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation staff overlooking the Pine Canyon parcel.



Wildflowers on Cleman Mountain located above the Pine Canyon drainage.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area Road Management: Oak Creek Wildlife Area Manager Huffman inspected the progress on the Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan (RMAP) work being completed by the Yakima Construction Shop in the Bethel Ridge Area. Road work is looking pretty good and they hope to be finished up this week. The crew is also installing gates on non-green dot roads that have been closed since the 1980s, as part of the road management improvement project. A picture of the first gate installed is below.



Gate installed on a non-green dot road on the Oak Creek Wildlife Area. The gate will reduce illegal traffic on a road that has long been closed to motor vehicles.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Snipe Surveys: This week WDFW Biologist Anderson has continued with a Wilson's snipe survey project. Biologist Anderson has been conducting marsh bird surveys along established transects in Skagit, Snohomish and King counties. The emphasis of the project is to document presence of breeding Wilson's snipe and other marsh birds such as American bittern, Sora and Virginia rail. Surveys consist of modified point count surveys along transects utilizing methodology outlined in the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) standardized North American marsh bird monitoring protocol. Numerous breeding pairs of American bittern, Sora, Virginia rails and Wilson's snipe have been observed. This project will continue until the end of June.



Virginia rail Nest



Observation Point on Samish Island



State Sensitive Common Loon Monitoring: Assistant District Biologist Cyra completed a survey for Common Loons on Spada Lake reservoir. A loon was located last year, but after the nesting season. While still later than desirable, this year's survey produced only one potential sighting of a loon that was not resighted. A complete survey of the potential nesting areas revealed no appropriate nesting habitat. Rapidly fluctuating water levels also make nesting on natural structures unlikely.

Loon Surveys on Spada Lake, a non-motorized reservoir.

More State Sensitive Common Loon Monitoring: Biologist Anderson spent time checking in on nesting Common Loons in King County. The county has half if not more of the nesting loons in the state. A new territory was found this season. Anderson found active nesting at two territories on the Hancock Timber Snoqualmie Tree Farm, both with two eggs and incubating. Monitoring will continue for updating data on this state listed species. Another site is suspected and will be investigated more as time allows.

Anderson received word from Tacoma Water staff that the loon pair on Howard Hanson Reservoir has one chick, hatched over Memorial Day weekend. Tacoma Water will continue to monitor the activity of this pair and chick. Potential banding efforts of the chick may occur based on monitoring updates. 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/>.

Northern Goshawk Site Visit: Biologist Danilson accompanied biologists from Puget Sound Energy (PSE) and the Swinomish Tribe to a Northern goshawk nest site on lands recently purchased by PSE for elk forage enhancement. The purpose of the site visit was to determine occupancy and breeding status of the goshawks and also to discuss future land management actions to improve elk forage quality on the site. The team used call-playback at several stations in areas of high potential habitat and visually inspected the nest site and forest stand. No evidence of goshawks was observed.

PSE's current proposal includes logging a portion of the forest stand containing the nest site and use revenues from this to fund road improvements necessary to facilitate forage enhancement activities elsewhere on the property. Danilson is working with the group to evaluate other management alternatives.

Heron Colony Management: Biologist Anderson conferenced with Seattle Parks and Recreation, Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, National Park Service and Heron Habitat Helpers regarding collaborative efforts for citizen stewardship of wildlife, in particular in the Magnolia area highlighting the nesting Great Blue Herons at Kiwanis Ravine and vicinity. A grant is being used to scope outreach and interpretive opportunities. Anderson has been the wildlife consultant for the effort for Seattle and the group as a whole.

Urban Peregrine Falcon Management: Biologist Anderson, over the weekend on personal time, confirmed the new location of the Mt. Si eyrie while assisting in leading a Seattle Audubon urban to mountains Peregrine Falcon nest site trip with area falcon researchers. The group had 15 falcons for the day and confirmed active breeding and near fledging at a number of area sites.

State-wide effort to monitor Golden Eagles in 2013: Biologist Anderson checked on a Priority 1 site in King County for Golden Eagle nesting status. An adult was observed at various territorial perches above the active nest, moving about the territory, and at one point escorting an Osprey quickly from the scene. The nest had two young that were approximately 4 weeks of age. Future monitoring will be conducted to determine success of young.

