

Wildlife Program

Week of March 11-17, 2013

REGION 1

Wolf Management

District 1: Conflict Specialist Shepherd discussed wolves, wolf management, food storage, butchering of carcasses, and carcass disposal with U.S. Air Force personnel. Wolves were within 50 yards of their training camp within the last few days, which is in use by students. A carcass that was buried at the end of January was dug up and had coyote scat and wolf tracks at the site (see photos). Air horns and other hazing devices were offered and discussed as firearm use is not allowed in non-emergency situations.



Wolf track found 50 yards from U.S Air Force survival training camp north of Smackout Meadows.



U.S Air Force personnel observe wolf tracks just below the survival training camp north of Smackout Meadows.



U.S Air Force survival training camp north of Smackout Meadows taken at a wolf track made within last few days (above). Carcass burial site partially caved in by students after a tunnel was dug by an animal at the same U.S Air Force survival training camp (below).





Wolf track at carcass burial site at the U.S Air Force survival training camp north of Smackout Meadows.

Conflict Specialist Shepherd participated in a conference call with Olympia and Okanogan Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) personnel concerning a wolf attack on a dog in the Lookout pack territory. Conflict Specialist Shepherd and Officer Erickson planned a snowmobile trip during the coming weekend into Ruby Creek where numerous recent wolf sightings have occurred above ranches along the Pend Oreille River. Conflict Specialist Shepherd and Private Lands Access Technician Bendixen discussed wolf management issues and hazing with a cattle producer in southwestern Stevens County near known Huckleberry pack territory. Several acres of fenced area near the house were surrounded by electrified fladry for a night pasture for cow/calf pairs apart from the 40 acre day use area.



Electrified fladry surrounds a barnyard and multiple barns on a ranch near known Huckleberry wolf pack territory.

Wolf Sighting: An Ewan resident stopped by McCanna's office to report a wolf sighting a half-mile east of Ewan on Sunday. McCanna gave the resident information to report the animal which was close to an alfalfa field which has around 50 deer in it on any given night. Biologist Atamian reviewed the reports from the public (via the online reporting site) and found only two reports for the general area.

Dog killed by coyote: McCanna was contacted on Sunday by a homeowner nine miles east of St. John who had let their bull terrier out when they heard a commotion and their dog was later found lying in a puddle of blood behind their house in a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) area. McCanna investigated the site and the dog was killed by a coyote.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Golden Eagle Surveys: Biologist Ferguson went back to a site in Lincoln County where one adult golden eagle was observed last week and found a new nest.



An adult golden eagle perched on a tree last week and another one today perched on a cliff (left) was the reason Biologist Ferguson looked for a nest in the area. The newly found adult golden eagle's nest in Lincoln County observed by Biologist Ferguson (below).



Elk and bighorn surveys: District Biologist Wik and Assistant District Biologist Vekasy continued aerial elk surveys. Weather and competing interests for the helicopter delayed flights this week until Wednesday. Flights this week covered Game Management Units (GMUs) 169 and 172. All of the raw observational data has been entered and bull ratios have remained steady at 18:100 cows and calf numbers have declined to 26, with the lowest observed ratios along the Grande Ronde River and Wenaha Rivers.



Two young bulls play on the future 4-0 Wildlife Area (above). A nanny and kid observed in the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness (below).



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

Private Lands/Access

Private lands access provided/PVPA: Private Lands Biologist Dawn Davis continued to follow up with private landowners in Walla Walla and Columbia counties to inquire about their interest in enrolling properties in the PVPA program. Two contracts have been entered and are pending review in CAPS. One contract in Walla Walla County will provide 974 acres of public hunting access under the Feel Free to Hunt (FFTH) program. In Columbia County, another landowner enrolled over 2,200 acres in PVPA-FFTH, which includes about four miles of river frontage on the Tucannon River.

REGION 2

Wolves: On Friday afternoon, Biologist Fitkin and Officer McCormick responded to a reported wolf depredation on livestock on Aeneas Valley Road in Okanogan County. No wolf or wolf sign was observed. An old cow carcass of unknown origin or ownership was at the site and may have died of natural causes, possibly winter kill. A two-inch deep abscess in the jaw would have made it difficult to eat. Reporting party mentioned wolf because of scat at the site that turned out to most likely be coyote, although it was collected. The carcass was scavenged by a variety of smaller critters (particularly birds). The caller found it on his property and thought there was wolf scat nearby. The skeletal system was mostly intact, and it appeared the animal had lay down and died at the spot sometime prior to, or during the winter. There were no signs in the hide that indicated the animal had been taken down by any predator. Predation forms are forthcoming.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Spring 2013 Pygmy Rabbit Translocations: Research Scientist Becker returned after two weeks of translocating pygmy rabbits from Oregon and Wyoming. The trip was a success with 32 rabbits captured and brought to central Washington. Once again translocations were an example of spectacular collaboration with WDFW staff working with staff and volunteers from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in both states, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Oregon Zoo, Washington State University, University of Idaho, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, U.S. Geological Survey, and University of Wyoming.

