# Wildlife Program

Week of June 24-30, 2013

## SCIENCE DIVISION

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

### Wildlife Areas

**Citizen Science:** Mike Schroeder (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Research Scientist), Andy Duff (WDFW, Wildlife Data Systems Manager), Janet Anthony (WDFW Biologist), Matt Vander Haegen (WDFW Research Scientist), Chuck Gibilisco (WDFW Outreach), Jeff Burnham (WDFW Range Ecologist), Dale Swedberg (WDFW Wildlife Area Manager), and Leo Brett (WDFW Forester) trained mentors for the Citizen Science program on June21-22 in Tonasket and at the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area.

The purpose of the effort was to train mentors so that they could conduct ecological integrity assessments on wildlife areas as well as encouraging and helping to train other volunteers to do the same. The session went well and numerous random points were sampled and the data uploaded. The training session was the culmination of several meetings, development of protocols, planning sessions, and selection of random points that involved numerous people in WDFW.

**Breeding Bird Surveys:** Research Scientist Mike Schroeder completed breeding bird surveys at Scotch Creek, Chesaw, Central Ferry Canyon, West Foster Creek, and Swanson Lakes Wildlife Areas. The surveys were initiated in 1993 and were designed to monitor breeding birds on and near wildlife areas being managed primarily for sharp-tailed grouse. The surveys include 'treatment' points on the wildlife areas and 'control' points off the wildlife areas. Although the surveys were designed to be annual, they have generally been conducted three out of every four years.

**Mazama Pocket Gopher Translocation Study:** The 2013 spring field season for this project at West Rocky Wildlife Area concluded on June 6 with 237 captures of 199 individual pocket gophers. These efforts do not directly represent the entire population as we were only able to trap a portion of the occupied area. Estimates of abundance and survival will take more time to develop because of this sampling approach. However, it is remarkable to note that four of the individuals caught were from the 2009 translocation release, meaning they were at least 4 years old. Gail and crew also captured 130 untagged animals, 19 of which were juveniles (born in 2013).

During the course of this study, we were also able to assist with two other pocket gopher-related projects. Dave Vesely of the Oregon Wildlife Institute has been contracted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to explore the use of detection dogs to survey/identify pocket gophers, and we collaborated with him to provide training materials. We also worked with Jeff Rice of the Puget Sound Institute to record pocket gopher sounds for the Encyclopedia of Puget

Sound. Although the results were modest, they are apparently the first known recordings of Mazama pocket gopher sounds. Jeff is still working on the Encyclopedia entry for the pocket gopher, but the audio recordings are available at http://www.eopugetsound.org/articles/mazama-pocket-gopher-audio-recording.

**Columbia River Treaty Ecological Integrity Project:** Staff from the Wildlife and Habitat programs met in Yakima (and online) with HDR Environmental Consultants to identify and map known key areas of ecological importance for wetlands, island habitat, waterfowl concentration areas, and important areas for species of concern that occur along the mainstem of the Columbia River. These areas will be evaluated under different waterflow management scenarios based on differing assumptions as they relate to the treaty with Canada. We successfully identified critical areas for each reach of the Columbia, starting at the Idaho border and winding its way down to the mouth of the Columbia at the Pacific Ocean. The project will go through several iterations and analysis between now and September when the final report is due.

## WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

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

**Washington State Bat Conservation Plan –** The plan was finalized by Wildlife Diversity staff following a 30-day public review comment period. This is the first conservation plan for bats in Washington. The plan gives an overview of bat biology, habitat requirements, legal and conservation status, known or potential threats to bats, and relationships to public health. It also includes brief accounts for each of the 15 bat species found in Washington with summary information on historical and current distribution and abundance, identification, taxonomy, habitat, natural history, threats, and conservation measures for each species. The plan also outlines strategies and tasks needed to implement conservation and protection of bats in Washington.

Copies of the plan are now available on WDFW's webpage and a limited number of hard copies will be printed for distribution. Staff is encouraged to circulate the availability of the plan to agency partners. The Bat Plan is available at *http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01504/*.