Bald Eagle Data Management Support: Assistant District Biologist Cyra modified the boundaries of a Bald Eagle roost location that is impacted by a proposed Forest Practices Application. Based on roost count data from the 1980s it appears the roost was delineated incorrectly. Communicated with Biologist Stinson of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) about specifics of this roost site, and sent changes to Olympia for incorporation into the Priority Habitat and Species (PHS) dataset. While no longer a state or federally listed species, WDFW is responsible for the management of the Bald Eagle site data that USFWS uses in their management of the species in Washington State.

American Pika: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued to review appropriate scientific literature on American Pika in preparation for beginning surveys under a contract from the U.S. Navy at a low-elevation naval installation where there have been reports of pika presence. While the USFWS declined to list the American Pika, it was found that climate change was the leading likely cause of Pika population reductions. With increasing temperatures, low elevation populations while rare, may be at increased risk in the future.

Wildlife Areas



Forty-seven acres of barley have now been planted on the Lake Terrell Unit. Natural Resource Technician Deyo disked the fields after the seed and fertilizer was spread by Wilbur Ellis Co. This grain crop is left standing for waterfowl to feed on in the winter.



Nooksack Unit Agricultural Lease: Manager Kessler received word that the agricultural lease on the Nooksack Unit had received all required signatures, and was ready to be sent to the lease holder. This agricultural lease will run from 2013-15. One hundred acres of corn are planted for silage; then 10% is left standing at harvest for waterfowl to feed on in the winter.

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continued to monitor the delivery of cattle on the Unit. DFW has a grazing lease that allows 400 cow and calf pairs on the Unit. Approximately 300 pair has been delivered so far. The lessee has also completed plowing 50 acres that will be planted with barley for forage and cover for wildlife and waterfowl. Wolfkill Feed and Fertilizer Company was contacted to place the order for barley seed and schedule planting later this month.

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm and Werkhoven Dairy completed field preparation for 20 acres of barley that will be planted this week. The Sky Valley Tractor Club has initiated site prep for planting winter wheat on approximately five acres of their leased field. Additionally, the Club has mowed a portion of the field to provide a year-round dog training area. Hay and wheat will be retained for wildlife forage and cover.

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm conducted a site visit to monitor weed growth and condition of the native vegetation that was planted earlier this year. At the Waterwheel Creek planting area, weed growth has been very slow and remains in check. At the Fish Passage Project planting area, reed canary grass is approximately 18 inches tall in the planting areas and 3-4 feet tall over the surrounding area. Maintenance mowing and herbicide application is planned for the coming week.

Corson Preserve: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm conducted a site visit to the Unit to review the condition of the boardwalk trail that winds through the Unit. Some trees have fallen across the trail in numerous places and damaged it. Manager Boehm will provide replacement materials and volunteers will repair the boardwalk. Additionally, barley and millet seed for six acres was delivered to provide food and cover for waterfowl. The fields will be planted this week.

Stillwater Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm joined with Sound Salmon Solutions (SSS) staff to implement the Stillwater Weed Management Plan for 2013. Herbicide was applied to Himalayan blackberry on approximately six acres of restoration plantings. Additional herbicide applications and periodic mowing are scheduled throughout the summer. Targeted weeds include blackberry, thistle, tansy, teasel and knotweed.

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

Wildlife Management

Band-tailed Pigeon Study: Biologist DeBruyn tracked radio equipped pigeons and found some individuals have moved away from trapping locales. DeBruyn also established a new bait site in Whatcom County where he plans on trapping more pigeons the week of June 10.

North Cascades (Nooksack) Elk Herd Management: Biologists worked on a number of issues pertaining to the North Cascades elk herd during the week outlined below:

- Danilson participated in site visits to two parcels recently acquired by Puget Sound Energy (PSE) in the Skagit River basin for the purposes of improving elk forage. Danilson continues to work with PSE and the associated review committee to direct property acquisition and forage enhancement activities.
- Danilson worked with Biologist McCorquodale to complete final data analysis using data collected during the spring surveys. Danilson is working with McCorquodale to transition the responsibility of data analysis to minimize the burden on McCorquodale's time.
- Danilson assisted a graduate student from Central Washington University who is working with GPS collar data from the North Cascades elk herd and the "Western Washington and Oregon Elk Models" developed by the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station. The objective of this project is to refine these broad-scale models of the existing data to fit the Nooksack situation to a more local scale, and model habitat management alternatives aimed at improving the distribution of this elk herd.
- Danilson and Biologist DeBruyn worked on getting two new Clover traps fabricated and rigged. The traps will be used in a cooperative project with the tribes to collar elk to answer population biology questions.
- DeBruyn also worked on organizing mortality data to be used at an upcoming technical meeting.