Throughout the capture efforts, shuttles transported the animals to breeding enclosures on Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area and Dormaier Unit within 48 hours of being captured and all rabbits survived the trip. Just two pygmy rabbits were taken from Oregon as most populations that were road-accessible this year had low numbers, while our crews captured the 30 rabbits allowed from healthy population throughout Wyoming.



Pygmy rabbits (left) were transported to these breeding enclosures (right) on Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area and Dormaier Unit during the translocating effort.

Sage Grouse: Biologist Gallie and Scientist Schroeder completed the first round of lek counts in Douglas County for sage grouse. Counts appear down from last year, but early counts usually are. The highlight so far has been finding a new lek West of Jameson Lake, and incredibly on this lek was a radio collared female that was part of the 2011 translocation into Lincoln County.



Male sage grouse observed on a lek in Douglas County. Photo by M. Schroeder.

Mule Deer: Biologists Volsen and Gallie responded to a rancher's report from Douglas County of sick/diseased looking elk calf near his cattle yard. He was concerned about possible disease transmission. The animal was located and found to be emaciated and lethargic, with a significant amount of hair loss; however it was not an elk, but an adult male mule deer. After consultation with Veterinarian Mansfield, we euthanized the deer and collected biological samples and sent to Washington State University (WSU) where it was identified as fungal ringworm.



Euthanized adult male mule deer from Douglas County was identified with fungal ringworm.

GOAL 3: USE SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES, DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Private Lands/Access

Foster Creek Conservation District (FCCD)/WDFW Wildfire Restoration Meeting and Tour: Private Lands Biologist Braaten invited Jon Merz, District Manager, and Kristine Desgroseillier, Program Coordinator from FCCD, to meet with Private lands staff (Cotton and Braaten) to discuss FCCD's Wildfire restoration grants for Douglas County landowners. Approximately \$190,000 in funding needs to be spent by June 30, 2013. Cost share grants for seeding firebreaks, herbicide and bio-control applications, and habitat plantings on private lands are available. Private Lands Biologist Braaten is working on a partnership proposal to offset costs to landowners interested in planting trees and shrubs within burn areas this spring. The proposal would complete work for willing landowners at no cost using FCCD funds and WDFW labor/equipment as a match. Another option was to use Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) crews to assist to get work completed in a short timeframe. A tour was also given by Private Lands Biologist Braaten of burn areas and to show potential project sites on private lands. The group also discussed a DOE -Direct Implementation Fund (DIF) that FCCD is working on

applying for that would allow projects to be developed over several years to restore water quality in riparian areas by installing new fence protections, filter strips, and tree/shrub plantings. The potential is to use funding to protect riparian areas from grazing, increase water quality, and provide new quality steel fence that could withstand future wild fires.

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Colockum Elk Survey: Biologist Moore prepared and flew the Colockum Elk Survey along with assistance from Colockum Wildlife Area Manager Lopushinsky and Habitat Biologist Meyer. All went well except one unit was only partially flown due to heavy winds on the last day. The numbers are still being processed, but overall we should be above 5,500 total animals and the calf ratio is near 32:100 cows. Bull numbers are up as well.



A group of elk encountered during the annual aerial survey of the Colockum herd.

Vantage Windpower Buteo Research: Biologist Moore worked with Research Scientist Watson on a buteo study funded by Invenergy, for their Vantage Windfarm Project. The goal is to capture either rough-legged hawks or resident red-tailed hawks and install backpack GPS collars to determine habitat use. During our outing one red-tail was captured and a rough leg was nearly captured, but got away.



Red-tailed hawk fitted with GPS radio to determine habitat use.

Wildlife Areas

Elk Re-Entry Gate: Oak Creek Wildlife Area staff installed a new elk re-entry gate along Highway 12. This corner of the fence catches a lot of elk that get onto the highway and can't find a way back above the fence.



Oak Creek staff installed a new re-entry gate along Highway 12.

Winter Feeding/Weather Conditions: Elk numbers varied through the week at all feed sites, with 200-650 at Watt and 0-350 at Robinson. Winter feeding operations have now ended at all feed sites in Region 3.

Lows this week were in the mid-30s with highs in the mid to upper 50s.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Oregon Spotted Frog Survey Project: Seasonal Biologists Johnson and Bauman continued to conduct Oregon spotted frog (OSF) surveys at historically occupied and new sites where landowner permission has been obtained. Several sites were surveyed during the week and Biologist Danilson along with Megan Cook from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service were able to assist one day. Highlights for the week included confirming OSF breeding activity at three sites and a new site in the Samish River watershed.

