

Wildlife Program

Week of November 4-10, 2013

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Fishers: Biologist Jeff Lewis, Diversity Division Manager Eric Gardner, and Listing and Recovery Section Manager Penny Becker provided recommendations (via a letter and conference call) to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding the fisher status review and an upcoming listing decision. Lewis completed the final draft of the implementation plan for the fisher reintroduction in the Washington Cascades, which is now available on Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) fisher webpage at http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/fisher/reintroduction_cascades.html. This plan is now the preferred (action) alternative for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis that is being led by North Cascades and Mount Rainier National Parks personnel to assess the impact of the fisher reintroduction on these two parks. Lewis is assisting the National Park Service (NPS) in this NEPA analysis.

Wolverine Meeting: Division Manager Eric Gardner attended a joint USFWS and multi-state wildlife management agency meeting to discuss options for wolverine management in light of the proposed federal listing. The majority of the states that have wolverine habitat have expressed concern over the USFWS's application of climate change science to justify the listing when wolverines are currently doing well and expanding their range from historic lows in the 1920s. The USFWS presented their logic for the Distinct Population Segment designation and the proposed listing as Threatened, as well as a draft conceptual plan for what conservation efforts would be required to be in place in order to find the proposal as "not warranted."

REGION 1

Wolf Management

District 1: Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Prince assisted Wolf Biologist Spence with routine wolf monitoring and tracking in the Smackout wolf territory. Specialist Shepherd discussed development of compost sites for cattle carcasses with Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) employees in Colville and livestock producers in the outlying area. Specialist Shepherd met with a local cattle producer and family at their ranch and discussed wolves, their federal grazing allotment, and range riding efforts. Equipment and paperwork were exchanged. Specialist Shepherd discussed work duties with a current contract range rider who received a contract extension. Specialist Shepherd also met with and discussed contract contents with a prospective range rider who will be under contract during the summer of 2014.

District 2: Conflict Specialist Bennett and Private Lands Biologist Lewis met with two Whitman County residents who claimed to see four wolves 800 yards away traveling near LaCrosse, Washington. The investigation did not conclude enough evidence to conclude wolf presence (i.e., no tracks or scat). Conflict Specialist Bennett looked into a wolf inside a north Spokane self-storage fence. The observer was sure it was a wolf because he had seen one in Idaho in years past. The employee will be looking through the surveillance camera videos for that day to see if they can see anything of interest.

Conflict Specialist Bennett looked into a wolf sighting from a very concerned landowner in north Spokane County just north of Moffatt Road near Peone Prairie. The landowner was concerned for his granddaughter with a wolf in the area. This call turned into a great opportunity to provide information to a landowner regarding wolves and their interactions (and misconceptions) with people. Bennett told the landowner the best way to identify a wolf traveling through his field would be when there was snow on the ground (due to the field being very grassy at this time).

The answering machine at the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area office recorded a message from a neighbor to the south saying he saw a wolf in his yard Sunday. Staff will call the man back, get a description of the animal, and request the gentleman fill out an online report if he still believes the animal is indeed a wolf. The report will also be passed on to this area's Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) conflict specialist.

District 3: Report of two wolves seen in Burbank Tree Farm area, photo of tracks consistent with large canid. Another report came in of two wolves howling outside of Dixie.

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Wildlife Management



Blue Mountains Bighorn Sheep:

District Biologist Wik spent most of three days attempting to capture bighorn sheep in the Asotin and Black Butte herds. One yearling ram was successfully darted on Friday in the Asotin Creek drainage. Three more days will be spent on this project in the coming week.

***A mature ram in the
Asotin herd***

Wildlife Areas

Habitat restoration at Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Rosman property – Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Mike Finch, Natural Resource Worker (NRW) Jim Bauer, WDFW Vegetation Ecologist Kurt Merg, U.S. Bureau of Land Management staff and Richard Fleenor, a Plant Material Specialist from the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), all worked together this week to overseed 200 acres of already-restored grasslands with extra sagebrush seed. They used two pull-behind grass drills and four broadcast spreaders to get the job done by Wednesday.

