Wildlife Program

Week of May 20-26, 2013

REGION 1

Wolf Management

District 1: Conflict Specialist Shepherd discussed wolf issues with Regional Director Pozzanghera.

Conflict Specialist Shepherd and Private Land Technician Bendixen checked and removed a camera in the Cottonwood Creek drainage and discussed the situation with a neighbor. Only coyotes were detected.

Conflict Specialist Shepherd, Private Land Technician Bendixen, and Officer Weatherman rode ATV's above separate cattle operations north and south of Deep Lake where the Smackout pack has been. No wolf sign was detected near the valley floor. Conflict Specialist Shepherd produced maps of Smackout wolf locations and discussed them with officers and a rancher throughout the week.

Conflict Specialist Shepherd discussed Damage Prevention Contracts, range riding, and preventative methods with cattle and sheep producers in what is suspected to be the Huckleberry Pack territory. Conflict Specialist Shepherd discussed a sighting of multiple wolves with a camper near Little Diamond Lake. Conflict Specialist Shepherd discussed wolf and bear issues with Officer Erickson. Conflict Specialist Shepherd discussed volunteer opportunities with two prospective range rider volunteers.

Biologist McCanna spoke to a landowner in the Hunters area regarding wolf preventative measures. The landowner has now been in contact with Conflict Specialist Shepherd and is willing to sign a livestock Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement (DPCA) contract. The landowner will be hiring a range rider for the summer.

District 3: District Biologist Wik and a volunteer placed remotely activated cameras in Game Management Units (GMUs) 166 and 175. A number of wolf reports were received and checked this week without confirmation of any.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Palouse Giant Earthworm: District Biologist Wik was approached by Idaho Fish and Game to see if the state of Washington would be interested in partnering with Idaho on an U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Section 6 grant (reduces cost share to have multiple states) that would determine if scat sniffing dogs could be used to locate Palouse giant earthworms. The first

grant would be for a lab setting to determine whether the canines can detect the worms. Wik passed the request onto the Diversity Division in Olympia.

Pheasant Crowing Routes winding down: Region 1 biologists are finishing up their spring crowing count surveys in the Pheasant Focus Area. Biologist Atamian ran the second Hay survey, 265 crows were recorded and had several visuals on roosters, but they would not stay put for photos. District Biologist Wik completed his final pheasant route in the southern end of the region and entered the data.

Moose Conference: District Biologist Ferguson along with Special Species Program Manager Rich Harris attended the 47th North American Moose Conference and Workshop and gave a presentation on "Moose status and population trends in Washington state: harvest, index counts, detection, and uncertainty," which was well received. Several biologists and the editor of Alces commented that we should write a paper on this topic for the journal.

The 47th North American Moose Conference and Workshop

Wildlife Areas

Cooperative Weed Control Project on W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area: Wildlife Area Manager Bob Dice discussed a cooperative yellow starthistle control project with a neighboring landowner. We are using grant funding from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation to pay for the project which has the ultimate goal of stopping the advance of yellow star in the Cummings Creek drainage, which is important elk winter range.

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

Wildlife Areas

Volunteer effort at West Branch Little Spokane (WBLS) Wildlife Area: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Palmer and Natural Resource Technician Jerry "Chris" Christensen traveled to WBLS on Wednesday this week to meet with Backcountry Hunters and Anglers Coordinator Matt Scott. Backcountry Hunters and Anglers as well as Backcountry Horseman have volunteered to remove old cable barriers at the west parking access along Horseshoe Lake Road and replace it with rail fencing purchased for use on WBLS Wildlife Area. Palmer and Christensen picked up the fencing material from the supplier and hauled it to the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area headquarters for storage until needed. While on-site, Palmer and Christensen also checked on weed growth for spring herbicide application planning.

Access Site Maintenance – North: Access Manager Scott Young visited access sites at Deer, Waitts, Jump Off Joe, Loon, Diamond, Sacheen, Davis, Eloika, Newman, Liberty, Williams, Badger, Silver, Clear, West Medical, north and south Audubon, Fishtrap, Horseshoe and Fan Lakes for general maintenance.