This is the third year that District 14 personnel have conducted OSF surveys in Skagit and Whatcom counties. The objective of the project, funded by the USFWS, is to further delineate the geographic range of this sensitive species to assist this agency in conducting a status review of OSF in accordance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA).



These male and female Oregon spotted frogs (observed in “amplexus”) were found in the vicinity of several other egg mass clusters.



Seasonal WDFW Biologists Johnson and Bauman along with Megan Cook from USFWS record Oregon spotted frogs from egg mass data at a site in Whatcom County (above). Biologist Johnson obtains a count (below) of a very large Oregon spotted frog egg mass cluster (48 total egg masses).



Swan Mortality and Morbidity Project: This week technician Anderson has continued to respond to swan hotline calls regarding sick, injured and dead swans in Skagit, Whatcom, and Snohomish counties. A total of five trumpeter swan carcasses were collected and sampled for lead poisoning this week as part of the swan lead mortality, morbidity study.

All five swans, two from Whatcom and three from Skagit counties, are believed to have died as a result of a collision with power lines. In addition, technician Anderson followed up on re-sighting previously released swans and collected tail and wing feathers to be used in the fabrication of ceremonial garments by local tribes.

	Skagit	Snohomish	Whatcom	Sumas	TOTAL
Power line suspect	35	5	29		69
Lead suspect	26	1	13	4	44
Trauma*	6		7	6	19
Unknown	15		3		18
Feather Pile	8		4	6	18
TOTAL	90	6	56	16	168

2012-2013 Winter Aerial Waterfowl Surveys: Assistant District Biologist Cyra assisted Marine Waterfowl Specialist Evenson with database QA/QC and corrections for the 2012-2013 winter marine waterfowl surveys in Washington and British Columbia. Data from these surveys are for use in Pacific Flyway hunting recommendations and for formulating a nationwide comparable survey for marine waterfowl.

Additional survey information is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/mapping/psamp/> and <http://seaduckjv.org/>

Golden Eagle Nest Monitoring: Assistant District Biologist Cyra updated the Golden Eagle tracking forms used by Forest and Surveys biologists to track the progress of the Golden Eagle survey statewide.

Scientific Collection Permit (SCP) WDFW team review: Biologist Anderson has participated in review dialogue regarding various SCP applications. Currently one large project has generated some internal dialogue and brought up some good thoughts on streamlining for future similar projects. This includes consideration of imposing time windows for lethal take outside of breeding season, limits to take given site so as to avoid concentrated take, lethal activities and need for outreach beforehand in highly public situations, among other topics.

Hydropower projects and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) licensing consultation: Biologist Anderson worked with Biologist Applegate regarding ongoing wildlife management and habitat mitigation needs for various hydropower projects proposed in King County. Applegate requested wildlife consultation regarding an ongoing project.

Wildlife Areas

Lake Terrell Barley Plantings: Manager Kessler ordered the barley seed for this year's plantings. Fifty acres of barley will be planted at Lake Terrell this year. The barley is left standing and provides much needed winter waterfowl feed.

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

Wildlife Management

North Cascades Elk Herd Clover Trapping Project: Biologists Danilson and Technician Anderson conducted trap checks, baited trap sites, and assisted in the processing and release of cow elk. To date, five elk have been captured through this project this year. One capture site continues to be active; however, with spring green up beginning, elk appear to be less interested in the bait being left at trap sites. Trapping efforts will continue for two more weeks.

North Cascades Elk Herd Annual Population Surveys: Biologist Danilson prepared for upcoming elk surveys. Tasks included going through VHF collar data, preparing data sheets, troubleshooting "real-time" tracking equipment, notifying landowners, and coordinating with project partners and the helicopter vendor.



Danilson and representatives from the Upper Skagit and Sauk-Suiattle Tribe collapse the Clover trap to physically immobilize a cow elk.



Once the elk is collared and ear tagged, the elk is quickly released. The total process takes only three to five minutes.

Region 4 Spring Bear Hunt: Biologists Danilson and Roozen continued to make preparations for the upcoming spring bear hunting season. Danilson finalized a notification letter, while Technician Otto ensured that mailing addresses were current before this letter went out on March 15. This letter informs hunters about the upcoming landowner-hunter coordination meeting, where hunters will receive access keys, maps, and other information. WDFW Wildlife Program and Enforcement personnel will attend the meeting, which is scheduled for April 13.

South Whidbey Audubon Meeting: Biologist Milner was the featured speaker at the group's weekly meeting. The topic was "Dealing with Problem Wildlife," which was very well attended and Milner's talk equally well received.

Brant Aerial Photographic Census Surveys: Assistant District Biologist Cyra provided flight following for Marine Waterfowl Specialist Evenson during his flights over Padilla and Samish Bays. These flights are creating a set of aerial photos for uses in a Brant population census to compare past survey efforts with a systematic transect survey effort. Surveys are flown each winter to determine if enough brant are present in these two bays to allow for a hunting season.