**Enhanced Pocket Gopher Survey Proficiency Among Private Consultants –** Section Manager Bruce Thompson worked with Region 6 and Science Division staff to conduct a five-hour refresher session for private consultants who have received previous training to conduct and document Mazama pocket gopher surveys. The refresher focused on providing settings where consultants could gain additional classroom and field time with pocket gopher mound identification and clearer communication in survey descriptions for review by applicable jurisdictions.

The field session also promoted consultants arriving at consensus views to hone skills in dealing with uncertainty during field surveys. Observers also included staff from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Habitat Program and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT).

## REGION 1

### Wolf Management

**District 1:** Conflict Specialist Shepherd attended the Stevens County Commissioner's meeting and a Stevens County Cattlemen's Association meeting with Regional Director Pozzanghera. The meetings concerned lethal removal criteria, data sharing, public safety, depredation investigations, and wolf detection and trapping.

Specialist Shepherd discussed the recent calf mortality and wolf locations with a cattle producer and wolf locations with residents in the Smackout wolf territory. A data sharing agreement was left with the producer.

Specialist Shepherd received a call from Officer Parkert in the Smackout wolf territory concerning a dead calf. Specialist Shepherd and Officer Parkert determined the calf had died from cougar predation as the landowner suggested. The owner was given a depredation permit and a hound owner was contacted.

***Left: Officer Parkert and a cattle producer discuss depredation issues at a cougar kill site of an orphaned calf. Right: Cougar kill site of an orphaned calf in the Smackout wolf territory.***

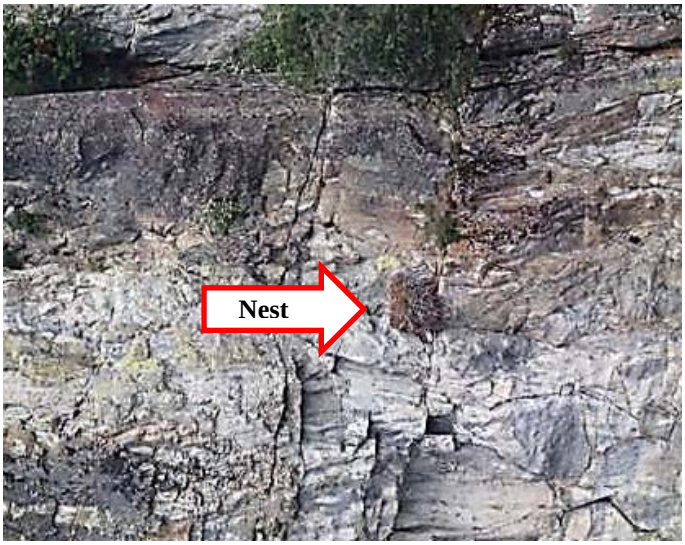
Specialist Shepherd produced maps of Smackout wolf locations and discussed them with officers, a range rider, and a rancher throughout the week. Specialist Shepherd met with the range rider and permit holder in Smackout Meadows to discuss wolf activities and data sharing.

Specialist Shepherd investigated reports of a wolf near cattle in the Tiger Meadows with Officer Parkert. Cattle were observed grazing and no wolf sign was detected although the reporting party is known to have extensive experience observing and studying wolves and other wildlife. A volunteer and a contracted range rider were also in the area and saw no wolves.

**District 2:** Wildlife Area Manager (WAM) Juli Anderson took a phone call from a woman in northern Lincoln County this week. She wanted to report a wolf sighting near her home while she was walking her dog. Anderson directed the woman to WDWF's web page for filling out the sighting form, and she agreed to complete it.

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

**Wildlife Management**




**District 1 Golden Eagle Nest Survey:** Teaming with Colville Confederated Tribes Wildlife Biologist Kodi Jo Jaspers, District Wildlife Biologists Dana Base and Annemarie Prince accomplished a helicopter survey of golden eagle nest territories within District 1. A total of 17 nest territories were surveyed including 6 "priority sites" for the statewide sample. No juvenile golden eagles were observed, thus none of these nest territories had evidence of productivity for this year.