Access Site Maintenance – South: Terry Folkins serviced access sites throughout the wildlife area complex this week. Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Dingman checked the campgrounds and trimmed limbs around the entry signs. Many vehicles with campers were entering the Wooten Wildlife Area towards the end of the week, which is the norm before Memorial Day weekend.

Campground 6

Campground 5

Campground 2

Campground 1

REGION 2

Wolf Management

Wolves: Biologist Volsen visited the Hurd Ranch and introduced family members Ross and Doug Hurd to Assistant Director Nate Pamplin, Deputy Director Joe Stohr and new Regional Director Jim Brown.

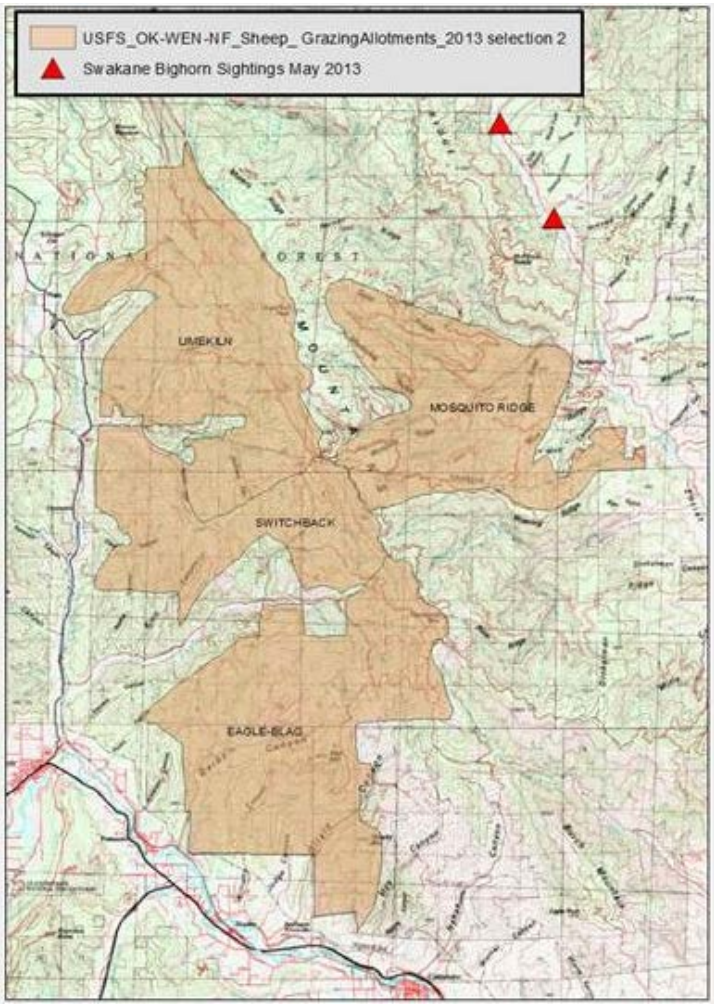
Biologist Volsen did an interview with Yakima AP Reporter Shannon Dininny on the Hurd Ranch and raising cattle in the presence of wolves. The reporter also met with the Hurd family to discuss their cattle operation.

Biologist Volsen worked with Conservation Northwest's Jay Kehne to develop an assistance package for a range rider for the Hurd Ranch.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Bighorn Sheep: There have been two different sightings of bighorn sheep outside their normal recent ranges that have put them in somewhat close contact to domestic grazing allotments. Biologist Gallie responded to two sightings (texted pictures from them too!) of four bighorn ewes up the Entiat Valley, about 15 air miles from either the Swakane or Chelan Butte herd. Assumed to be young animals exploring new territory, there are domestic grazing allotments within five miles of where these sheep are. Due to the high flow of the Entiat and Mad Rivers, there appears to be a barrier that may be preventing wild/domestic interaction, but the situation will change as water levels decrease. Biologist Volsen is in contact with the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest about this issue and they are adapting the domestic ranges to avoid contact. It is unlikely we will be able to track these animals, so any reports from the public or herders will be important. If contact is suspected, we will work with Region and Olympia



staff to decide a course of action, which possibly includes the removal of the wild sheep before they can re-assimilate with the herd.