Annual WDFW-Muckleshoot Tribe-Tacoma Water meeting: Regional Program Manager Link and Biologist Anderson attended the annual co-management meeting with Muckleshoot Tribal biologists, managers and council members. The meeting also includes Tacoma Water staff

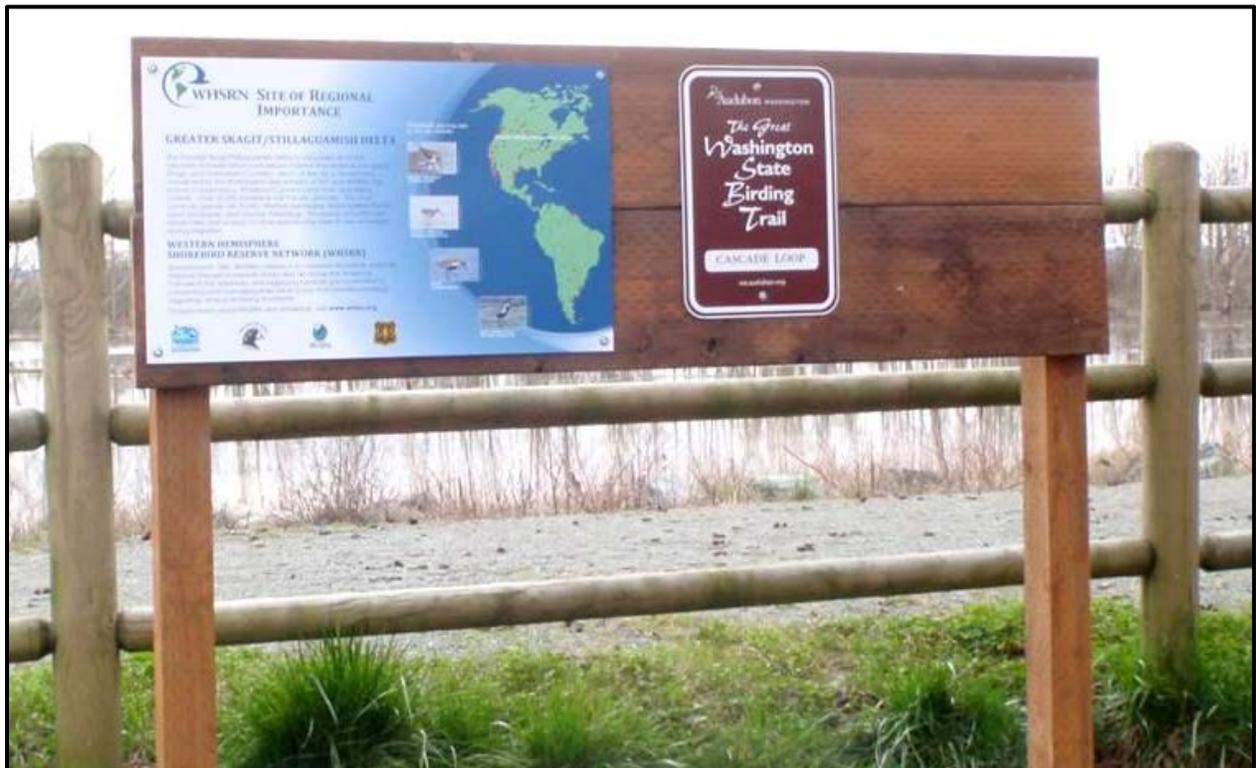
as the bulk of management discussion centers around co-management activities in the Green watershed (GMU 485). Management updates and 2013 permit levels were discussed.

Bellevue Master Naturalist Annual Training – Urban Wildlife: Biologist Anderson provided a two hour class to a group of Bellevue Parks' volunteer docents participating in their annual “Master Naturalist” group training. Anderson presented on urban ecosystem processes, urban wildlife ecology, urban wildlife research, urban wildlife conflict reduction, wildlife disease, as well as major topics that often come up in speaking with the public and how to handle them.

Wildlife Areas

Skagit Agricultural Enhancement and Lease Program: Manager Belinda Rotton and Natural Resource Specialist (NRS) Greg Meis met with two local farmers to discuss potential lease arrangements for the Samish, South Padilla Bay and DeBay Slough Units. Farm plans and lease proposals have been requested, but none of the lease arrangements have been finalized. NRS Meis prepared a draft of the Leque Island lease for review.

Samish Unit: Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Natural Resource Technician Curran Cosgrove prepared materials for three new duck blinds to be installed on the Samish Unit. Skagit staff is coordinating with the local chapter of the Washington Waterfowl Association who is planning to construct the blinds during a volunteer work party during the next few weeks.



Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove installed the new Western Hemisphere Shorebird Network Sign and Washington Birding Trail signs on the Big Ditch and Skagit Headquarter Units.

Island Unit: Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove installed additional beaver deceivers in various drainage ditches on the Island Unit.

Tennant Lake Boardwalk: Manager Kessler monitored the water level at Tennant Lake. Kessler hiked in and adjusted the beaver dams and deceiver pipes. Recent heavy rains have once again raised the water level in the lake.



The Custer Sportsman's Club held a work party to set up the Intalco Archery Course. They cleared brush from trails and installed the target bags along the course. The course is now open to the public until the end of August.

Samish River - Welts Property Wetland Enhancement Project: Restoration Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton, and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff had a pre-development meeting with Skagit County to identify which County permits will need to be secured to complete the project. The project likely qualifies for a Shoreline Exemption, but does require Special Use, Access, and Grading Permits.

Stillwater Revetment Removal Project: Restoration Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Wild Fish Conservancy staff met with Camp Korey, the property immediately downstream of the proposed project. The group discussed the project overview and how three different modeling efforts predict the river will react as a result of the project.

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP): Restoration Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Lands Agent Iris, Skagit Watershed Steward Warriner, Planner Williams,

Engineer Barnard, PSNERP Project Manager Tanner, and Skagit River Systems Cooperative Staff met to discuss the 10% Conceptual Design Report completed for Telegraph Slough through the PSNERP Program and to review the current status of the project.

Cherry Valley Waterwheel Creek Project: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with project partners Wild Fish Conservancy and Stewardship Partners and Sound Salmon Solutions to finish the Phase 1 planting along Waterwheel Creek. Approximately 4,100 native trees and shrubs were planted on hummocks along the newly-created stream channel.

Crescent Lake Wildlife Area: Approximately 30 acres of standing corn was cut to provide forage for waterfowl. The corn was left standing during the pheasant and waterfowl hunting season as cover.

GOAL 3: USE SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES, DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wildlife Management

Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary – questions to Director over legal status: One of the most common questions received regarding the Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary is “does this certification provide any legal status?” The Director’s Office received a lengthy inquiry regarding a non-profit music festival property that has been certified as a Backyard Habitat for 12 years. Anderson relayed certification does not provide any legal status since it is a voluntary outreach program encouraging wildlife stewardship.

“Wild” Red-tailed Hawk being held captive: Biologist Anderson received the almost annual report of concern from Seattle residents regarding a Red-tailed Hawk being “held captive,” i.e., weathered, outside a house of a local falconer. Much of the public does not understand or have any background in falconry and common practices. Weathering of falconry birds is a common activity and is for the health of the bird. A good local website that a former board member of WA Falconer’s Association has put together discusses this and other aspects of falconry: <http://www.themodernapprentice.com/index.htm>

Research Request for Tooth Age Efforts: Biologist Anderson is working with East Side Information Technology Applications Specialist Owens and Biologist Jenkerson to provide for an information request and coordinate data sharing regarding a tooth age structure effort that compliments population study efforts in the North Bend area elk herd. Efforts are being conducted by the local non-profit, Upper Snoqualmie Valley Elk Management Group.

“Don’t Feed Waterfowl” review assistance to city of Mill Creek: Biologist Anderson received an information and review request regarding development of signage that the city of Mill Creek intends to put up adjacent to a local stormwater pond. The pond has a large population of waterfowl. The stormwater pond is a very popular place for locals to feed the almost tame waterfowl there. The pond is adjacent to the Region 4 headquarters. Mill Creek has had animals chasing walkers on the adjacent foot path, issues with concentrations of waterfowl waste, as well as issues with trash left from folks coming to feed the ducks. Feeding these

animals may be fun, but it promotes unnatural behavior in wildlife, unnatural concentrations of waterfowl potentially leading to disease issues and general nuisance waste, as well as supplementation of their natural diet with a generally poor nutritional item, white bread. Mill Creek has chosen to put some outreach signage up due to these problems and concerns.

Wildlife Areas

Samish River Unit: Manager Rotton, Restoration Projects Coordinator Loren Brokaw, and Natural Resource Conservation Service Biologist Kathy Kilcoyne had a pre-permit application meeting to discuss the proposed Samish River project. County staff outlined the process for permit application and expected approval timelines.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Wildlife Management

Region 4 Wildlife Program staff meeting: Assistant District Biologist Cyra joined the rest of the regional wildlife staff for a meeting to discuss current and future activities and directions, receive a briefing on budgets, and to hear about changes in the Scientific Collection Permit process, Rehabilitation program and the Falconry permit program. Additionally, we were briefed on the status of the volunteer program within the Department.