***Newly documented golden eagle nest observed near Lake Ellen.***

**District 2 Golden Eagle Survey:** Biologist Ferguson conducted productivity surveys on our lower-priority golden eagle nest sites in Whitman County and found two nests with young – one with a fledged chick and the other with a nearly fledged chick. One other nest was observed with two adults but no juveniles.

***Golden eagle nest with one adult and juvenile found along the Palouse River in Whitman County.***

***Golden eagle adult found at another nest along the Palouse River in Whitman County.***

**<u>Wildlife Areas</u>**

**Grouse tracking at Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area (SLWA):** Volunteer Dr. Kim Thorburn and seasonal WDFW Tracker Nancy Williams were each busy this week at SLWA and vicinity. Thorburn retrieved a mortality signal-beeping collar that had been on a sharptail hen, but it appeared to have been a case of a slipped collar, not a kill. She also photographed a collared sage grouse hen with four chicks this week. Her comments on this event: *"The attached photo is of [a radio-collared] sage hen hiding from me. I saw four chicks with her on the brood flush. One looked a little larger than the others. She eventually got up and walked away from me and three of the chicks, which had been hidden to that point, flushed. She was clucking softly and after a bit, the fourth flew out. They were close to where she nested."*

***Radio-collared sage grouse at SLWA, hiding with four chicks, June 29, 2013 -*** *Photo by Kim Thorburn.*

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Concrete toilet problem at Loon Lake, Stevens County:** Two concrete walls are separating at our Loon Lake access toilet. Inside/outside visibility is not yet a problem, but this issue will need to be addressed soon.

**Blue Mountains Wildlife Area Complex – Access Program:** Terry Folkins serviced access sites throughout the complex this week. Terry used his ATV boom sprayer to spray Russian thistle growing in the Heller Bar access area parking lot. Terry also cleaned up the Asotin Creek shooting range. Terry has noted that four toilets at Heller Bar are in need of pumping soon.

***Loon Lake Access Site: toilet walls pulling apart.***

***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 – Elk Fence:** Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Dingman checked the elk fence from the Mountain Road down into the Tumalum. No holes in the fence were found and no fresh elk sign was seen near the fence. The one-way gate installed by Cuevas Winegeart and Dave Meisner a couple months ago appeared to be functional.

***One-way gate installed a few months ago by Cuevas Winegeart and Dave Meisner.***

# REGION 2

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

### Wildlife Management

**Waterfowl:** Biologists Finger and Duvuvuei conducted a brood route of Winchester Ditch, an 8.4 mile route between Winchester Lake and State Route 28. Sixteen broods were counted (12 mallard, 1 teal, 3 unknown) which is the lowest count since the routes inception during 1995. Ninety-nine broods were counted along this route during 1998.

### Wildlife Areas

**Aerial Herbicide Application:** After 10 days of weather related delays, Wildlife Area Staff finally met up with the contract applicator, Central Valley Helicopters, and directed the pilot to 330 acres of noxious weeds for herbicide application. Target weeds for the spring application include Perennial pepperweed, Canada thistle, Dalmation toadflax, Catchweed bedstraw and Russian olives.

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

### Wildlife Management

**Frenchmen Ponds Project:** District Biologist Finger and Natural Resource Technician Carpenter visited the Winchester and Frenchmen Regulated Access Areas to plan food plot planting efforts for the next couple years, which will be funded by Duck Stamp and Print dollars if the Columbia Basin proposal is funded as expected. We intend to plant 6 acres of winter wheat (August 2013), 10 acres of spring wheat (March 2014), and 14 acres of moist soil basin with Japanese millet and CanaMaize (May 2014).

CanaMaize is round-up ready, short stature, corn that may work within wetland basins without irrigation. Ability to apply round-up would help with the battle against sod forming grasses and rushes, which typically out-compete newly established seedlings, even after prior disking. Seed beds will be prepared with at least one herbicide application prior to disking in spring.

***Spring wheat planting at Winchester Regulated Access Area***

## REGION 3

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Burrowing owls:** The owls at the webcam burrow have been experiencing high levels of mortality in recent weeks. Biologist Gregory has confirmed that three owls at the camera site have been killed. In two of the cases, a hawk was confirmed as the predator by recorded footage from a volunteer webcam observer. It is very rare to witness this type of event. This provides valuable information about burrowing owl natural history and ecology.