Biologist Gallie spend time updating databases on sheep survey and telemetry data to produce up to date maps of sheep distributions for the three Chelan County herds. Maps will be used in planning and land management purposes (grazing allotments with Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service). Biologist Gallie also began documenting small flocks of domestic sheep and goats within and on the periphery herd ranges. Thus far, only one goat farm has been located with the herd-range (Swakane), and another two sheep farms and nine goat farms on the periphery of herd ranges.

Triploid Checkered Whiptail: Biologist Finger participated in a conference call to discuss next steps with regards to the arrival of the triploid checkered whiptail at Lind Coulee of Potholes Reservoir. At this point it is unclear what, if any, impacts the whiptails will have to native wildlife; they currently overlap in distribution with side-botched lizards. Whiptails are primarily insectivores, so impacts to native wildlife will likely be due to inter-specific competition for resources.

Wildlife Areas

Hapless Campers Motorhome Burned up at Forde Lake Campground: Fortunately the surrounding area had recently been prescribed burned and a potential wildfire was avoided.

Burned out motorhome at Forde Lake Campground

North Central Washington Prescribed Burn Team – Burning was completed on Blue#1 burn unit on Monday. With rain during the past week, the spring burn season on the Sinlahekin has come to an end with 200 acres prescribed burned. A two-person crew, team members Parvinen and White gathered all the prescribed burn plumbing, (e.g., hoses, fittings on Blue #1 and Blue#2 burn units). This was an important accomplishment with the impending busy Memorial Day weekend on the Sinlahekin and the risk of tampering or theft of this expensive equipment. Over the weekend several team members attended and successfully completed a class on Intermediate Fire Behavior (S-290) taught by Fuels Manager Leuschen.

Wildlife Areas

Winter recreation evaluation: Last week, Tom McCoy met with James DeSalvo, Executive Director of the Methow Valley Sports Trails Association (MVSTA), and the volunteers who performed all of the trail grooming this past winter on the Lloyd Ranch and Pearygin State Park

to debrief on everyone's final thoughts on how to pilot winter trail program. In short, everybody felt that it met or exceeded expectations. This new multi-use trail, close to Winthrop with excellent terrain, generated effusive praise from the public and was much appreciated by MVSTA as an inexpensive, entry level opportunity to winter sports. The Methow Valley is generating international attention as a winter sports destination and these new trails are viewed as a wonderful complimentary addition to the existing trail network.

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

Wildlife Management

Brewster Sixth Grade Camp – Assistant manager Haug guided a group of Brewster sixth grade middle school students on a very wet hike from Conners Lake to Forde Lake (see pictures below). The group got to learn about the history of the Sinlahekin, its flora and fauna, and restoration work being done as part of the Sinlahekin Ecosystem Restoration Project. Much of the hike's discussion revolved around the importance of fire as function within the ecosystem and fire effects/byproducts. There were lots of questions about the project and our prescribed burning efforts. There were also lots of soaking 'tween' feet and the second group never participated in the hike…better luck next year!

Outreach: Biologist Gallie had two Wenatchee High School students along for a job shadow. We located radio-collared bighorn sheep to observe lambs, looked at a golden eagle nest, and toured the Swakane Wildlife Area. Students were very interested in careers in the outdoors and with wildlife. They must have enjoyed their time as they were constantly saying, "Dude…your job is so cool!"

Golden Eagle seen up-close during a job shadow

REGION 3

None

REGION 4

I-5 Bridge the morning after it collapsed into the Skagit River in Burlington.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

One of nine band-tailed pigeons captured in Whatcom County by District 14 personnel.

