

Wildlife Program

Week of June 10-16, 2013

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Island Marble Conservation: Ann Potter, Wildlife Diversity Biologist, and Dave Hays, Diversity Restoration Ecologist, participated in discussions with San Juan Island National Historical Park (SJINHP), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and University of Washington, to evaluate Island Marble butterfly demographics and threats. Discussion focused on determining immediate steps to reduce threats, including possibility of initiating a captive-rearing effort. Island Marble is a candidate for state listing and currently under review by the USFWS for possible federal listing. The number of populations and individuals has declined significantly over the last five years; most butterflies now occur within SJINHP. Adult butterfly numbers are very low this year; a search for eggs and larvae located fewer than 100.

Given (1) low number of individuals, (2) existence of a rearing protocol that demonstrably support survivorship rates far above wild conditions, and (3) participation from the most experienced Island Marble care expert; participants agreed on park staff initiating a small captive-rearing effort. Additional steps are underway to reduce threats by installing fencing and temporary cages around host plants with eggs/larvae to reduce deer herbivory.

REGION 1

Wolf Management

District 1: District Wildlife Program staff deployed self-activated cameras within Game Management Unit (GMU) 105 (the Wedge) to document potential wolves and/or grizzlies in the area. Documentation of new wolf packs is a priority in the District. In the coming weeks cameras will be deployed in other areas with reported wolf activity, but unconfirmed wolf packs. Cameras will be checked on a regular basis and all species captured with photos will be recorded. District Wildlife Biologist Dana Base met with Trent Roussin, one of the two recently hired wolf trapping specialists, and helped him with logistical issues relative to his work as well as set-up of a work space and access to the District office.

Conflict Specialist Shepherd participated in the wolf conference call with the carnivore section lead Donny Martorello discussing the data sharing agreements and other wolf issues. Conflict Specialist Shepherd went to the Wedge with Biologist Prince, Technician Bendixen, and a contractor. Time was spent looking for sign, no fresh sign was observed, and deploying cameras in the Churchill grazing allotment on the Colville National Forest.

Conflict Specialist Shepherd met with the Stevens County Cattlemen's Association president and media specialist and discussed data sharing among livestock producers. 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 met with Regional and local Conservation Northwest members to discuss assistance with range riding, hazing, and other objectives targeted at reducing wolf – livestock conflicts on a field trip to Smackout Meadows. The outcome was productive and the field trip included a preliminary slide show.

Conflict Specialist Shepherd flew in a fixed wing plane and located wolves in the Smackout, Huckleberry, Salmo, and Diamond wolf packs. Conflict Specialist Shepherd discussed the Wedge wolf situation and the Churchill grazing allotment with Regional Director Pozzanghera. Conflict Specialist Shepherd communicated with allotment holders in the Wedge.

District 3: District Biologist Wik placed additional cameras throughout the eastern Blue Mountains this week, including in an area of a report of an injured pup. Conflict Specialist Rasley and Assistant District Biologist Vekasy boxed up the two wolf scat samples we collected north of Waitsburg and sent them in for DNA verification.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Spokane Goose Banding Project: Biologists Ferguson and Atamian worked with WDFW Waterfowl Biologist Erin Wehland and Assistant Biologist Warren Becker along with 10 other hard working volunteers. The group captured geese at three locations in Spokane: Hangman Golf course, Gonzaga University and Liberty Lake. The group was very successful banding 121 and capturing over 140 geese, which included recaptures and goslings too young to band.



Blue Mountains Golden Eagle monitoring: Assistant District Biologist (ADB) Vekasy conducted aerial survey of Priority II eagle territories within the influence of wind power development. Two territories had nestlings within 80% of fledging age (considered successful), and one had adults present but no indication of any nestlings. Also observed Priority I nest at Cummings Creek, which had failed, but found a new territory/nest south of Cummings Creek with surprisingly young nestling for this area at this time of year. Another new territory/nest this year in the Tucannon river drainage had a single 8 week-old nestling. District Biologist Wik checked one golden eagle nest in upper Alpowa Creek this week that had two nestlings in it. Both were old enough to be considered successful.



Wildlife Areas

Sherman Creek Wildlife Area Prescribed Burning – The prescribed burning component of the habitat improvement project on the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area continued this week. The burn window was limited this week by weather, but the crew did manage to treat approximately 17 acres. Burning was conducted from 6:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. on Wednesday night, and again on Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.