**Wildlife Areas**

**Cabin Creek Unit:** L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Manager Weingeart and Assistant Manager Hunt toured the Cabin Creek parcels in upper Kittitas County with Richard Tveten. The area is heavily used by ORVs, with numerous user-created trails, bridges, hill-climbs, and redundant road/trail systems. Managers also met with Vic Monahan, owner of a substantial private inholding, who would like assistance in controlling ORVs that come off WDFW land onto his property.

***Cabin Creek Unit ORV trails.***

**Wenas Wildlife Area Access:** Wenas Backcountry Horsemen put up entrance/exit signs on the new Sheep Company parking area. Wenas Wildlife Area staff constructed this parking area in cooperation with the group to provide additional parking oriented to horseback riders, complete with hitching posts.

***Wenas Back Country Horsemen provided this entrance sign to the Sheep Company Horse Trailer parking.***

**Oak Creek Wildlife Area's Green Dot System:** Assistant Manager Berry and NR Worker Farias assembled and installed three green dot reader boards on North Fork Oak Creek, Garrett Canyon and Cleman Mountain (see pictures). In addition they assemble two more sign and loaded onto the truck for installation as time allows. The next step after the reader boards are installed is to build and install a kiosk at each reader board with information and maps attached.

***Green dot reader board installed at an Oak Creek Wildlife Area entrance.***

***Green dot reader boards installed at entrances to the Oak Creek Wildlife Area.***

## REGION 4

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

### Wildlife Management

**Killebrew Lake Assessment:** Biologist Milner accompanied staff from Olympia and Region 4 on a tour to Killebrew Lake on Orcas Island. Although WDFW has owned this Lake and some upland since the 1960s, some of our staff was unfamiliar with this property. Two exotic invasive animals were found in the lake: Chinese Mystery Snails and Bullfrogs. The snails have been reported to WDFW staff that monitor aquatic invasive species.

***Chinese Mystery Snail collected from Orcas Island.***

**Snoqualmie Bear Project:** Biologist Smith assisted Graduate Student Welfelt and Technician Buskirk with checking and removing barbed-wire bear hair corrals. Bear hair samples were collected at over 50% of the 40 corrals checked. Again, several corrals produced multiple samples. All corrals were removed to be relocated during the second round of the project.

***A barbed-wire bear hair corral used during the Snoqualmie Bear Project.***

**Black Oystercatcher Productivity Survey:** Biologists Milner, Cyra, Evenson, and Biologist Emeritis Nysewander conducted a partial Black Oystercatcher productivity survey in the San Juan Archipelago, a species we haven't checked in a few years. One banded bird from the movements study we conducted in 2007/2008 was found very near its 2007 nest site on Strawberry Island. Of the 16 sites checked, one pair was confirmed incubating; 8 sites had no birds present; 5 sites had pairs with one or two chicks ranging from 7-10 days up to 3-4 weeks in age. The remaining sites had adults present, but no chicks were seen.

***Black Oystercatcher adult and chick in the San Juan Archipelago***

**Citizen Science – Bat Acoustic Encounter Surveys:** Biologist Anderson and volunteers with Bats Northwest participated in bat surveys at the lower Snoqualmie Valley Wildlife Management

Units (WMU) that WDFW manages (Stillwater, Cherry Valley, and Crescent Lake). The group surveyed Cherry Valley WMU. The purpose of these monitoring surveys is to develop a periodically updated confirmed species use index of the sites and involve citizens in trend monitoring of bats within the Lower Snoqualmie Valley. Anderson updated the CERVIS volunteer project website and discussed needs and went over training with new participants.

**State Sensitive Common Loon Monitoring:** Biologist Anderson spent time checking in on nesting Common Loons in King County. One pair that had seemingly failed appears to currently be on eggs or has a chick. Survey time was limited and could not confirm actual status. Anderson spent time coordinating chick capture needs for July in eastern and western Washington with researchers and WDFW biologists. More information on Common Loon management in Washington, as well as state listed wildlife, is available at http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/endangered/ and http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/loons/.