Band-Tailed Pigeon Study: Biologist DeBruyn established a new trapping station in Whatcom County and successfully captured nine band-tailed pigeons. All pigeons were weighed, banded and photographed, and three were outfitted with VHF radio transmitters. Biologists Danilson and Anderson assisted DeBruyn in processing the pigeons. The objective of this project is relocated VHF radio equipped pigeons over the summer months to locate mineral springs used by the pigeons. On an annual basis, biologists throughout the state count band-tailed pigeons at existing mineral spring sites. In Skagit and Whatcom counties, three mineral spring sites have historically been used for this purpose. However, two are on private property and long-term assurances of access to conduct these surveys are questionable.

Biologists Anderson and DeBruyn put the finishing touches on a backpack mounted VHF transmitter on a male band-tailed pigeon.

Bald Eagle Data Management Support: Assistant District Biologist Cyra visited sites of Bald Eagle nest reports. WDFW is responsible for the management of the site data that USFWS uses in their management of the species in Washington State.

Marbled Murrelet Training Assistance: Assistant District Biologist Cyra provided survey related information concerning most active survey windows and survey locations to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Tribal staff looking for sites for a mid-season Marbled Murrelet survey refresher.

Stillwater Restoration Riparian Bird Monitoring: Biologist Anderson conducted the first of four monitoring surveys at Stillwater Wildlife Management Unit. A number of breeding birds were in full swing, as well as migrants still pushing through. Highlights were Nashville Warbler, Lazuli Bunting, a bull elk and recent bobcat tracks near a hen mallard with ducklings.

Towards the tail end of the survey, mid-morning, Anderson ran into a Seattle Audubon group, a family walking their dogs, and a field trial individual just walking their dogs, and pointed out areas to bird and what he had seen,. All got to see the bull elk and hopefully some of the smaller feathered type. More info about the Stillwater Wildlife Management Unit, as well as other WDFW Wildlife Areas and the units that make up each of them can be found here: http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/snoqualmie/Stillwater/

Heron Colony Management: Biologist Anderson met with University of Washington (UW) Landscape Architect and Facility managers regarding the heron colony at the Rainier Vista and upcoming construction work. Anderson pointed out active nests, relayed history, and toured the area proposed for upcoming major landscape and work to install a vegetated overpass to Husky Stadium and the Light Link Rail. UW will be working with Anderson to provide a plan that considers the breeding herons while moving forward with the construction activities appropriately. UW is very proud of their herons and happy to still have the colony in light of eagle issues in other Seattle area colonies. It is hoped to have students begin studying the colony on campus once staff become more available both with WDFW and UW.

Biologist Anderson continues to keep in touch with volunteers, Heron Habitat Helpers, and Seattle regarding the recently abandoned Kiwanis Ravine colony. Half of the colony simply picked-up and are now renesting at Commodore Park, just down the hill from Kiwanis ravine. The other 45 pairs are yet to be relocated.

Urban Peregrine Falcon Management: Biologist Anderson has been working with Seattle Department of Transportation staff and area peregrine monitoring volunteers to monitor the Ballard Bridge nest site. The male bird was quite injured and passed on in rehab. The female is very successfully tending to the 2-3 week old chicks currently. However, as they get older, it may be too much for one bird. Hopefully, another male will pair with this now unpaired female. If not, taking of the chicks to place with falconry and rehabilitation facilities may be considered. Monitoring efforts will help determine the appropriate course of action.

Urban Wildlife Outreach – Woodland Park Zoo "Water Features for Wildlife" presentation: Biologist Anderson in collaboration with Dr. Jennifer Pramuk, Curator of

amphibians and reptiles for Woodland Park Zoo, presented a "how to" regarding providing water features for area wildlife. Anderson and Pramuk also discussed specifically the value and management of features for amphibians, which are declining globally. Conservation issues and ecology of amphibians was also touched on.

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 200 pair has been delivered so far.

Stillwater Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm toured the Harris Creek restoration project with staff from Sound Salmon Solutions (SSS). SSS has completed the final planting on the three acre site along Harris Creek, through funding from the King Conservation District. Approximately 1,000 native trees and shrubs were planted in areas that were previously overrun with invasive blackberry.