Thanks go to Wildlife Area Manager Dan Peterson of the Wells Wildlife Area, Glenn Paulson, and Kurt Merg for allowing SLWA to use their seeders in this operation.



Merg calibrating his grass drill (above) and two pull-behind grass seeders getting prepared (below) on November 4, 2013.



Grouse tracking at Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area (SLWA) – Volunteer Dr. Kim Thorburn drove out this week for a total of two ground-tracking days. She also spent one day with two volunteers from Ireland, training them for spring grouse survey work. The new volunteers spent a fair bit of time in the Spokane and Tri-Cities areas where the brother of one resides. Wildlife Area Assistant Manager (WAAM) Mike Finch and Thorburn conducted a tracking flight on Friday with contract pilot Dave Parker. The pair found all but two of the birds radio-collared in 2013 which were known to still transmit signals. They noted one female sage grouse quite a bit south of the wildlife area at a nearly inaccessible spot near Odessa.

Chief Joseph Wildlife Area – Range condition: Wildlife Area Manager Bob Dice and Biologist David Woodall looked at range condition on the wildlife area while assisting staff with moving equipment for the pond cleaning project. The majority of the wildlife area burned in the

2012 Cache Creek fire. Much of the range was infested with yellow starthistle and other exotic weeds before the fire. Neighboring landowners such as BLM chose massive grass seeding projects to restore rangelands. Our choice was a massive helicopter spraying program with approximately 1,500 acres treated with tordon and escort herbicides. Areas we looked at that were once infested with starthistle are relatively weed-free and full of thriving native grass plants. Bench areas that were prime candidates for being choked out by exotics such as tumble mustard were full of well growing grass plants. A large fire such as the one we experienced followed up by an aggressive aerial weed control program has done wonders for the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area. Of course, we didn't have funds to spray everything that burned and some of those particular areas still have weed issues that will need to be addressed later.

REGION 2

None.

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management



Pheasant Releases:
Friday was a pheasant release day and Private Lands staff Stutzman and Kaelber utilized some volunteers to help set 340 roosters loose at Big Flat, Lost Island (Army Corps of Engineers) and Hope Valley (WDFW).

Above: Two volunteers released roosters at the Lost Island Habitat Management Unit as Technician Kaelber looks on. Below: The parking lot at the Army Corps Big Flat Unit on a Saturday during pheasant season.



Wildlife Areas

Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan (RMAP): L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Hunt and Technician Hill hiked into North Fork Manastash to complete RMAP related tasks. Technician Kyle installed two water bars with hand tools on an old closed road. This will correct the problem of water from a spring rutting the roadway and allow for formal abandonment through Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Hill also noted that slash placed by DNR to close the road this summer had been recently cut out to allow ATV access.



Left: North Fork Manastash, June 2013 after RMAP abandonment work was completed. Right: North Fork Manastash, November 2013 after the road was re-opened by the public to create ATV access.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Woodland Park Zoo – WDFW Citizen Science 2013 Amphibian Monitoring: Biologist Anderson worked with staff members of Woodland Park Zoo and a graduate student with a volunteer Master's student in the Global Field Program of Miami University of Ohio and Earth Expeditions, <http://www.earthexpeditions.org/>, to summarize and present 2013 monitoring data to volunteers in the program. A total of 78 volunteers participated this year. The student is also working to incorporate the first season (2012) into her summary as part of her "Community-based conservation and participatory education" requirement of this field study graduate degree. An initial map of 2013 survey sites and species occurrence can be found at https://mapsengine.google.com/map/edit?mid=zKvIvdsbSrQ4.kFPikxtF_bwQ.

Dr. Hayes and Biologist Hallock briefed the state Wildlife Commission this last week regarding the state of herptiles in Washington. Part of their briefing discussed using citizens to assist in

conservation of these fascinating, but often overlooked species. Additional information at is available at http://wdfw.wa.gov/commission/meetings/2013/11/agenda_nov0813.html.



Typical trail camera set-up – camera (on the left), scent lure and wolf urine tubes on big tree.