**State Candidate Golden Eagle Statewide Survey:** Biologist Anderson conducted a ground productivity status survey of the active Golden Eagle nest in King County. The pair no longer has two chicks (siblicide is common in Golden Eagles) and now appears to, very successfully, be provisioning one 6-week old chick. District 12 staff will return to the nest site over the next two weeks to confirm the chick has made it to 7-8 weeks, per survey protocol. Biologist DeBruyn went into an occupied Golden Eagle site and observed a downy chick in the nest.

**Wildlife Interaction Rules – Osprey:** Biologist Anderson received word from a consultant biologist that is working for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) facility at Sandpoint in Seattle that the Osprey platform recommended by WDFW in a conflict situation where birds were attempting to nest on a NOAA ship three years ago has now successfully been occupied by the pair. See attached pictures, courtesy of Jim Kaiser, consulting biologist. Anderson also fielded some requests for management direction regarding work around current active or unoccupied Osprey nests. Anderson referred requests to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Migratory Bird Division. WDFW regulates removal of Osprey nests outside of the breeding season, October through February, under the state Wildlife Interaction Rules, available to review at http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/rules/.

***Osprey using platforms recommended by WDFW in conflict situations –*** *Photos courtesy of Jim Kaiser*

**Illegal advertisement and offering of capture and translocation of wildlife:** Biologist Anderson worked with Detachment 10 staff to discuss needs and a plan to address a situation that continues to occur regarding a citizen advertising and offering a wild species for others to relocate and "establish populations." Anderson will continue to work with Enforcement to take steps to assist in remedying this situation.

It is illegal to capture, keep in captivity, translocate, import, export, etc. wildlife of Washington without appropriate permits from WDFW and at times other regulatory entities. This is largely due to the need to provide conservation measures for our wildlife species – plus – wildlife are not pets! They are wild animals and property of all the citizens of Washington. Please let wildlife be and just enjoy observing them in nature and support efforts to provide for their habitat needs.

**Wolf Coordination Call:** Biologist Danilson participated in an internal conference call regarding ongoing wolf management activities and updates throughout the state. There continues to be little to report in Region 4, but participating in the conference call is valuable in that it helps maintain a perspective on what is going on elsewhere in the state and what the agency is doing to anticipate and or respond.

## Wildlife Areas

**Ebey Island Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with Wolfkill Feed and Fertilizer and Lessee Alexander to plant two fields of barley. Approximately 20 acres of barley is planted on the east side of the unit and a new 10 acre field is planted on the west side of the unit. The barley will provide forage and cover for waterfowl and pheasant this coming fall. Additionally, the parking area by Homeacres Road was cleared of weeds using the field mower. A highly-visible parking area has helped to deter people from dropping litter and waste in the parking areas on this unit.

**Crescent Lake Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm and the Sky Valley Tractor Club continue to conduct soil preparation for weed control and planting an area that has been neglected for a number of years. Their effort will help control invasive weeds and provide improved hunting in that corner of the unit, which is near the field the Tractor Club leases.

**Corson Wildlife Preserve:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm worked with Snohomish County Corrections to discuss the possibility of work crews for the Corson Unit. Crews were used in the past to build trails. Now, Manager Boehm would like to use crews for trail maintenance and repairs to the boardwalk. Training will be provided for the supervised crews if this plan develops.

**Cherry Valley Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm worked with Citizen Advisory Group member Paul Gilmore on coordinating volunteer work parties to mow a portion of the unit for dog training and trials. An out-pouring of support from local dog clubs has made it possible to begin mowing one of the traditional dog training areas this week. In addition to mowing an area for dog training and trials, additional mowing and trail clearing is also planned to provide greater access for other user groups. Paul Gilmore stated that his message to local dog club volunteers is that "all user groups will benefit from the volunteer efforts of club members."

Manager Boehm continues to work with Frohning Dairy on site prep and planting 30 acres of grain within the unit. Disking and plowing has begun and will continue next week.