Night burning in the Cougar Unit at Sherman Creek Wildlife Area

Chief Joseph Wildlife Area – Wildfire: Wildlife Area Manager Bob Dice responded to a report of a wildfire on the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area on Saturday June 8. Crews from Blue Mountains Fire District #1(BMFD), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) also responded initially. Due to jurisdictional uncertainties, there was quite a bit of confusion at the beginning of the fire on where the fire could be fought and by whom. The private residences along the Grande Ronde have no fire protection, yet this is where the fire came from. BMFD's protection boundary covers most of the wildlife area north of the Grande Ronde. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) staff out of Vale, Oregon and USFS staff would only protect BLM land and could not engage the fire on the west end where BMFD crews were working. There were a few instances where homeowners were screaming at BMFD crews for assistance as fire approached their residences. BMFD refused assistance due to the homeowner's opposition to join the fire district when given the opportunity to be included.

This fire burned just less than 2,500 acres. There were 12 miles of fire lines. Some bighorn lambing habitat on WDFW land was burned. It is unknown how the bighorns fared during this fire. DNR took over command of the fire on Tuesday to the relief of BMFD crews who were exhausted. The IC3 team immediately ordered additional resources on Tuesday and by Thursday; the fire was pretty much out. All fire crews and the incident management team left the area Friday morning. During this fire there were five different helicopters used for suppression. Without air support, this fire would have burned literally thousands more acres of land.

Though much of the vegetation was green, it did burn in this fire. Green is just a color as we learned during this fire. The wildlife area provided a five-ton military cargo truck with a 1,800 gallon tank for engine support and dust control. The fire camp was located at buildings on Rock Dixon's land adjacent to the wildlife area. Dixon's staff made a significant contribution towards fighting the fire. Mr. Dixon also volunteered services of his private helicopter, but it turned out the pilot was not available.



Fire camp was located at these buildings with burned WDFW land in the background.



Helicopter view of burned WDFW land



The 98 Delta, a private contract helicopter from Eagle Helicopters of Spokane, dipped water near Heller Bar. Pilot Robby McKenzie did an outstanding job suppressing fire and working with firefighters on the ground.

REGION 2

Wolves

Wenatchee Wolves: No activity to report. Sightings and reports have dropped off recently. The Hurd Ranch has released cattle from the calving pens and they are back on the range. Payments have been made to the Hurd Ranch based on the current agreement.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Pygmy Rabbit Kits Released to Wild: Research Scientist Becker, Diversity Division Manager Gardner, Lands Division Manager Sprague, and a team of staff and volunteers released an additional 41 pygmy rabbit kits from all breeding enclosures to the wild at Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area. The kits were weighed, sexed, treated for parasites, sampled for genetics, and some were fitted with glue-on transmitters to track their movements post-release. The next kit round up will be on June 24 at Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area.



Left: A pygmy rabbit kit is held to obtain a tissue sample from its ear. Right: A kit munches on grass and shows off its new ear punch.

Pygmy Rabbit Identification Guide: Research Scientist Becker distributed a guide to biologist colleagues and Region 2 customer service aimed at identifying pygmy rabbits and distinguishing differences between pygmy rabbits and cottontails. The guide is aimed at helping staff answer inquiries from the public that come in frequently during the spring when juvenile cottontails are misidentified as pygmy rabbits.

Wildlife Areas

Barker Canyon Fire: Manager Fitzgerald inspected Pastures 2 and 3 that burnt last July as part of the Barker Canyon Complex Fire. May showers brought abundant June flowers, and good grass recovery, with abundant seed production. Approximately 33% of the Columbia Basin

Wildlife Area Ponderosa Pine forest was damaged. One tree was killed, but the other pine is expected to survive. Sagebrush cover in a large portion of Pasture 2 was heavy and as a result the fire burned much hotter and recovery will take longer.



Above: Taken from the burn line. Below left: Typical sagebrush cover, Pasture 2. Below right: Pasture 2 after the burn.



See if you can find the fawn? A doe found a small patch of green the next day within the Cougar Unit to drop its fawn where scents were masked by the smoke. This is a wide angle view of the fawn in the Cougar Burn Unit. There is smoldering duff within one foot of it so warmth may have played a role in where the doe dropped the fawn as well.