Wildlife Program Staff Hiring: Assistant District Biologist Cyra along with District Biologist Anderson assisted District Biologist Milner with an interview panel to review candidates for a temporary position to evaluate Wilson's Snipe populations and status on Regional wildlife areas.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Black-tailed Deer Research Project: A fawn mortality search associated with the Region 5 portion of the black-tailed deer research project was conducted. Study does and their associated young 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) GMUs. To date, in the Washougal cluster of five remaining does, four fawns remain alive.

Region 5 Deer Management: The annual spring survey of deer on and near the Klickitat Wildlife Area was conducted on March 11-12. Klickitat Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven, Enforcement Officer Bolton, retired Wildlife Area Manager Morrison, and Biologists George and Holman completed the survey. A total of approximately 250 deer were observed during the effort. Animals observed seemed to be in pretty good condition, except for some animals exhibiting hair loss syndrome. Results of the survey will be calculated, graphed, and presented in future weekly reports. Thanks to all those that participated in the annual spring survey.

Pacific Flyway Meeting: Biologist Bergh attended and presented the Resident Dark Goose Management Program Evaluation on the Lower Columbia River at the Science Symposium at the Pacific Flyway Meeting near Newport, Oregon. Waterfowl Section Manager Kraege requested a presentation to the Flyway meeting to share findings from this evaluation as well as receive input to this management challenge. A report on the evaluation of this program conducted by Biologists Bergh, George, and Miller includes information on spatial/temporal distribution, survival, and band returns. Papers were given on various migratory bird topics throughout the flyway, including wintering brant conservation in northwest Mexico.

Wildlife Areas

Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area

Deep River District Team Field Trip: Region 5 Habitat, Fish, and Wildlife Program staff along with a representative from the Columbia Land Trust (CLT) toured the Oneida Unit adjacent to Deep River this week. The goal of the District Team tour was to discuss the long term goal of WDFW and CLT to acquire and restore tidal wetlands along Grays Bay for waterfowl and salmon habitat. While there, Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Technician Sample placed two wood duck boxes in the forested wetland, and made plans to return to treat the English ivy that is in the unit. They also made a quick stop at the Altoona Unit where they had just enough time to remove a small patch of English ivy growing on the forest floor.



Deep River District team meeting.

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Spotted Frog Egg Mass Survey: Manager Van Leuven surveyed the three areas of Trout Lake Marsh where spotted frog breeding occurs the earliest. The water level has dropped since last week, resulting in about a 50% reduction in water surface area. This has concentrated the frogs into a smaller area of suitable habitat, and the first wave of egg-laying resulted in some very large clusters of egg masses. One cluster contained 259 egg masses. Van Leuven counted a total of 524 egg masses during outings over a two-day period. On both trips, Van Leuven saw two sandhill cranes in the Oregon spotted frog breeding area.



Sandhill cranes (above) and a cluster of spotted frog egg masses (below) observed on Trout Lake Marsh.



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

Private Lands/Access

Polar Access Site: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes installed a new 4x4 post and posted Discover Pass, Be Responsible with Litter, No fires or Fireworks, and No Off-Road Vehicles signs within WDFW property boundary.



New signs posted at the Polar Access site.

Beaver Creek Access Site: Spangler and Rhodes pressure washed the moss off the restroom roof, walls, and floor.



Pressure wash maintenance performed at the Beaver Creek Access Site.

Sportsman Loop Access Site: WDFW construction crew installed gates on the road connecting the two Sportsman Loop Access East and West sites. Access staff Spangler and Rhodes cleaned the area and posted new signs at the gate and entrance road as well as pressure washed the reader board and a few of the moss covered ecology blocks around the parking area. These improvements will hopefully reduce the 4x4 damage, dumping, and vandalism that have routinely taken place here.



WDFW construction crew installed gates on the road connecting the two Sportsman Loop Access East and West sites.



Other

District 10 & Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area Winter Conditions

Past Weather: February temperatures and precipitation were both below average for the month. Snowfall for the month was minimal with little to no accumulation for the month on the valley

floor on the Mudflow Unit of the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area. Snow levels and temperatures have both risen lately, melting lower and middle elevation snow.

Short-Term Forecast: The 6-10 and the 8-14 day forecast are for below normal temperatures and normal precipitation.

Long-Term Forecast: The one month and forecast model shows below normal temperatures and an equal chance for above average, below average, or normal precipitation. The three month forecast model is for below normal temperatures and precipitation.

Habitat: Forage is available at lower elevations, and elk appear to have fed heavily on willows and cottonwoods in the Mudflow Unit, while most areas above 3,000 feet currently have some snow cover, and areas above 3,500 feet have significant snow cover. Most south facing slopes are snow free to higher elevations. Green up has started in the lower elevations, but more than likely still a couple of weeks away for areas above 1,000 feet in elevation.

Snow Depths: See attached table for detailed information.

Animal Concentrations: No unusual concentrations of elk noted to date. On March 1, 2013, a total of 180 elk were present on the Mudflow Unit monitoring area.