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

**Wildlife Management**

**North Cascades Elk Herd Management:** Wildlife Program Staff attended the public meeting in Sedro-Woolley and presented a PowerPoint slideshow that provided the audience with an overview and the current status of the North Cascades elk herd. The purpose of the meeting was to take the initial steps in developing a stakeholder group that will work with WDFW to advise and direct management actions and inform the development of the North Cascades elk herd management plan. About 160 people, mostly representing agricultural interests, attended the meeting. As anticipated, the predominant theme of the meeting was elk damaging agricultural crops and the public safety concerns related to elk-vehicle collisions on SR 20 between Sedro-Woolley and Concrete. A good showing of agency staff from Enforcement and the Wildlife Program contributed to the evening program.

***Approximately 200 people attended the first public meeting held by WDFW to discuss elk related issues in Skagit Valley.***

***Typical browsed fir on Blakely Island***

**Blakely Island Deer Problem:** Biologist Milner joined officers from the WDFW Marine Detachment, Dr. Eric Long from Seattle Pacific University and two students, and landowner representatives to discuss the extremely high deer population on Blakely Island. Dr. Long has been studying the deer on Blakely since 2007 and estimated the population is three-to-four times higher than is optimal for the island's size. As a result, the landowners' foresters are unable to re-establish conifer trees, especially Douglas-fir on Blakely. Several strategies to try to reduce the population were discussed and plans were made to continue working on the issue.

**Stillwater Wildlife Management Area Wildlife Monitoring for habitat enhancements:** Biologist Anderson ran the second songbird survey of the season at Stillwater WMU. A highlight was a second year adult male American Redstart, localized and irregular on the west side. It has been three years since this survey, ran as a proxy measure of wildlife use in regards to riparian habitat enhancements. Redstarts have been documented on the property in past surveys and it was good to see that this property continues to attract a very diverse songbird community, with some uncommon species being more regular on site and using both habitat enhancement areas as well as more mature riparian habitat.

***American Redstart observed at Stillwater during the second songbird survey of the season –*** *Photo courtesy of Gregg Thompson (local birdwatcher and photographer).*

**Co-management Technical Committee Meeting:** Manager Link and Biologist Danilson attended the co-management technical committee meeting. State and tribal biologists are trying to revitalize this committee and have agreed to meet on a quarterly basis. The purpose of the meeting is to stay coordinated, share data and resources, and work together in a collaborative fashion. For the most part, this meeting (and the previous one earlier this year) have focused on the North Cascades elk herd. In addition to Danilson, attendees included Manager Link along with biologists from the Muckleshoot, Tulalip, Stillaguamish and Sauk-Suiattle Tribes. The wildlife biologist from the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and a policy representative from the Swinomish Tribe were also present.

**Band-tailed Pigeon Study:** Biologist DeBruyn equipped the final pigeon with a radio transmitter and released it near the capture site in Skagit County. Biologist Anderson has located all 10 radio equipped birds and believes all to be alive and well.

## Wildlife Areas

**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 and Intalco units.

**Lake Terrell ADA Accessible Hunting Blind:** The Whatcom County chapter of the Washington Waterfowl Association built a new ADA accessible hunting blind at Lake Terrell. Young and old members spent the day clearing and prepping the site and constructing the blind. The crew did an excellent job on this much needed hunting opportunity. This blind will be designated as specifically for handicapped hunter use.

***A new ADA accessible hunting blind was built by the Whatcom County chapter of the Washington Waterfowl Association at Lake Terrell.***

**Skagit Agricultural Enhancement and Lease Program**

**Island Unit:** Manager Belinda Rotton with the assistance of Capital and Asset Management Program (CAMP) Permit Biologist Chris Gourley prepared a Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA) for the Island Unit Ditch Maintenance Plan. The JARPA was submitted to Skagit County and WDFW for review. The Army Corp of Engineers has been contacted to determine if permitting is needed. No determination has been reached.

Volunteers continue to prepare the private barge for transport; new ramps are being fabricated off-site and plan to be installed this weekend. Equipment and supplies will be transported early in the week to complete planting. Corn planting this season may be limited due to the late date. Natural Resource Specialist (NRS) Greg Meis will check field conditions early in the week and modify the planting plan. Private individuals have offered to donate corn 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:** Skagit Wildlife Area staff monitored barley and corn planting at the Samish to determine timing of herbicide application. Sharecrop farmer has completed planting potatoes.