Stillwater Restoration Riparian Bird Monitoring: Biologist Anderson conducted the first of four monitoring surveys at Stillwater Wildlife Management Unit. A number of breeding birds were in full swing, as well as migrants still pushing through. Highlights were the continuation of one second year Nashville Warbler, Lazuli Bunting, Bullock's Oriole and many other riparian specialist and open scrub area associated birds. This effort is part of long term monitoring of wildlife regarding WDFW riparian habitat enhancements on this wildlife unit. Bird use of habitat enhancement areas is being examined as a proxy for wildlife habitat value and overall use in comparison to established similar habitat on the wildlife unit.

More information about the Stillwater Wildlife Management Unit, as well as other WDFW wildlife areas and the units that make up each of them can be found at http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/snoqualmie/Stillwater/

Wildlife Areas

Skagit Agricultural Enhancement and Lease Program

Island Unit: Manager Belinda Rotton met with Habitat Biologist Brian Williams and Restoration Projects Coordinator Loren Brokaw to discuss the development of an Island Unit Ditch Maintenance Plan. Brian was able to outline the items to include for project review by the Corp of Engineers, Department of Ecology and Skagit County. Manager Rotton and Natural Resource Specialist (NRS) Greg Meis are gathering necessary information to develop the plan. Private individuals are interested in donating heavy equipment services to WDFW to assist with the drainage maintenance on the Island Unit.

Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Natural Resources Technician (NRT) Curran Cosgrove continued to monitor field conditions and drainage on the Island Unit, Samish and Leque Island.



Skagit Wildlife Area staff planted millet in the Ole Thompson field of the Island Unit.

Samish Unit: Staff coordinated the barley and corn planting on the Samish Unit. Contract planting work should be completed this week. A sharecrop farmer is schedule to begin field prep as early as this weekend.

Leque Island: Staff is monitoring sharecrop farming activities on the Leque Island parcel. If weather conditions hold it is expected that WDFW's share of corn and barley will be planted next week.

South Padilla Bay: Manager Rotton discussed the location of cereal grain enhancements with the lessee. Field work has started but planting is not complete on the site.

North Cascades Elk Management Group: Restoration Projects Coordinator Brokaw worked with the Office of Public Affairs to complete a press release that will be sent to local Skagit and Whatcom county media this week. The press release invites the public to attend the first meeting of the North Cascades Elk Management Group on June 26 at 6:30 pm at the Sedro Woolley Community Center.

Stillwater Revetment Removal Project: The Lands Division completed a draft of the Right of Entry permit needed for Wild Fish Conservancy to construct the project on WDFW land. Wild Fish Conservancy will review the permit requirements this week.

Lake Terrell Fencing: Manager Kessler and Natural Resource Technician Deyo repaired fencing on the Lake Terrell Unit. The fencing was destroyed by a car that left the roadway.



WDFW Road Grading crew worked at the Lake Terrell and Intalco units repairing gravel roads and parking areas. The pothole filled road to the new Lake Terrell fishing pier was repaired and improved.

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

Wildlife Management

Marmot Repatriation: About two weeks ago WDFW received a report that a marmot had stowed away in a motor home and had been transported from Perrygin Lake in Okanogan County to Birdsvew in Skagit County. The reporting party tried to trap it out of the RV, but it evidently got out into the wild. Last week one of the neighbors called saying that she had caught the marmot in a live trap and asked what she should do with it. Biologist DeBruyn responded and identified it as a yellow-bellied marmot. The citizen was willing to drive the marmot back to Perrygin Lake and was authorized to do so. She departed immediately and the marmot is back where it belongs.

Wildlife Conflict Reduction – Bird Airstrike efforts at SeaTac: Biologist Anderson received word from Port of Seattle Wildlife Biologist Steve Osmek regarding ongoing efforts to exclude Osprey from the SeaTac area. The Port of Seattle has been working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and WDFW to ensure management activities meet state and federal needs, while providing for port needs to reduce airstrike with birds.

The port is actively attempting to exclude nesting Osprey in a two-mile radius of the airport and developing techniques to ensure success. The port is also capturing young from active nests and

translocating, once near fledge, to other active nests outside of conflict zones for surrogate care by “foster Osprey parents.” This has been successful and encourages young to come back to these conflict-free areas to establish territory once breeding age. See attached picture of two adult Osprey gathering nesting materials on the taxiway of SeaTac.