Hozomeen Wolf Project: Biologist DeBruyn and a National Park Service (NPS) biologist installed 11 motion sensitive trail cameras in the Ross Lake National Recreation Area along trails that have been frequented by wolves in the recent past. Long days of hiking into the back country were involved to place the cameras in topographical bottle necks to ascertain the presence or absence of wolves. The timing was perfect as the area is about to be snowed in and the cameras are left until spring.

Tacoma Green River Watershed Hunt Unit 485: Biologists Anderson and Smith spent opening day (Saturday, November 9) touring the watershed meeting deer and elk hunters drawn for the Unit 485 hunts. Anderson visited multiple areas during the morning hours and Smith during the afternoon. Two antlerless deer were harvested during opening day (one youth, one hunter with disabilities). Several deer hunters reported seeing multiple elk and vice versa. Hunter questions primarily dealt with habitat and regulation pamphlet clarification issues. Copies of the regulation pamphlet were available for hunters who may have needed them and DNA sample kits were provided to watershed staff in the event any bears were harvested during the hunt. DNA is being (voluntarily) collected from bears harvested in King, Snohomish and Chelan counties to provide additional data for an ongoing research project.



View through the brush at Eagle Lake in the Tacoma Green River Watershed.

County Growth Management Act – Take Authorization Assistance to King County

Department of Transportation (KDOT): Biologist Anderson provided Take Authorization, on behalf of Regional Program Manager Link, for five KDOT projects. Anderson was also in touch with two KDOT environmental engineers regarding data on proposed transportation infrastructure projects that may affect caves and/or talus slopes – a WDFW Priority Habitat; as well as what current information WDFW has on three bald eagle territories to assist KDOT in meeting U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Bald and Golden Eagle Act of 1940. Anderson relayed to these staff members that they could enter into an agreement to get more fine-scale, at times sensitive, WDFW data for their transportation project due diligence needs. He directed them to the Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) information request site and will be working with them on any appropriate management consideration needs. The information request site is for researchers, public or private projects involving legal considerations and other appropriate situations.

Urban Coyote Interview – Capitol Hill Times: Biologist Anderson provided information on urban coyote ecology, how to avoid conflicts and academic work nationwide studying the common occurrence of this very adaptable “urban top predator” in cities and suburbia. The interview will be released sometime this week.

Pacific Flyway Shorebird Survey: Biologist Milner participated in the annual training session for volunteers who will be counting shorebirds as part of the Pacific Flyway Shorebird Survey. In Region 4, this effort is headed up by Ecostudies Institute, with WDFW partnering to provide support to the effort.

Pigeon Guillemot Population Survey Report: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued work on finalizing the report of the breeding survey of Pigeon Guillemots in Puget Sound.

Wildlife Areas

Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw spent much of the week completing follow-up tasks from the project kick-off public meeting held on October 30. These tasks included: adding WDFW and Ducks Unlimited project contact information on the project webpage, updating the project email list to include meeting attendees, sending an email to the project email list to provide the project webpage URL, and beginning to draft a Q&A sheet to answer questions asked at the meeting. There is still time to volunteer to participate in the project Stakeholder Committee by completing the survey on the project webpage by November 15. Information about the Stakeholder Committee and the survey is posted at http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/skagit/leque_island_project.php.

Fir Island Farm Final Design Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Planner Williams modified the project adaptive management and monitoring plan to be consistent with a statewide adaptive management standard template. Projects Coordinator Brokaw also returned a malfunctioning water quality monitoring datalogger to the manufacturer for repair, and ordered an additional spare datalogger.

Samish River Unit (Welts Property) Wetland Restoration Project: The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) comment period for the project has closed, and Projects Coordinator Brokaw organized the comments received and will draft replies to each. Skagit County has initiated the Special Use Permit process, and will be accepting comments until November 22.

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with WDFW staff to discuss next steps for the development of the Ebey Island Unit. Primary topics discussed were access, agricultural crops and meeting requirements for the Coastal Protection Fund. A meeting with local farmers to discuss interest and requirements is in the planning stage.

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm had to delay spreading gravel on access roads due to the wet weather. Lighting improvements were made at the Cherry Valley net pen facility. A portion of the lights were set-up on a timer to coax birds into the covered pen during wet weather and to improve rounding up the birds for delivery to the wildlife units.

Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA) British Petroleum (BP) Planting Project: Volunteers for the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association performed a native plants planting project along Terrell Creek on the British Petroleum Unit. Manager Kessler coordinated with the NSEA managers, posting signs and closing the hunting on one portion of the area close to the planting project while the planting was going on.

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

Wildlife Management

Mountain Goat Harvest Sampling Follow Up: Per the request of Special Species Section Manager Harris, Biologist Danilson followed up with hunters who did not contact the La Conner office to have their mountain goat sampled. The purpose of the follow-up was to determine if they successfully harvested an animal and to determine if WDFW could still obtain a sample. Of the three hunters Danilson followed up with, two could not be reached and the third did not successfully harvest a goat.

Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary – Crossing Paths: Biologist Anderson worked with other Wildlife Program staff to assist Public Information Officer Luers in finalizing the November Crossing Paths regarding winter waterfowl watching sites. This information can be found in the current November edition at http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/crossing_paths/.

Wildlife Areas

Skagit Wildlife Area's Hunting Season: Natural Resources Specialist (NRS) Greg Meis and Natural Resources Tech (NRT) Curran Cosgrove monitored water levels, waterfowl and hunter use on the Samish and Island units. Hunter numbers are increasing as weather and bird movement improves. Cosgrove reposted three additional safety zone signs near the Headquarters

office. Some of the safety zone signs are missing and hunters were hunting very close to the office and parking area.

Skagit Wildlife Area Headquarters Habitat Management: NRS Meis and NRT Cosgrove with the assistance of the North Sound weed crew continued maintenance of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Project plantings at Headquarters. The crew removed young alder seedlings, blackberry and sprayed reed canary grass to release new native plantings.

Pheasant Release Program: Pheasant release volunteers encountered damaged locks on the entry gate for the Bow Hill Road release site. Enforcement has been notified and will increase patrol of the area. Addition wood chips were added to the parking area on Bow Hill Road. The parking area has become rutted with increased traffic and recent rain. Whatcom Wildlife Area Manager Kessler received 390 pheasants for the pheasant releases. Birds were released by volunteers on the Intalco, Lake Terrell and BP units. Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continues to work with volunteers from the pheasant release program to get birds out on the units alive. This past week there were two escapees and one mortality to report. Reports from the field indicate that the wet weather and poor access road conditions may influence coming deliveries.

Lake Terrell Unit ADA Hunting Blind: Manager Kessler met onsite with ADA Coordinator Delores Noyes to check the new ADA Hunting Blind on the Lake Terrell Unit. There are some improvements that need to be done before it is fully wheelchair accessible. Manager Kessler will work with volunteers to make those adjustments.

Private Lands/Access

Blind Construction and Unit Set-up: Natural Resource Techs Deyo and Otto continued with waterfowl unit set-ups in Whatcom, Skagit and Snohomish counties. This entails setting up unit boundaries, building blinds and brushing them to the terrain, installing parking signs and preparing parking areas.



Waterfowl Quality Hunt Site in Whatcom County

Private Lands Access Contracts: Biologist Milner continued work on Waterfowl and Snow Goose Quality Hunt contracts and entering sites into the WDFW online system.

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

Wildlife Management

Game Health – Deer: Biologist Anderson received an inquiry from a deer hunter regarding a “strange injury” in the buck they took. Anderson relayed it sounded like an abscess and asked for pictures to pass along to State Wildlife Veterinarian Kristen Mansfield. Mansfield confirmed the oddity was an abscess, possibly caseous lymphadenitis, which is often seen in goats and sheep...and apparently in ungulates occasionally. There is no ill effect to the animal, the meat around the affected area just needs to be cut out and abscess material kept from salvageable meat. Find information on this in livestock at <http://www.tennesseemeatgoats.com/articles2/caseouslymphadenitis.html>.



An abscess, possibly caseous lymphadenitis, often seen in goats and sheep is also seen in deer occasionally. Photo by M. Ventoza.