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

Wildlife Areas

Heads Up -- Rocky Ford Foot Bridge: After receiving hazard complaints regarding the aluminum footbridge at the Rocky Ford Fish Hatchery Site, Access Manager Josh Harmon inspected the bridge and contacted Construction Project Coordinator Casey Davidson from the Capital and Asset Management Program (CAMP) who had inspected both the aluminum and the wooden bridge on June 12 and recommended closing them. The shoreline supporting the bridge abutments has eroded to the point that the abutments have dropped, and the abutment supports are hanging. Manager Fitzgerald met Josh on site to determine what we could do to repair the bridges. Access Staff can repair the abutments for the wooden bridge, but repairs to the aluminum bridge are beyond our capability and we'll have to close it for safety reasons. The closure will surely cause controversy as the bridges are approximately three-quarters of a mile apart and the aluminum bridge accesses a very popular fishing spot.



Bridge



Hanging Abutment Supports



Tonasket-Oroville Upward Bound Program: Assistant manager Haug and silviculturist Brett hosted the Washington State University-based Upward Bound Program (pictured below). The Washington State University (WSU) Upward Bound is a project designed to provide educational assistance and support to eligible high school students to complete high school and continue on to

college. Students accepted into the project will receive academic support, tutoring, mentoring, career exploration, counseling, and the opportunity to participate in summer programs at WSU-Pullman. The nine students from Tonasket and Oroville participated in data collection using GPS and analysis using ArcGIS software. They also learned about the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, its history and current management. They will return in July to further explore the field of Natural Resource Science and Management.

Students in Upward Bound are four times more likely to earn an undergraduate degree than those students from similar backgrounds who did not participate.

Access Site Work: Access staff spent a day at Roses Lake. Fifty yards of gravel was delivered to two large potholes from a previous washout that would suck in a car tire very easily, while the rest was spread over roadway. Another 50 yards is needed to complete the whole site.



REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Jackrabbit Surveys: Biologist Gregory joined WDFW Biologists from Regions 1 and 3, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Colville Tribe for training on jackrabbit DNA collection. This summer, hundreds of sites will be visited throughout potential jackrabbit habitat to search for pellets that will provide DNA for determining population distribution and connectivity.



Above: Searching shrub-steppe habitat for jackrabbit sign. Below: Jackrabbit habitat near Lower Crab Creek.



North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) Grant preparation: Biologists Gregory, Bjornstrom, Ross and Buser met with Tina Blewett from Ducks Unlimited to discuss continued development of the Mid-Columbia NAWCA Grant request. The meeting was a great opportunity for clarification of the application guidelines and progress toward completion of the

request. Much work remains before the deadline in early 2014. Adding a land acquisition or conservation easement to the package for match would make the application more competitive. The group also needs to identify more projects as targets for the one million dollar grant.

Canada goose banding: Biologist Gregory was part of a team that included several members of the Wildlife and Fish Programs, the Washington Waterfowl Association, and other volunteers assisting Waterfowl Specialist Wehland with the 7th annual goose banding effort in the Tri-Cities. The dedicated crew captured 152 birds at three parks along the Columbia River in Kennewick and Pasco. Of the total birds captured, 10% were recaptures from previous years. The information collected from returned bands is used to track goose movements and survival and helps biologists set hunting seasons.

Biologists Bernatowicz and Moore also assisted in the goose banding project within District 8, where roughly 100 birds were banded.



Approximately 80 geese wait to be banded at Columbia Park in Kennewick.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Golden Eagle Survey: Biologist DeBruyn was finally able to make it into a site that has had snow issues preclude a ground visit. He found two adult eagles at the site but wasn't able to see

the actual nest. It is only the second golden eagle site that has been found to be occupied in District 14 this year.



Snoqualmie Bear Project:

Biologist Smith assisted Graduate Student Welfelt with checking barbed-wire bear hair corrals. Bear hair samples were collected at 50% of the 27 corrals checked. Several corrals produced over 20 samples, with 46 being collected at a single corral. All corrals were refurbished and fresh lure added. The corrals will be checked again and removed in 10 days.

A Black Bear hair sample was caught by a barb of a corral during the Snoqualmie Bear Project.