Reduction of this airstrike conflict is good for the birds and good for public safety. Airport management of wildlife is an increasing issue across metropolitan areas with increasing air traffic. Management of these situations and refining successful techniques is a win-win for birds and humans to coexist.



Two adult Ospreys gathered nesting material on the SeaTac taxiway.

Bear Depredation Hunts: Biologist Anderson assisted with coordination of retention of research samples from any bear taken in Game Management Unit (GMU) 485 due to permitted depredation hunts. This was at the request of the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe (MIT), which is conducting the study in that unit. Anderson coordinated with MIT, Tacoma Water, WDFW Enforcement, and the permittee to ensure that MIT will be provided for in their research efforts.

Urban Canada Goose Management: Washington State Parks contacted Biologist Anderson for advice on options to manage urban Canada geese long term at area parks that have chronic issues. Anderson provided some site-specific tips and referred parks management to the Living with Wildlife-Canada Geese website http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/canada_geese.html.

Urban Bird Construction Disturbance: Biologist Anderson assisted WILDCOMM with multiple reports from a reporting party regarding disturbance and “take” of birds due to dredging of a pond. WILDCOMM asked for assistance. Anderson called the reporting party to explain state protection of birds and provide federal web reference and general phone contact. Overall, the situation was not necessarily a wildlife disturbance issue – but may be a Hydraulic Code

violation. Anderson passed information along to area Habitat Biologist Fisher, who is knowledgeable of the site and is looking into the situation.

Wildlife Areas

Cherry Valley Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with the Snoqualmie Citizen's Advisory Group (CAG) and approximately 25 guests from various dog clubs. The main topic of discussion was centered on how to bring dog training and trials back to the Cherry Valley Unit. This Unit has a long history of dog training and many clubs would like to see that return. Manager Boehm stated that dog trials and training at Cherry Valley is open for discussion, but will be different than in the past. Many changes have occurred within WDFW and at the Unit including increased permit and administrative fees, the need for volunteers to conduct site prep, and two large restoration projects that are in close proximity to traditional dog training areas. Collaboration between the dog club community and Manager Boehm will continue.

Headquarter - Wylie Slough Restoration: Skagit River Systems Cooperative Restoration Ecologist Brenda Clifton began yellow flag control for the season with the assistance of a DNR field crew. The crew was able to treat all of the restoration area since tidal conditions were good.

Fir Island Farms (FIF): Manager Rotton, Habitat Biologist Brian Williams and FIF consultant Dave Cline met with the Hayton family to discuss the proposal to install groundwater monitoring wells and perform geotechnical surveys on the Fir Island Farm site as part of the next level of project feasibility work.

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

Wildlife Management

Conflict Specialist Recruitment: Biologist Danilson worked with Section Manager Simek, biologists from Regions 1 and 2, and local personnel to coordinate the interview and selection process for the Conflict Specialist positions being recruited for throughout the state. Danilson also contacted the candidates to be interviewed for the Region 4 (District 14) position to schedule interviews and discuss the interview process.

Urban Wildlife District "Tour and Orientation" for WDFW Headquarters: Biologists Anderson and Thompson provided a tour to Diversity Manager Gardner, Endangered Species Section Manager Allen, and Surveys Section Manager Thompson. The tour consisted of visiting a local rehabilitation facility to see how they run, how they work with WDFW, and what "goes on daily" in the world of local wildlife rehabilitation. They then went to some well-known urban wildlife sites including the Kiwanis/Commodore Park Heronry, adjacent Osprey platform that WDFW successfully collaborated with Seattle Parks, Seattle Light, and Burlington Northern Santa Fe to provide for retention of the active territory and promoting watchable wildlife, while reducing a conflict situation with the railroad. Finally, observation of one of the urban Peregrine

Falcon eyries on a local bridge with two eyasses running back and forth, making ready for first flight in the highly dynamic urban landscape of Seattle. The group hoped to make it to some wildlife occurrence sites in the exurban portion of Region 4 but ran out of time (mostly due to traffic!).

Snoqualmie Wildlife Areas: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with WDFW Volunteer Coordination staff to discuss the Discover Pass Voucher program. Volunteers can work 24 hours on specified projects to earn a voucher for a free Discover Pass. Manager Boehm has worked with two volunteers who have met the required hours and should receive their free Discover Pass. Manager Boehm plans on promoting this opportunity to attract volunteers who are interested in providing labor in exchange for the Discover Pass.