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm initiated site mowing around the entrance to the Unit. Four-foot tall reed canary grass was mowed around the access gates and parking lot. Additionally, two trails were cut through the tall grass to provide walking paths for wildlife users. Additional mowing and trails are planned in the coming weeks.

Private Lands/Access

Spring Bear Damage Hunts: Technician Otto surveyed the two Region 4 spring beat units to examine new bear peeling (damaged trees), forestry operations within the units, and where necessary secured unit access gates. Otto contacted (in the field) enforcement personnel, security staff, foresters and hunters in the units and received reports of both increased bear and hunter activity.

Lake Terrell Field Prep: Natural Resource Technician Deyo continued disking the fields at Lake Terrell in preparation for barley planting.

Lake Terrell and Intalco Units Noxious Weed Control: Natural Resource Technician Deyo weed whacked blackberries in a fenced area at Lake Terrell. He also controlled Scotch broom and tansy ragwort on the Lake Terrell and Intalco units.

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

Wildlife Management

North Cascades Elk Herd Management: Biologist DeBruyn worked on enumerating human caused elk mortality in the Nooksack elk herd during the 2012-2013 season. The information will be used at an upcoming co-management meeting with the tribes.

Biologist Danilson worked with Projects Coordinator Brokaw to develop and disseminate notification materials for upcoming meetings with a stakeholder group and the steering committee that will guide that group. The scheduled date for the stakeholders group has been set for the evening of June 26 in Sedro Woolley.

Big Game Hunting Special Hunt Permit Opportunities: Biologist Danilson fielded numerous inquiries related to upcoming big game hunting seasons and opportunities. Each year as the deadline for special hunting permit opportunities approaches, district biologists are often flooded with calls by hunters wanting clarification or information relevant to the hunt(s) they are considering applying for.

Aerial Waterfowl Surveys: Assistant District Biologist Cyra reviewed and provided comments on a draft version of the Aerial Observers Guide to North American Waterfowl being produced by the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service.

Wildlife Areas

Island Unit: Manager Belinda Rotton prepared an updated summary of the proposed 2013 agricultural operation on the Island Unit for Regional Director Bob Everitt.

Natural Resource Specialist Greg Meis and Natural Resource Technician Curran Cosgrove disked Broadlyn as well as Field 1 and Field 2 of the Island Unit. River levels have dropped a bit this week and field conditions are wetter following recent rains.

Samish Unit: The draft lease to cover the corn planting on the Samish Unit was completed and submitted by Manager Rotton. This lease also combines private lands access sites as part of the lease rental payment.

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Plantings: Natural Resource Specialist (NRS) Meis and Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove mowed WWRP planting areas on the Skagit HQ and DeBay Slough planting sites. Manager Rotton and NRS Meis will coordinate with Tom Wampler of the North Sound Weed Crew to evaluate the planting sites for survival over the winter.

Lake Terrell Dog Training: Manager Kessler discussed dog training opportunities on the Lake Terrell Unit with a local hunter. Dog training with live fire is allowed on certain parts of the wildlife area, including parts of Lake Terrell.

Nooksack River Dike Trail Mowing: Natural Resource Technician Deyo mowed the river top dike trail along the Nooksack River on the Nooksack Unit.

Stillwater Revetment Removal: Restoration Projects Coordinator Brokaw drafted a set of performance measures to be included with the Right of Entry agreement for Wild Fish Conservancy to complete work on WDFW lands. The purpose of performance measures is to give clear metrics that can be used to determine when the project is completed.

Private Lands/Access

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Technician Otto and Biologist Roozen met with several partner landowners and provided them updates on Program staffing and funding. Roozen and Otto also provided appropriate landowners an update on waterfowl food plot installation funding, timing, and scheduling.

Private Land Wildlife Viewing: Biologist Roozen and Technician Otto completed setup of the first pilot wildlife viewing site located on south Whidbey Island. Otto and Roozen also met with landowner to discuss the site. This site offers public the opportunity to see multiple species of passerines and sea birds, as well as eagles, osprey, and some mammals. Private lands staff plan to install/open at least two more sites in the Region by early summer.