**<u>Private Lands/Access</u>**

**Monroe and Skagit Spring Bear Hunt:** Natural Resource Technician Otto continued working with hunters turning in their Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issued keys.

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Master Hunter Response:** Biologist Anderson spent time providing information and explaining process of King County master hunts to permit holders. Anderson provided Master Hunter permit holder data to the volunteer coordinator for the hunt in Elk Area 4601, North Bend, to begin August 15.

**Bald Eagle Management:** Biologist Anderson fielded some requests for bald eagle management. Anderson referred requests to USFWS, Migratory Bird Division. Anderson also worked with Wildlife Services Data Management group to update some eagle nest status as well. Bald Eagle Management requirements are listed at http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/bald_eagle/.

**Lost pet "wildlife" assistance:** Biologist Anderson was requested by Regional Customer Service regarding an orphaned pet ornate box turtle. Anderson provided identification and recommended the animal be given treatment and adopted out at a facility that provides for pet adoption and handles more "exotic" pets other than more common domesticated cats and dogs.

**Deer Damage Complaint:** Biologist Danilson accompanied Sergeant Phillips on a deer damage complaint at an organic community supported agricultural operation.

**Wildlife Conflict:** Biologist DeBruyn responded to numerous calls related to (among others), eagles, deer, ravens and killdeer. Referrals were made to agencies and rehabbers who were in position to deal with the issues.

**Private Lands/Access**

**Grower Signatures:** Natural Resource Technician Otto completed amendments to grower contracts and had them signed and sent to Olympia.

**Wildlife Areas**

**Snoqualmie Wildlife Area:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm attended the monthly meeting with the Washington Waterfowl Association (WWA). Manager Boehm provided a brief introduction as the new Wildlife Area Manager, and a presentation that provided the framework for management of the Snoqualmie Units. Manager Boehm expressed the need for volunteer work parties and projects that will greatly speed up the pace of improving hunting conditions for the Snoqualmie Units. Washington Waterfowl Association members were very interested in coordinating field activities with Manager Boehm.

**Leque Island:** Restoration Projects Coordinator Brokaw spent time responding to questions from people on the Leque Island Stakeholder email list that were generated from the update

email sent the previous week. To be added to the Leque Island Stakeholder email list, please email Loren.Brokaw@dfw.wa.gov.

**Stillwater Revetment Removal Project:** Restoration Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Lands Agent Iris are continuing to work with Wild Fish Conservancy and Ducks Unlimited to assure complete Right of Entry agreements are executed so that implementation can begin in late July.

**Samish Unit:** Natural Resource Specialist Meis mowed thistle and bind-weed areas for potential treatment later in the season.

**DeBay Slough:** Manager Rotton has been coordinating with a sharecrop farmer for the remaining 20 acre share of DeBay Island that needs to be planted.

***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 participated in a conference call with other biologists and managers regarding the ongoing recruitment process for four conflict specialist positions throughout the state. Danilson also participated in conference calls with Region 1 and 2 biologists to conduct reference checks for two of the candidates that have applied for multiple positions.

**Snoqualmie Wildlife Area:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reached out to staff from Barnett Implement, members of the Sky Valley Tractor Club, Citizens Advisory Group member Mark Ryder, and farm manager Steve Child in an effort to resolve and repair a number of problems with the aging tractor. Each of these individuals and organizations provided information, know-how, and volunteer time to fix the three-point hitch and power take-off system, repair the exhaust system, and get the tractor and mower operational again. All of the effort paid off on Thursday as the first acres of mowing were conducted at the Cherry Valley Unit.

## REGION 5

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Western Pond Turtle Management – Shell Disease Investigation:** Trapping effort for western pond turtles concluded at the Beacon Rock site this week. Biologists George, Stephens, Holman, and Anderson all participated in the effort. A total of 12 traps were deployed in the State Park's most significant water body. 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 seven day trapping effort, a total of 24 individual pond turtles were encountered, in addition to 70 individual western painted turtles.