Black-tail Deer Disease Issue: Biologist Danilson coordinated with Veterinarian Mansfield to address questions from a local hunter regarding worms found in four deer carcasses harvested by his hunting group in Whatcom County. Based on the hunter’s verbal description, Mansfield was fairly confident he was observing larval tapeworm cysts and that the meat is safe for human consumption if handled properly (the hunter’s primary concern). Further, the disease is not uncommon in ungulates and is not a population concern. Mansfield provided some documentation which Danilson mailed to the hunter for confirmation.

Elk Conflict Management: Conflict Specialist Griffith received 11 new reports of elk damage this week. The majority of these are in and around the Challenger Road, Birdsvew, and Pinelli Road areas. He has been conducting site visits with these landowners and working with them on Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements, technical guidance, hunter assignments and issuance of damage permits. One such site visit yielded a project that will ultimately end up as a cooperative fencing effort to modify boundary and cross fences to allow elk to freely pass

through the property. Griffith also reviewed trail camera photos from a camera that was deployed in Day Creek. No elk were observed on the photos.

Biologist Smith met with landowners, Upper Snoqualmie Valley Elk Management Group personnel and hunters regarding elk damage to agricultural crops in areas of the valley. Smith also monitored general modern firearm hunting activity occurring on agricultural lands experiencing damage from elk. In addition, Smith deployed a trail camera at one location to monitor elk/deer activity during hours of darkness. Activity was intermittent over the last week.

North Cascades Elk Management Work Group: Biologist Danilson attended the North Cascades Elk Management Group Forage Enhancement Committee meeting. Topics discussed included existing “block management plans” in the South Fork Nooksack watershed, places where habitat enhancement would provide the most benefit, specific habitat treatments that have succeeded (or failed) to improve forage quality, and where we ultimately want to manage for elk (vs. not manage for elk) in the Skagit Valley. The Forage Enhancement Committee is one of four committees working under the umbrella of the North Cascades Elk Management Group to advise the update of the North Cascades Elk Herd Management Plan. These committees, comprised of various stakeholders, are meeting on a monthly basis.

Program Manager Link, Biologist Danilson, and Conflict Specialist Griffith met with a professional facilitator this week to discuss and develop a plan for the upcoming North Cascades Elk Management Group Damage Committee meeting. Danilson and Griffith followed up this meeting by providing the facilitator with background documentation on the draft North Cascades elk herd plan, existing issues and conflicts, and agenda and summaries from past work group and committee meetings.

Osprey Management: Biologist Anderson returned multiple requests for direction and process regarding take authorization of osprey nests on cell towers and other structures. Anderson continued discussions with area major tower owners regarding consultation needs with WDFW regarding removal of nests.

Heron Colony Management – Seattle: Biologist Anderson provided advice to Seattle Department of Planning staff inquiring about management needs regarding construction projects proposed around a heron colony in Seattle.

Wildlife Areas

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP): Projects Coordinator Brokaw reviewed and provided comments on an outreach blueprint developed by PSNERP staff. The outreach blueprint identifies jurisdictions, co-managers and stakeholder groups that will likely be interested and should be contacted when outreach begins for the project. More information about PSNERP is located on the project webpage at www.pugetsoundnearshore.org.

Island Unit: Skagit Wildlife Area staff Meis and Cosgrove assisted with ferry operation for equipment removal from the Island that was completed this week. Wildlife area staff will complete the maintenance and winterization of the equipment.

Manager Rotton is scheduling a field tour with engineering staff from Olympia to access the condition of the culvert and tide gate structures on the Island Unit. This assessment will be necessary to begin the discussion about permitting and design for any future repairs. The engineers will also assess the sites that have existing culverts but no outlet structures installed.

Wiley Slough Restoration Project: Manager Rotton scheduled a meeting with Dike District #22 (DD#22) representatives to review the Statement of Qualifications for the engineering firms that will be considered for the next design phase of the Wiley Slough Tide gate repair. Manager Rotton and Habitat Biologist Brian Williams met with DD#22 Commissioners Stan Nelson and John Wolden to discuss the recent ditch maintenance work completed on Wiley Slough. There is some concern regarding the amount of vegetation that was removed from the site and potential wetland impacts of the dredge spoils. A field tour has been schedule with the Department of Ecology wetland specialist for further review and clarification.