U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Administrative Access Meeting: Biologist Danilson met with the new District Ranger and Wildlife Biologist for the Baker District of the Mount-Baker Snoqualmie National Forest. The purpose of the meeting was to develop a more streamlined process for WDFW to get administrative access for work in areas that are otherwise closed to the public. Several road systems on the Baker District have wildlife-related winter closures and are thus gated. Danilson provided USFS staff with background on the closures and updated information related to population size and distribution of the species being protected. As a result of the meeting, the process for wildlife and fisheries staff to obtain access should be much less burdensome.

Oregon Spotted Frog Project: Biologist Danilson reviewed plans for a proposed project in Whatcom County that has the potential to impact one of the larger breeding sites of Oregon spotted frogs. Danilson also discussed the project with the project proponent from the Natural Resource Conservation Service, WDFW Habitat Biologist Cole, and WDFW Biologist Hallock to evaluate potential project impacts and discuss potential next steps. Biologist DeBruyn transcribed and submitted this year's egg mass surveys to the WDSM.

US Navy Pika Surveys: Biologist Milner met with Navy staff for a kick-off meeting for the pika surveys at Jim Creek Navy property. The reporting process for progress on the contract was reviewed, as were questions regarding access, safety, and the timing of the first visit to the Jim Creek installation to meet staff and review the site.

Bald Eagle Data Management Support: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued to work with Biologist Stinson of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) about specifics of the boundaries and history of a Bald Eagle roost location that is impacted by a proposed Forest Practices Application. 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 began a GIS habitat survey for American Pika in preparation for beginning a contract from the U.S. Navy for surveys at a low-elevation naval installation. A survey form was also designed. 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.

Peregrine Falcon: Assistant District Biologist Cyra visited the Index Town Wall in an attempt to determine nesting status. Washington State Parks, which administers the wall, has instituted a volunteer closure on several routes due to this nest which expires on July 1. Parks was asking if this timeline was still appropriate. While a single bird was observed, the ledge is not visible from the ground and behavior of the bird was such that ledge activity could not be ascertained.

Elk Crop Damage: Biologist Smith worked with Officer Krenz and Problem Wildlife Coordinator Carrell to arrange for night watchmen/hazers to help combat elk caused crop damage in the Green Valley area.

Western Bluebird Relocation Project: Biologist DeBruyn met with Biologist Milner and a private consultant to work out a system to investigate nest box predation using trail cameras.

Wildlife Areas

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. Additionally, Manager Boehm characterized the Unit for a local photographer. Dan Douglas, a photo-hobbyist, is interested in photographing waterfowl and wildlife on the Ebey Island Unit.

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm and Werkhoven Dairy completed planting 20 acres of barley on the four fields within the Unit. All total, there are approximately 90 acres planted with corn and barley, with 20 acres of barley and 10 acres of corn that will be retained for wildlife this coming fall. Additionally, the Sky Valley Tractor Club continues to mow a portion of their field to provide access for dog training, and have harvested the hay on approximately five acres of the field. They have also begun soil preparation for weed control and planting a new field of wheat to be retained for wildlife.

Corson Wildlife Preserve: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm worked with long-term volunteers to provide barley and millet seed for six acres of fields for wildlife forage. Additionally, gravel, planking and posts were provided for maintenance and repairs of the trail

and boardwalk system within the Unit. Nature lovers and bird watchers utilize the trails to gain access to the many habitat features within the Unit.

Lake Terrell Grass Field Planting: Manager Kessler and Natural Resource Technician Deyo planted grass and oat seeds in a three acre field at Lake Terrell.

Noxious Weed Control Mowing: Natural Resource Technician Deyo mowed invasive poison hemlock on the Nooksack Unit. He also mowed fields at Lake Terrell to prevent the reed canary grass from going to seed.

British Petroleum (BP) Barley Plantings: Manager Kessler coordinated with the farmer who will be planting 20 acres of barley on the BP Unit. The fields have been worked up, and will be planted very soon. Manager Kessler also discussed ways to harvest hay from fields and leave some grass standing for cover to improve hunting on the site.