REGION 5

None

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Black Tailed Deer Mortality Study

Capital Forest: Biologist Michaelis continued to monitor radio-collared deer in the Capitol Forest Cluster. It is fawning season so does are being checked every other day in an effort to capture fawns as soon as possible after they are born. With the thick vegetation, catching fawns can be a very challenging endeavor. Last week, Biologist Murphy and two volunteers assisted Michaelis and were able to locate a fawn from a marked doe, but it was too fast on the steep slope and the group was unable to catch it. The total number of deer being monitored in the Capitol Forest Cluster remains at seven does, two yearlings, and one fawn.

Vail: Biologist Tirhi and staff conducted three fawn searches in the Vail study area last week associated with the mortality study. All does in the study in the Vail study site had been fitted with vaginal implant transmitters (VIT) in addition to satellite radio collars. The former allows staff to monitor parturition while the second allows staff to monitor movements and mortality. Three does appear to have prematurely expelled their VITs early and thus have to be monitored both in terms of their movements (clustering) and visually for signs of pregnancy. Tirhi and staff recovered a VIT from one of these does within three hours and an extensive search found neither fawns nor sign of fawning. After expelling her VIT, this doe travelled approximately 1,000 feet, across a creek, bedded down for several hours, and then crossed the creek again to travel approximately 0.5 miles to bed down in reprod on a significant slope. This does not suggest fawning. Tirhi and staff then proceeded to locate the remaining two does and searched for fawns

of one without success. According to satellite monitoring, the latter doe travelled approximately 0.25 miles after staff presence followed by a significant long-range movement. Tirhi returned to Vail two more times last week, searched fawns one day and attempted to get visuals the second with no success. Tirhi will attempt again this week, but in the evening as movement patterns suggest one doe is bedding in clearcut at night which might provide the best opportunity for a visual check.

Mason/Satsop: Biologist Murphie spent the week monitoring collared does with the objective of capturing/collaring fawns in the Mason and Satsop units. Eight of 13 deer have been fitted with a transmitter that allows the remote detection of a fawning event, while the remaining 5 deer require physical tracking and observation. Of the eight Satsop deer, four have had fawns; six fawns have been collared. Of the five deer in Mason, three have fawned; four fawns have been collared. Additional searches will continue this week. Five volunteers provided valuable assistance in the fawn searches/captures.

Pysht: On Thursday June 6, Biologists Loafman, Ament, McMillan and Cullinan (PNPTC) plus two volunteers responded to a VIT alert for a potential fawning for doe 294PYF located in the Deer Park Road area. The transmitter was found and the surrounding area was searched. No fawns were found. It was suspected, however, that the fawns were not dropped at this location due



to the atypical circumstances (the vegetation at the site of the VIT was not matted down, combined with the steepness of the area and the piles of slash and brushy vegetation). Biologists Loafman, Ament, Cullinan and two volunteers (one of which was different from the previous day) returned to the site and scoped out the area hoping to catch a glimpse of the doe. After consulting maps and downloading data from the collar, a search was conducted along a tank-trapped logging road some 558 meters from where the VIT was found. A visual of the doe was made, but it happened so quickly that the volunteers were unable to determine if she was still pregnant. During a quick search of the area where the doe was seen two male fawns were found. Collars were placed on 363PYM and 364PYM.

Just prior to the visual of this doe, an additional VIT alert was received that afternoon for doe 296PYF. The team then headed to Little River Road where they were quickly able



Biologist Ament weighs a fawn.

to retrieve the VIT and find two female fawns which were collared and christened 367PYF and 368PYF. The doe was seen standing guard very close by while we worked on the fawns. One fawn was located at the VIT and the second one was only five feet away.



Above: Volunteer Corey Foust points to where he found the fawn. Below left: Biologist Ament and Volunteer Corey Foust with fawn. Below right: Biologist Cullinan with fawn.



Western Snowy Plovers: Biologist Sundstrom continued to monitor snowy plovers at Midway Beach. There have been nine nests located so far this year, but eight of those nine have failed with predation by corvids (e.g., crows and ravens) being the primary cause of failure. However, the single nest that was not depredated hatched during the last week of May and Sundstrom has since observed the male with three chicks. It takes 28 days before snowy plover chicks fledge and are able to fly to escape predators so these chicks still have a couple more weeks before they are recruited into the population.

New Peregrine Falcon Sighting: While no Taylor's Checkerspots were seen during a butterfly survey of the main east-ridge road to the cell tower at Dan Kelly, Biologist Ament did observe a peregrine falcon perched on a snag nearly at eye level.