Samish River Unit: Manager Rotton and Restoration Projects Coordinator Loren Brokaw have a meeting schedule with new Natural Resources Conservation Service staff to include the project biologist to discuss the upcoming Samish River Unit Project. The SEPA review process is underway and the permitting package is nearing submission to the appropriate agencies.

Leque Island Unit: Staff installed a traffic counter on Eide Road to begin collecting site use data for the Leque Island alternatives analysis process.

Private Lands/Access

Online Mapping: Private Lands staff mapped and submitted Waterfowl Quality Hunt sites to be posted online.

Whidbey Island: Staff closed Private Lands Diversity site for the winter months due to hazardous trail conditions. Staff toured the Pheasant Release site at Arnold Farm and met with Whidbey Island Land Trust before touring the quality deer hunt site on their property. No issues were identified.

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

Wildlife Management

Outreach: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm was the guest speaker at the Monroe Rod and Gun Club's November meeting. Manager Boehm gave a brief summary of the past year's activity and goals for next year. Everyone is interested in better hunting lands. Manager Boehm stated that this can happen quicker with volunteer support. The club requested a list of projects or tasks that are high priority and moved to explore ways to provide assistance. Manager Boehm also met with local Cub Scout Troop 360 in Lake Stevens. Manager Boehm discussed what wildlife areas are, who uses them, and that volunteering is a great way for clubs to help out. A group activity is planned for December.

Natural Resource Technician Hiring: Biologists Danilson and Griffith completed the hiring processes for the seasonal Swan Technician and Conflict Specialist Technician positions. Sherman Anderson was hired for the Swan Technician position (a job he held last winter) and Kyle Pinjuv accepted the Conflict Specialist Technician position. Sherman and Kyle will begin work on November 18. Danilson and Griffith also procured a vehicle for the Conflict Specialist Technician.

Explosives Storage Inspection: Biologist Danilson and Technician Otto met with a Washington Labor and Industries explosives inspector to discuss explosives storage requirements. The current storage facilities and record keeping practices were deemed adequate by the inspector. However, the La Conner Field Office has a new storage magazine on order which will improve security and safety. Danilson completed the appropriate paperwork for licensing this magazine and submitted it to Labor and Industries.

Training: Staff completed the mandatory Information Technology Security Awareness Training. Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued to provide assistance to staff with instruction on radio training, radio use requirements, and assigning radio call numbers. Biologist Milner attended Canada Goose check station training in Region 5 as a quick and efficient way to get some hands on experience identifying various goose sub-species. The Vancouver Canada goose subspecies of interest in Port Susan Bay and Milner will be surveying for them this winter in that area.

Aircraft Safety: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued working with Marine Survey Specialist Evenson on safety equipment for the upcoming marine waterfowl surveys and continued communication and comments with the safety office on the proposed department Aircraft Standard Operating Procedure.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Townsend's Big Eared Bats: District Wildlife Biologist Anderson followed up on a report that cavers opened a passage around the permanent gate at Christmas Tree Cave in Klickitat County. The cave was gated in the mid-1990s to protect a large year-round population of Townsend's Big-Eared Bats, *Corynorhinus (Plecotus) townsendii*. WDFW will be working to organize a work party to repair the damage to the entrance of the cave.

Wildlife Areas

Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area – Nellie Corser Site Visit: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald made a visit to the Nellie Corser Unit of the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area in Skamania County this week to see if there were any maintenance issues that needed to be addressed. While at the site, Hauswald hiked the trail loop to Duncan Creek and alongside the waterfall features to pick-up litter and note any maintenance concerns. One concern that will need to be addressed this

winter is one of the bridges over a small stream has a cracked beam causing it to sag and slant to one side, making the bridge unstable. The bridge will be removed from the trail as staff time allows. He also noticed a rather large patch of English ivy that should also be removed this winter, as well as a few scotch broom plants. Signs were posted at the trailhead and overall the unit looked to be in very good shape with only a few maintenance issues that will need to be resolved.