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

Wildlife Management

Band-tailed Pigeon study: Biologist DeBruyn with assistance from Biologist Anderson and Officer Jones trapped pigeons near Deming in Whatcom County and put two transmitters on adult male band-tails. This brings the number of transmitters in Whatcom to five which is the target number for the county. There are two transmitters out in Skagit and we hope to put on three more next week.

The highlight last week was seeing a pigeon at the Deming trap site that had been trapped and equipped with a transmitter earlier at a site on Agate Bay Lane near Lake Whatcom. Another of the Whatcom birds is hanging around between Acme and Van Zandt and the third is staying pretty close to the feeder where it was trapped. The Skagit birds seem to be more sedentary and both are still pretty close to Hamilton where they were caught.

There are 23 birds in Skagit and 15 in Whatcom that are banded with aluminum bands on one leg and visual I.D. bands on the other. The Agate Bay birds have the pink band on the left leg whereas the Deming birds have it on the right. The Skagit birds have the yellow band on the left leg and if we develop another trap site there they will get the opposite.



Officer Jones does some community outreach while holding a band-tailed pigeon that is ready to be banded.

Judson Lake Remediation: Biologist Danilson participated in a conference call with the Judson Lake group to discuss progress and plans for dealing with relic lead shot at the bottom of the lake. Danilson and Section Manager Kraege also coordinated with WDFW habitat personnel to develop a clearer picture on the permits necessary to implement the proposed plan. Judson Lake, which straddles the U.S.-Canada border, is a favored roost site for trumpeter swans. Lead shot, left behind from decades of waterfowl hunting at Judson Lake, is believed to be a key source of lead ingestion by the swans. For more than a decade swans have been excluded and/or hazed away from the lake, which appears to have reduced mortality. The proposed project is intended to result in a long-term solution by making the shot less available to the swans.

Wildlife Areas

Skagit Agricultural Enhancement and Lease Program

Island Unit: Manager Belinda Rotton met with Restoration Projects Coordinator Loren Brokaw to discuss the development of an Island Unit Ditch Maintenance Plan and are preparing for potential permit applications. Private individuals are interested in donating heavy equipment services to WDFW to assist with the drainage maintenance on the Island Unit.

Natural Resource Specialist (NRS) Greg Meis and Natural Resources Technician (NRT) Curran Cosgrove prepared fields and planted 10 more acres to millet and about 3 acres of barley. Additional ground being prepared for planting next week. Private individuals have offered to donate corn seed and planting services to plant the Island Unit. Provided transport options to ferry equipment can be negotiated quickly it is likely that corn could be planted this season.

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

Leque Island: Staff coordinated the planting of 48 acres of barley with a local vendor and our sharecrop farmer is completing this seasons plantings.

Safety Zone Signs and Posts: Natural Resource Technician Deyo replaced faded Safety Zone signs and metal posts with new signs and wood posts on the Lake Terrell Unit.

North Cascades Elk Management Group: Public Affairs distributed a press release to local media to introduce the North Cascades Elk Management Group and to invite the public to the upcoming meeting on June 26 from 6:30–8:30 p.m. at Sedro Woolley Community Center. The Skagit Valley Herald wrote an article about the group at http://www.goskagit.com/all_access/public-meeting-on-elk-population-scheduled/article_543e7199-4f2f-5915-96a1-8427c7f39965.html

Leque Island: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) distributed a new timeline for completing their determination on whether or not the groundwater study met originally outlined protocols and standards. The new timeline anticipates their final determination to be complete by July 31.

Restoration Pathway: Restoration Projects Coordinator Brokaw completed a draft of a restoration project tracking form that will be distributed for internal review. The intent of the tracking form is to help restoration project proponents understand and plan for all steps that need to be completed to install restoration projects on WDFW lands.

Private Lands/Access



Above: Technician Otto assisted a private land partner in planting 20 acres of barley for migrating waterfowl forage on the Harksell Unit in Whatcom County. Below: Technician Otto met with successful bear hunters and gathered keys and tooth samples.





Region 4 access crew chipping storm debris with help from WDFW's noxious weed crew at the Hoover Access Site located on the Snohomish River. The tops of several large cottonwood and maple trees were blown down by high winds.

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

Wildlife Management

Requests from the Public: Biologist Milner talked with various members of the public, providing information on marbled murrelet Forest Practice Rules, conflicts with deer eating vegetable and fruit gardens, where to find Priority Habitat and Species (PHS) maps on the WDFW website, how to turn in keys from the Monroe spring bear hunt, and the reasons for apparent shorter late buck and muzzleloader seasons for black-tailed deer.