***Western Pond Turtle Captures at Beacon Rock State Park***

**Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Habitat Management:** Biologist Anderson met with four members of DNR's Natural Areas program out of Ellensburg and Spokane to discuss land management activities on two of their ownerships in Klickitat County. A variety of issues were discussed including elk and sandhill crane habitat management, wetland enhancement, public access, and control of non-native vegetation. WDFW appreciates DNR consulting us in their land management activities on these significant natural resource areas.

**Black-tailed Deer Research Project:** Fawn searches associated with the Region 5 portion of the black-tailed deer research project have been discontinued. Study does are still 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). During 2013, six fawns have been captured in the Washougal cluster. Fawn monitoring is currently being conducted. To date, four 2013 fawns remain alive in the Washougal study cluster. Please see the attached photos from this year's fawn capture period of the black-tailed deer research project.

***Black-tailed fawn captures***

## Wildlife Areas

### Shillapoo Wildlife Area

**Canary Grass Control Efforts:** Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Loomis has completed the wetland disking and the planting of a grain cover crop in two North Unit basins in order to control reed canary grass and promote the growth of native vegetation. Both basins were almost entirely canary grass and sprayed last fall to reduce the vegetation that needed to be disked before planting could begin this year. The grain cover crop was planted to restrict the regrowth of canary grass and to provide a winter food source for migrating and wintering waterfowl. With an earlier start to the wetland disking and a late wet spring, native plants should also have time to germinate and mature this growing season in both the basins.

***Canary Grass Control Efforts at Shillapoo Wildlife Area***

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Hunting Season Opportunity:** Biologist Anderson answered several phone calls from hunters interested in upcoming fall hunting opportunities. Two contacts were made to assist disabled hunters with questions about road access and hunting success in GMUs 388 (East Klickitat) and 574 (Wind River). Although we are a few months off from the beginning of the fall hunting season, many anxious hunters are planning their time-off and starting to scout unfamiliar areas they have not hunted before.

**Private Lands/Access**

**Access Sites:** Access staff Spangler and Rhodes once again hauled garbage dumped at Vancouver Lake. Spangler and Rhodes also worked with the Larch Mountain inmate crew at several sites (Shillapoo South, Langsdorf Landing, Lacamas Lake, and Steel Bridge) weedeating and spreading gravel.

***Vancouver Lake dumping***

***Inmate crew assistance***

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Shillapoo Lake Estuary Restoration Project:** Shillapoo Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald gave a presentation to the Waterfowl Advisory Group on the proposed Shillapoo Lake Estuary Restoration project. The Advisory group has been interested in the progress of this project and invited Manager Hauswald to provide an update. A good discussion ensued about the project.

**Pinniped and Avian Predation in the Lower Columbia River:** Wildlife Program Manager Jonker gave a presentation to the Olympia Chapter of Trout Unlimited on Pinniped and Avian Predation in the Lower Columbia River. Current conditions of managing for salmon recovery in the lower Columbia River are complex with many comprehensive recovery plans that identify and provide an implementation strategy to reduce all sources of mortality throughout the

salmon's life cycle. This presentation provided an update on the status and challenges that come with managing predation from caspian terns, double-crested cormorants, and sea lions in the Lower Columbia River.

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Motorboat Operator Certification Course (MOCC):** Biologist George along with Natural Resource Technician Sample attended the Motorboat Operator Certification Course this week. The three day in-depth training was designed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and carried out through instructors from both WDFW and DNR. The course covered topics ranging from navigational aids, safe operations, legal regulations, and emergency procedures. On-the-water applications provided knowledge and skills in operating different vessel types, safe maneuvering, trailering, emergency procedures, and rescue. This valuable training will be applied extensively to work conducted on the main stem of the Columbia River and associated tributaries located within Region 5. Biologist Miller led the crew of 5 instructors to train the 16 students in these basic boating and safety skills. Miller is one of two MOCC instructors for the Wildlife Program. Several Wildlife Program employees were present and the crew from Region 5 did very well in the training and demonstrated great knowledge of safe boating skills.

## REGION 6

None