Technician Otto clears vegetation and debris from an access path at a viewing site.

Sign-in box at wildlife viewing site that was installed to gather information from those that use it. This information will hopefully assist private lands staff better manage this and other private land wildlife viewing sites.

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

Wildlife Management

Capture and Relocation of a Nuisance Cougar: Biologist Danilson consulted with Enforcement personnel regarding the relocation of a cougar that had killed a goat on private property in rural Skagit County.

Peregrine Falcon Management: Biologist DeBruyn worked with a local engineer to come up with voluntary guidelines to minimize disturbance at a local peregrine falcon site. The engineer agreed to an 850 foot buffer zone between the nests and any construction activity as well as a seasonal restriction of logging and road building activity.

Backyard Wildlife Program Region 4 Staff Team Coordination: Biologist Anderson and Administrative Assistant Host worked with new Customer Service Specialist Wilson to begin orientation on processing Backyard Wildlife requests from the public. Wilson is picking it up fast. It will be very helpful for staff operations and efficiency to have this ability to handle these requests as a team. Thanks to Heidi and Laura!

Supervisor Responsibilities: Biologist Milner spent the week working on various projects and paperwork related to supervisor responsibilities. Milner completed the annual review of expectations and evaluation for Biologist Cyra, updated the position description for the private lands biologist in anticipation of assuming responsibility for supervising the program. Milner met with Manager Link and Biologist Danilson to work on this transition. Milner completed the employee portions of her annual review and evaluation, pursued questions regarding the Navy Pika contract, and talked with outgoing Private Lands Biologist Roozen about his ideas for carrying the program forward.

Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continued to evaluate the equipment needs for the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area. Irrigation equipment was recently purchased to provide water to the Cherry Valley Restoration areas this coming summer. Manager Boehm has also completed purchasing all of the equipment, herbicide and supplies necessary to implement the weed management plan for the Units. Noxious weeds continue to be a problem in many of the Units.

Nooksack Unit Agricultural Lease: Manager Kessler finalized the agricultural lease renewal and sent it off to get all required signatures. He also got a temporary use permit for the site completed to allow work on the site while the agricultural lease is getting signed off on.

Wildlife Area Access: Natural Resource Specialist Meis mowed, weed wacked and treated weeds at the parking areas for Fir Island Farms, Headquarters and DeBay Slough Units.

Samish Unit: Natural Resource Specialist Meis and staff treated additional areas for thistle and other problem plants on this Unit.

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

Wildlife Management

Radio Training: Assistant District Biologist Cyra provided radio training materials support and instruction to Wildlife Program staff requesting use of the DNR managed state radio system.

Equipment Preparation/Maintenance: Assistant District Biologist Cyra began prepping and performing maintenance to the District Whaler in anticipation of marine surveys in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Training: Staff attended *"Sexual Harassment Awareness and Prevention for Managers"* training.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Sandhill cranes in the Glenwood Valley.

Sandhill Cranes: Biologist Anderson continued with sandhill crane nesting surveys in Klickitat County. A new nesting pair of sandhill cranes was verified this week in the Trout Lake Valley. A one week old juvenile crane (colt) was observed with the adults. The location of this pair is an indication of a gradually increasing nesting population of sandhill cranes in Washington State.

Biologist Anderson assisted Biologist McFall from the Conboy National Wildlife Refuge with a field trip for board members of the Columbia Land Trust to observe sandhill cranes in the Glenwood Valley. The Columbia Land Trust has been very active in land conservation in the Klickitat River drainage. Their land acquisitions have been important for protection of a variety of state priority species and habitats.

Gray's River Area Elk Damage: Biologists Miller and Bergh met with Officer Anderson to discuss plans to reinstate the Gray's River Elk Permit Area. After meeting with landowners in the area last month, it was decided that reinstating the Elk Area would be one good option for easing elk damage in the agricultural area. Boundaries for the area were discussed as well as a possible season structure for permits in the area. A proposal with these ideas will be presented to the local landowners for their feedback later this summer.