Biologists Danilson and DeBruyn fielded several calls dealing with animals, from river otters to deer causing problems for landowners. Biologist Anderson spent time assisting Olympia, Mill Creek and Wildlife Health in responding to trapped, injured, dead or wildlife concerns related to development. All of them related to “urban” environment situations.

Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm collaborated with WDFW staffers Steven Sherlock and Christine Redmond to discuss the procedure for

issuing vouchers to volunteers to receive a free Discover Pass. Two long-term volunteers participated in the pheasant release program during 2012 and volunteered over 30 hours. For their work they will receive their complimentary Discover Pass for 2013. Additionally, Manager Boehm registered four projects for the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area that volunteers can participate in to earn the required 24 hours for a complimentary pass.

Leque Island: Manager Rotton met with Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) staff to discuss the upcoming Highway 532 widening and Davis Slough bridge project. They will be working out of the Davis Slough parking area for much of the project and the agencies need to coordinate timelines and work areas. In addition, WSDOT has agreed to work with WDFW to maintain a field access from this location.

Headquarter- Wylie Slough Restoration: Manager Rotton coordinated a meeting of the Wiley Workgroup to provide updates on the tidegate repair project and the pump station project.

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

Wildlife Management

Conflict Specialist Recruitment: Biologists Danilson and Milner along with Sergeant Phillips conducted the first round of interviews for the new Conflict Specialist position in La Conner. Danilson followed up the interview process with Section Manager Simek, Program Managers Link and Robinette, and other staff from Region 2.

Scientific Collection Permit (SCP) Review: Biologist Anderson reviewed a number of SCP applications and provided comment to SCP coordinator, Biologist Thompson. More about SCP needs is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/scp/>

Supervisor Responsibilities: Biologist Milner worked with Human Resources to get the Private Lands Biologist position posted, which occurred on Friday and extended Biologist Anderson's appointment through August. Milner also worked with IT to gain access to the Private Lands program files now that Brandon Roozen has left WDFW. All files were transferred so we can use them and assure they don't get lost in the shuffle as we move to fill the position.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Western Pond Turtle Management: Trapping for western pond turtles was concluded at the Pierce Refuge site, with Biologist Stephens in the lead. Biologists George and Holman participated as well. A total of 24 traps were deployed in two of the more significant Pierce water

bodies. The focus of this year's pond turtle work is to investigate the extent and severity of the shell disease condition in the Columbia River Gorge pond turtle populations. During the eight days of the trapping effort, a total of 32 individual pond turtles were encountered. Additionally, 44 western painted turtles were located.

Black-tailed Deer Research Project: Fawn searches associated with the Region 5 portion of the black-tailed deer research project were continued. Study does are being monitored by a combination of remote (satellite) and field (VHF) methods. The does are located in two study clusters concentrated within the Washougal (568) and Coweeman (550) Game Management Units (GMUs). To date, six fawns have been captured in the Washougal cluster during 2013. Fawn monitoring is currently being conducted as well. To date, five 2013 fawns remain alive in the Washougal study cluster.

Fisher Reintroduction Meeting: Wildlife Biologists Anderson and Bergh attended a WDFW/USFS meeting to discuss the potential reintroduction of Fisher into the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. The intent of the meeting was to inform the USFS about the work WDFW has been doing in the Olympia National Park. Jeff Lewis and Harriet Allen from the Olympia office attended the meeting and gave an excellent presentation on our past work and future planning efforts for recovery of this species. Currently WDFW is evaluating potential fisher habitat throughout the entire Cascade Range for future release efforts. The Gifford Pinchot National Forest is just one of the areas being evaluated in this planning process.

Wildlife Areas

Cowlitz Wildlife Area (CWA) – Peterman Roadside Scotch broom Control: CWA staff chemically controlled roadside Scotch broom on nearly 75 miles of road within the Peterman Unit of the wildlife area to help prevent the spread of this invasive shrub by vehicular traffic. Since the density of the populations along the road varies from none to very dense, the roads were slowly driven and the plants spot sprayed when observed.