Animal Condition: The majority of animals observed to date appear to be in fair condition, although there are some with rough pelage that are in poor condition.

Mortality: No mortalities were observed this week.

Public Contacts: None to report related to winter conditions.

The public is reminded that the Mudflow Unit of the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area lying east of a line defined by Hoffstadt Creek, The North Fork Toutle and Deer Creek is closed to public access through April 30 to minimize disturbance and associated energy demands on elk wintering there.

District 9 Winter Conditions

Past Weather: Mild winter conditions continue to dominate District 9. No new snow at lower elevations.

Winter Severity: The Klickitat Wildlife Area is free of snow and eastern Klickitat County is snow free and early green up has started. In the southern Cascades, snow levels retreated this week as mild weather continued.

Forecast: Mild conditions will continue.

Habitat: Habitat continues to be open below 2,000 feet throughout the region.

Animal Concentrations: No unusual concentrations have been reported for big game this past week.

Animal Condition: Deer and elk appear to be in very good condition and no winter stress/mortality has been reported this week. Animals appear to be healthy and several deer have been seen with last year's fawns.

Mortality: Mostly road kill, not attributed to winter conditions.

Public Contacts: None.

MOUNT SAINT HELENS ELK HERD
 2012/2013 WINTER CONDITIONS - SNO-PARK SNOW DEPTH,
 NRCS SNOTEL DATA, AND SNOWPACK

From web page <http://www.fs.usda.gov/activity/giffordpinchot/recreation/wintersports/?recid=31178&actid=91>
http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/cgi-bin/sno_narr3.pl
<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/snotel/Washington/washington.html>

SNOWPARKS:		12/07/2012	12/14/2012	12/21/2012	12/28/2012	01/04/2013	01/11/2013	01/18/2013	01/25/2013	02/01/2013	02/08/2013	02/15/2013
Name	Elevation											
TRAIL OF TWO FORESTS	2,200'	No report	Trace of new snow	2ft of snow	More than 2ft of snow	No new report	No new report	No new report	No new report	10" new and 2 ft base	No new snow. 2ft total.	No new snow
MARBLE MT	2,700'	No new report	5" new snow	4ft of snow	More than 4ft of snow	No new report	No new report	No new report	No new snow. 72 inch base.	14" new and 80" base	No new snow. 84" base.	No new report
WAKEPISH	2,800'	No snow	5" new snow	42" of snow at the sno-park	More than 42" of snow	Sno-park inaccessible due to heavy snow	Sno-park inaccessible due to heavy snow	Sno-park inaccessible due to heavy snow	No new report	Sno-park inaccessible due to heavy snow	No new report	No new report

SNOWTEL STATIONS:		Stats	12/1-12/7	12/8-12/14	12/15-12/21	12/22-12/28	12/29-1/4	1/5-1/11	1/12-1/18	1/19-1/25	1/26-2/1	2/2-2/8	2/9-2/15
Name	Elevation												
		Avg Snow											
JUNE LAKE	3,340'	Depth (inches)	12.3	26.8	68.8	103.3	101.6	97.3	93.3	88.4	103.1	98.2	98.4
		Min Temp (F)	30.9	27.5	25.7	27.5	18.7	23.7	17.2	28.6	29.3	26.2	24.6
		Max Temp (F)	43.9	37.8	35.2	34.5	35.1	40.3	47.1	63	39	49.6	42.4
		Avg Temp (F)	36.6	32.7	29.9	31.1	27	33	28.8	44.9	33.8	36.4	33.1
		Year to date precipitation (inches)	68	72	82.9	84.6	85.9	86.3	98.6	97.2	106.3	109.3	109.8
		Avg Snow											
SPIRIT LAKE	3,520'	Depth (inches)	1.1	9.6	19.1	27.8	26.1	19.7	20.1	18.1	25.9	24.7	25.3
		Min Temp (F)	31.5	19	19	22.3	20.3	25.3	9.9	27.7	28.6	12.7	23.2
		Max Temp (F)	48.4	41.9	44.4	35.6	41.7	46	54.4	54.3	42.1	48.2	43
		Avg Temp (F)	37.9	32.7	30.2	31.6	29.2	34.5	28.2	39.1	34.4	35.9	33.5