Western Pond Turtle Management: Trapping for western pond turtles concluded at the Bergen Road site. Biologists George, Stephens, Bergh, and Holman all participated in various aspects of the work. A total of 10 basking and 10 hoop traps were deployed in two of the more significant Bergen 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 trapping effort, a total of 64 individual turtles were encountered with a total of 111 captures. Additionally, 11 western painted turtles were located.

Black-tailed Deer Research Project: Initial fawn searches associated with the Region 5 portion of the black-tailed deer research project were conducted. 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. To date, no fawns have been captured in either cluster during 2013.

Wildlife Areas

Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area

Mount St. Helens Fertilizing: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Technician Sample beat the rain this week and finished spreading pelletized fertilizer over 150 acres on Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area to increase forage available to elk. There are a few remaining acres left to be done when favorable weather returns. Along with fertilizing selected areas of ground, there are also plans to harrow areas with dense moss cover in order to break up these mats and allow more grass to grow.

Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area

Private Lands/Access

Chehalis River Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) Meeting: Biologist Stephens attended a CRM meeting for landowners in the South Fork and Upper Chehalis Watershed. The group was given a presentation on the installation of critter pads in the watershed and discussed prioritization of funding for critter pad and equipment pad requests. Critter pads consist of a small area raised several feet above the flood zone and the purpose is to provide a short-term refuge for livestock during a flood event. The group also viewed photos of several landowners' properties which have suffered severe erosion along stream banks and discussed potential methods of halting or slowing the erosion process.

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

Wildlife Areas

Shillapoo Wildlife Area

Watchable Wildlife at Shillapoo: During a visit to the Shillapoo Wildlife Area this past week Manager Hauswald observed the following bird species: Black phoebe, Lazuli bunting, Black and Vaux's swifts, American goldfinch, Cinnamon and Blue-wing teal, wood duck, gadwall, mallard, Canada geese, Great blue heron, Egret, Red-tailed hawk, Kestrel, and Bald eagle. Visitors should be aware that it is the middle of nesting season and are reminded to have their dogs on a leash to protect the ground nesting birds in the area.

Private Lands/Access

Vancouver Lake and Langsdorf Landing Access Sites: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes received a report that the Vancouver Lake entrance sign was sprayed with graffiti as well as the reader board at the paved parking area. Spangler and Rhodes pressure washed and painted the Vancouver Lake entrance gate and picked up and hauled six bags of trash. In addition, they raked and painted lines for the ADA trailer parking spot at the Langsdorf Landing site.

Vancouver Lake

Langsdorf Landing

St. Helens Land Access Planning Meeting: Program Manager Jonker, Biologist Stephens, and Technician Sample met with staff of Weyerhaeuser's St. Helens Tree Farm and members of the Southwest Washington Land Access Coalition to discuss the implementation of the St. Helens Land Access Program for the 2013-14 hunting season. This will be the seventh year of what has been deemed by all parties involved, to be a successful program. The program will be operated similarly to previous years by using volunteers to inform hunters of active logging areas which are open to walk-in access only. The 2013-14 elk permit holders to the Winston, Margaret, Toutle, and Coweeman GMUs will likely continue to enjoy weekday motorized access to approximately 80% of the tree farm and weekend access to nearly 100% of the tree farm, barring weather or other operational closures.

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

Customer Service: The May 22 Special Permit Application deadline provided incentive for many hunters to contact Region 5 Biologists and Customer Service Staff. Inquiries come from a variety of sources including, "Team Vancouver", "Wildthing", the Directors Office, and the Commission, as well as more traditional in-person and telephone contacts. Topics of particular interest included hunting opportunities; help with where to apply for hunts; deer management in Klickitat County; the Hairloss Syndrome, deer management in the Washougal GMU, etc.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Western Pond Turtle: Biologists Skriletz and Murphie led the annual western pond turtle two day capture event at the Mason County turtle site. Twenty one other wildlife professionals from WDFW, WDNR and Woodland Park Zoo played a vital role in this successful operation. After two days we ended up with 51 turtles captured, including all the breeding age females with antennas. We did lose one breeder over the winter that Biologist Murphie was able to locate on land since the radio signal was still sending from the deceased turtle. We were able to replace her with another female that just reached breeding age and outfitted her with her first antenna and bright yellow numbers. This year we had our

Nanette Baker, above, and 22 other wildlife professionals played a vital role in the successful western pond turtle capture event.

highest number of snorkeling turtle catchers with staff from the WDFW Fish and Habitat Programs as well as Wildlife Biologist Mainwaring from WDNR.