Cowlitz Wildlife Area – Kosmos Old Highway Gate Opened: The gate on the Old Highway on the Kosmos Unit of the wildlife area has been opened to allow people to access the water's edge. The lake levels on Riffe have risen to the point where access to the old Kosmos Bridge is now underwater. The gate was installed because erosion around the old bridge into the historic location of the town of Kosmos had made it unsafe for vehicular access. Ecology blocks had been installed to prevent accidents, but vandals kept moving them. An unsuspecting driver could drive into the gap between the bridge and the old roadbed.

Cowlitz Wildlife Area – Allen Barn Approach Archaeological Evaluation Request: CWA staff submitted a request for archaeological evaluation to Tacoma Power for the Allen Barn Approach project. This project is a ground disturbing project as the ground will be cleared of all sod prior to rocking the approach. The evaluation was submitted in accordance with policies to protect cultural resources.

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

Private Lands/Access

Kress Lake Boat Launch: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes spent time this week monitoring the Kress Lake Boat Launch project. The boat launch has been installed and trail surrounding the lake has been graveled and mostly packed. The work is expected to be completed by the end of June.



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. Biologist Michaelis did not observe or capture any new fawns. The total number of deer being monitored in the Capitol Forest Cluster remains at seven does, two yearlings, and one fawn.

Black Tailed Deer Mortality Study -- Vail: Biologist Tirhi and staff conducted two fawn searches in the Vail study area last week associated with the mortality study. Tirhi was able to force a GPS location for one doe from one mile away, which allowed Tirhi to walk into the clear-cut in which the doe was bedding quietly enough to get good visuals. The doe may still be pregnant, but the pregnancy was not as obvious as it sometime is. No fawns were seen following

the doe and Tirhi found no fawns following an extensive search of her location. The doe rambled away approximately 400 feet to bed down, behavior not suggestive of having left fawns behind. Tirhi next checked a doe whose VIT had been expelled the week preceding. Tirhi was able to locate one newborn dead female fawn that was in excellent condition which has been killed by coyotes. Tirhi processed this as mortality. Extensive search did not produce a twin. Biologist Rice and staff searched for a twin the following day but were not successful. The doe's movements since do not suggest a twin, but staff will continue to monitor both preceding does. A third doe at Vail continues to move in a pattern that does not suggest fawning; staff will attempt to get to this location this week and get visuals and conduct another fawn search. Finally, the fourth and last remaining doe at Vail has yet to expel her VIT (and/or the VIT has malfunctioned).



Dead fawn killed by coyotes in the Vail study area of the Black-tailed Deer Mortality Study.

Black Tailed Deer Mortality Study -- Mason and 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. No new fawns were added last week. Additional searches will continue this week.

Black Tailed Deer Mortality Study -- Pysht: No mortalities or fawning events occurred during the past week of June 9-15. One remaining doe, 10696 (293PYF), has yet to birth her fawns or drop her VIT. The collar has sent three separation event notices this last week. Biologists Loafman and Ament checked on the status of doe 293PYF on June 11. Data was retrieved from her collar to help Biologist Rice determine why the collar is sending these faulty messages.

Biologist Loafman downloaded GPS, Activity and Sensor data from the collared does on June 9 and June 15 and checked on the signal status of the 2012 fawn on June 12. Biologist Loafman instructed Biologist Ament on how to enter data into the PDA and download collar data using the hand-held terminal. Biologist McMillan downloaded and updated all the data from PDA and Handheld Terminal and put copies on the S drive.

Western Snowy Plovers: Biologists Hoenes, Sundstrom, and Michaelis conducted the second breeding adult snowy plover survey at Midway Beach. Data has not yet been summarized to determine the number of double observations, but biologists observed a minimum of 15 adult plovers. In addition, they located two new scrapes (nest cup made by a male that may be chosen by a female to lay her eggs in) and one new active nest that had three eggs. With the discovery of the new nest, there have been a total of 10 nests observed at Midway Beach thus far. One has hatched and the male was observed last week with two of the three known chicks.