		Year to date precipitation (inches)	34.4	37.6	42.2	45.2	45.6	47.7	47.8	48.4	56.2	57.2	58.1
Name	Elevation	Stats	12/1-12/7	12/8-12/14	12/15-12/21	12/22-12/28	12/29-1/4	1/5-1/11	1/12-1/18	1/19-1/25	1/26-2/1	2/2-2/8	2/9-2/15
PEPPER CREEK	2,140'	Avg Snow											
		Depth (inches)	0	0.17	14.7	24	24.6	23.8	22.8	23	28.9	25.4	23.3
		Min Temp (F)	32.4	30.4	30	30.4	21.6	27	12.9	23.9	33.1	28.4	23.7
		Max Temp (F)	48	43.2	36.9	36.9	39	41.4	43.5	55.2	43.7	53.8	45.9
		Avg Temp (F)	40.2	35.4	33	33.8	28	33.3	26.5	33.4	35.4	36.2	35.5
		Year to date precipitation (inches)	22.2	23.7	29.9	31	31.3	33.8	33.8	34.3	37.3	38	38.2
Name	Elevation	Stats	12/1-12/7	12/8-12/14	12/15-12/21	12/22-12/28	12/29-1/4	1/5-1/11	1/12-1/18	1/19-1/25	1/26-2/1	2/2-2/8	2/9-2/15
SHEEP CANYON	3,990'	Avg Snow											
		Depth (inches)	12.6	25.7	61.3	96.3	93.6	88.4	84.7	81.4	102.7	102.5	103.4
		Min Temp (F)	29.1	21.9	23.4	25.5	20.5	23.7	14.5	25.5	28.2	24.1	23.9
		Max Temp (F)	42.6	36.5	33.8	33.6	39.9	39.4	54.4	58.5	37.8	52.5	39.2
		Avg Temp (F)	35	30.7	28.2	30.2	28.4	32.3	29.1	43.6	32.3	35.3	31.7
		Year to date precipitation (inches)	60.4	63.8	69.6	77.3	81.7	86.3	86.3	87	95.9	98.3	98.9
Name	Elevation	Stats	12/1-12/7	12/8-12/14	12/15-12/21	12/22-12/28	12/29-1/4	1/5-1/11	1/12-1/18	1/19-1/25	1/26-2/1	2/2-2/8	2/9-2/15
CALAMITY	2500'	Avg Snow											
		Depth (inches)	0	0	13	22	18.7	17.7	15.3	15	15.9	14.2	11.2
		Min Temp (F)	33.8	32.5	29.1	31.3	23.7	28	21.2	32.5	32.4	31.3	30
		Max Temp (F)	47.7	41.2	40.3	36.3	36.1	43.5	56.7	62.1	43.2	48	42.3
		Avg Temp (F)	40.2	35.6	32.8	33.4	29.1	36	32.2	47.2	36.3	39.2	35.8
		Year to date precipitation (inches)	42.1	44.5	52.2	54.6	54.8	59.2	59.4	60.1	66.4	67.5	68
Snowpack % of Avg Snow Water Equivalent			12/07/2012	12/14/2012	12/21/2012	12/28/2012	01/04/2013	01/11/2013	01/18/2013	01/25/2013	02/01/2013	02/08/2013	02/15/2013
JUNE LAKE			no data	no data	180%	134%	no data	no data	147%	139%	149%	no data	140%
SPIRIT LAKE			no data	200%	410%	134%	447%	371%	350%	286%	414%	535%	486%
SHEEP CANYON			86%	91%	151%	165%	170%	184%	169%	145%	164%	173%	160%

02/22/2013	03/01/2013	03/08/2013	03/15/2013
No new report	No new report	No new snow. 3ft total.	No new snow and 2ft base
No new report	15" new snow and 90" base	9" new and 84" base	No new snow and 6ft base
Sno-park inaccessible due to heavy snow	No new report	No new report	No new report

2/16-2/22	2/23-3/1	3/2-3/8	3/9-3/15
96.1	122.4	116	116.1
25.7	27.1	27	32
51.4	41.5	43	50
33.3	32.4	34.3	39.3
111.5	119.1	122.5	123.5
2/16-2/22	2/23-3/1	3/2-3/8	3/9-3/15
24.1	32	26	25
21.7	20.1	19	12
48.9	44.4	44	47
33.5	33	33.5	37.3

59.2	62.2	63.9	64
2/16-2/22	2/23-3/1	3/2-3/8	3/9-3/15
21.6	30.7	27	24.1
24.8	31.3	26	27
56.8	41.5	50	56
34.9	35.2	35.3	39.8
38.9	42.9	44	44.4
2/16-2/22	2/23-3/1	3/2-3/8	3/9-3/15
100.5	123	115.1	114.7
24.4	23.2	21	27
52.3	41.4	41	47
31.5	30.7	32.7	37.8
100.3	106.5	109.1	109.7
2/16-2/22	2/23-3/1	3/2-3/8	3/9-3/15
9.4	15.7	11.6	9
30.6	31.3	31	35
50.5	46	47	53
36.3	35.5	36.8	43.8
69.2	74	75.2	75.4
02/22/2013	03/01/2013	03/08/2013	03/15/2013
130%	140%	no data	142%
398%	371%	344%	no data
159%	153%	148%	139%

REGION 6

None