Thanks to the trained eye of WDFW biologists, 35% of the turtles captured were identified as having some level of the shell rot that is present at the other two turtle sites in Washington. We had hoped that the Mason County population was free of the disease, but we weren't so lucky. The three turtles with the worst symptoms were transported to Woodland Park Zoo where they will receive extensive rehab before they will be able to be released. Mason County marks the fourth out of six recovery sites now confirmed with SCUD. Staff is aggressively managing this emerging disease which threatens the 20+ year successful recovery program. At this time we are still searching for the cause and cure of this disease.

Top left: Western pond turtle with radio transmitter. Top right: Underwater picture of tagged western pond turtle. Bottom left: Snorkeler bringing turtle in for processing. Bottom right: Excellent crew for turtle work, 2013. *Photos by Nanette Baker and Alan Mainwaring.*

Pysht Cluster: Deer Monitoring – A VIT and mortality alert happened on the holiday Monday (actually the VIT alert was at 11:56 pm Sunday night). Biologist McMillan hadn't received prior permission to work on the holiday, so she arranged to have Biologist Cullinan (Pt No Pt Wildlife Biologist) go out and investigate the alerts. Biologist Cullinan discovered a mortality of the

collared doe (10713; 298PYF). The observed signs are indicative of predator mortality, with possibility of a prior puncture wound. Biologists Cullinan, Ament, and Loafman will investigate the carcass on Tuesday, May 28 and will conduct a necropsy if the carcass remains are still there. Biologist Cullinan borrowed a motion detector camera from Lower Elwha Tribal Bio Sager. He will set up the camera to record any predators that come back to the carcass.

None of the other six collared does in the Pysht Unit had fawns during the week of May 19. Crew remains on standby. Collar on the sole remaining yearling fawn at West Siebert (245PYF) had a live signal on Tuesday, May 21. Research Scientist Rice indicated that Biologist Loafman should check on this individual regularly to the one year collar date (May 30, 2012) to determine survivability to one year. After that a ground check is to be done only when in the area conducting other deer-related work.

Mason County Cluster: Biologist Murphie checked the status on does related to fawning and made three attempts to make contact with one doe, which expelled a VIT, with no success. He did capture and collar two fawns from another doe.

Taylor's checkerspot reintroduction and captive rearing: Over the past few weeks Biologists Linders, Randolph, Johnson and Walker completed three more rounds of adult surveys at all reintroduction sites (Range 50, Scatter Creek, Glacial Heritage and Pacemaker) and at Range 76. The heat had a stifling impact on adult numbers, which have been reduced to about 33-50 percent of 2012 counts. Numbers peaked early and dropped fast, although a few stragglers (seven) were still observed at Range 50 on Saturday in spite of the recent and ongoing rain. A release of 104 adults at GHP last Sunday appears to have led to mass dispersal, as only five adults were observed during a survey the following day. The same number of adults was counted at SCS that day, although no adults were released there. Surveys at all sites have been challenging to complete as a result of poor weather over the past two weeks.

Captive rearing facilities at The Oregon Zoo and Mission Creek have completed their checkerspot mating activities for the year. The heat in early May proved to be a new challenge, especially in the greenhouse at Mission Creek, where inmates had to wear frozen neck and shoulder pads to keep themselves cool. Adult checkerspots were very sedentary during hot spells at both facilities and showed little to no interest in mating. Supplemental feeding of males helped somewhat. Egg production has lagged as a result, although with 4,537 eggs the Oregon Zoo is nearing its production target (5,000). Mission Creek currently has 3,686 eggs with a few females still laying eggs.