Biologist Sundstrom and Shoalwater Bay Tribal Biologist Spencer surveyed the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) dune restoration project site at Graveyard Spit and observed six snowy plovers; all six were in the area where construction will be initiated next month. Most notably, one of the males was observed tending chicks. This was a significant observation because that male had been observed at the site during previous surveys and biologists suspected he had a nest, but were never able to locate it. At this point, it is not known whether any of the other five snowy plovers observed have nests on the spit. However, one of the females was banded and was the same female that nested at this site during the 2012 nesting season. WDFW biologists will continue to monitor and survey the area on a weekly basis to ensure construction activities do not negatively impact any snowy plovers that are actively nesting or tending to chicks in the vicinity of the construction site.

Western Pond Turtle -- Mason County: As part of a long-term effort to reestablish populations of western pond turtles within the Puget Sound lowlands, Biologist Murphie began monitoring adult female western pond turtles at the District 15 release site last week. The purpose of the monitoring effort is to detect nesting activity and collect eggs laid for transfer to a head-start program. The head-start program, conducted in cooperation with the Woodland Park Zoo, allows for a higher hatching rate, accelerated growth, and improved survival of hatchlings until being returned to the release site.

Western Pond Turtle -- South Puget Sound: Biologist Tirhi and staff including one seasonal and one intern continue to be extremely busy with monitoring nesting Western Pond Turtles. Thirty-five females have been fitted with radio transmitters and are being monitored from 11 a.m. until 9 p.m., unless a female is out of the ponds and nesting, at which point monitors stay with the female until she is finished nesting and/or returned to the point. Nineteen nests have been laid to date. Several female turtles have come out of the ponds daily to roam the area only to attempt to nest and then abandon or not nest at all. Staff continue to transport half of the nests to the Woodland Park Zoo and left half in the ground to incubate 100 days, per the second year of testing which produces more viable egg (as measured by hatch success) and hatchlings (as measured by weights).

New Peregrine Eyrie Located: Biologist Ament had observed an adult peregrine falcon perched on a snag during checkerspot surveys on June 3. The peregrine was making some alert calls and Biologist Ament was quite suspicious that there may be an eyrie in the vicinity. She returned to the area on June 10 to conduct another checkerspot survey, but weather conditions deteriorated and the survey was abandoned. When she first arrived she observed an adult peregrine flying to the west below the ridgeline, so she decided to scout the cliff face with her binoculars and a scope. She was able to locate a rock ledge with some whitewash present and with some monitoring was able to observe at least three young peregrine chicks at the eyrie. The adult peregrine did not return to the ledge during the observation time period. Biologist Ament took notes and made a few drawings that depict the nest ledge on the cliff face. She will be submitting completed documentation forms to Data Systems staff this week.

Wildlife Areas

3 Crabs: Representatives from the North Olympic Salmon Coalition (NOSC) and Manager Guzlas hosted a public meeting regarding the future of the 3 Crabs Restaurant site and the potential restoration alternatives. The meeting kicked off with a review of the WDFW acquisition process and purpose for the site lead by Manager Guzlas. This was followed by a thorough presentation of the possible restoration actions lead by Jamie Michel (NOSC Project Leader) and



3 Crabs Public Meeting

Rebecca Benjamin (NOSC Executive Director). These presentations were followed by another hour of questions and answers. There was tremendous turnout for this Wednesday evening meeting totaling more than 70 participants. The majority of the attendees were local residents near the site along with Clallam County staff, Commissioners, USFWS staff, Jamestown S’Klallam tribe biologists and others.

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

Wildlife Management

Peregrine Falcon: Biologist Tirhi was alerted by Biologist Thompson of three peregrine eyasses that were killed at a railroad switching yard in Tacoma. Tirhi made contact with the

rehabber and falconer involved in the collection. She discovered that although three to four eyasses were seen in the nest, only one eyass (a tercel) was picked up on the train tracks where it was moments from being hit by an oncoming train. A similar incident had occurred in 2013 and Tirhi has spent some time scoping surrounding buildings for a possible new nest location (eyrie), but was unsuccessful. With this recent event, the falconer from Wenatchee was unable to get a qualified rehabber or WDFW to respond the day of the collection, so he took the bird home. Tirhi met up with him on Saturday and they were unsuccessful in getting the eyass back onto its ledge. Tirhi took the bird and made plans to transfer the bird to a local rehabber. Tirhi also got the GPS coordinates of this new nesting site to submit to the WDFW state database.



Juvenile male (tercel) peregrine falcon eyass collected in downtown Tacoma.