Waterfalls on Duncan Creek

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

Wildlife Management

Elk Season: Biologist Anderson reports heavy hunting pressure in the upper Lewis River drainage, Lone Butte, and the west side of Indian Heaven Wilderness. Favorable weather

conditions came into the South Cascades as the week progressed and snow levels dropped to 3,500 feet. There have been reports of several nice bull elk taken in the Siouxon Unit 572.

Goose Management Area 2A Goose Season Training: Statewide Waterfowl Specialist Wehland and Enforcement Officer Van Vladricken along with Biologists Holman, George and Miller held a training day for those involved in goose hunting management in Area 2A. The training featured sections on goose management within the Pacific Flyway, regulations, check station procedures, law enforcement, goose identification, etc. The training was well attended by WDFW and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists and technicians. The



Dusky Canada geese spotted on lands managed by the Port of Vancouver.

special regulations and check station requirements for Area 2A (and 2B) are in place cooperatively with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the states of Washington, Oregon, and Alaska as well as British Columbia, Canada and are designed to protect populations of the Dusky Canada goose.

Southwest Washington Management Area 2A and 2B Goose Hunt: The 2013-2014 Southwest Washington goose hunting season began this past weekend. On opening day, 154 geese were harvested by 67 hunters at a rate of 2.29 geese per hunter. One dusky was also harvested during this period. At the moment, all zones remain open for Management Area 2A. A total of 40 duskies are distributed amongst five zones in Management Area 2A and 2B. Zones may close to hunting geese if dusky quotas are exceeded. For information regarding up-to-date zone closures, hunters can call the WDFW Region 5 office at (360) 696-6211 and follow the menu options for hunting and waterfowl. Hunters interested in participating in this season can refer to pages 16, 19 and 20 of the Migratory Waterfowl and Upland Game Seasons pamphlet for further details regarding requirements for participation. The pamphlet is available online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/>.

As a reminder for those planning on participating, Management Area 2A hunts take place on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The season will extend from November 9 through December 1 and December 11 through January 26. Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge differs in season lengths, authorized hunt days, and will also require a reservation to participate. Please refer to the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge website www.fws.gov/ridgefieldrefuges/ridgefield/recreation/huntinghomepage.html for further information regarding hunting on the refuge.

Hunters should record their harvest on harvest cards and bring all geese, fully feathered and intact, to a check station between the hours of 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Hunters are required to bring all harvested geese to a check station. Locations for these stations can be found on page 19

of the waterfowl pamphlet. WDFW is aware of the difficulties associated with this season and is grateful to hunters for their continued cooperation while we attempt to recover a declining subspecies. Thank you and good luck during this season.

Wildlife Areas

Klickitat Wildlife Area – Pheasant Release: Volunteers Morrison, D. Wheelhouse, and R. Wheelhouse distributed pheasants to the Finn Ridge Road site and the Gun Club site, while Wildlife Area Manager released pheasants at the Hatchery Unit this week. The birds looked good and the delivery went smoothly. We put 64 birds at the Hatchery Unit, 40 at the Gun Club property, and 16 at the Finn Ridge Road site.

Klickitat Wildlife Area – Gate Closures: Segments of Anderson Road, Old Headquarters Road, South Breaks Road, and Sheep Canyon Road are now closed to motor vehicle traffic and will remain closed until next spring. These annual seasonal closures are implemented to limit disturbance to wintering wildlife, keep vehicles off the roads when road surfaces are soft, and improve public safety by restricting driving access when road conditions are worst. The Sheep Canyon Road gate is also expected to curtail off-road driving in certain meadows and reduce problems with unauthorized vehicles accessing private lands nearby via the WDFW road. Three of the gates will be re-opened in time for spring turkey hunting season. The opening of the other gate will depend on soil conditions; usually it is opened the first week of May.

Private Lands/Access

Oneida Access Site: Repairs and upgrades to the Oneida launch have mostly been completed. Paving was completed this week along with some painting. Some of the parking lot striping will have to wait until a nice day.



Oneida Access Site



Oneida launch before (left) and after (right) repairs and upgrades.



Oneida Access Site

St. Helens Land Access Program: Biologist Stephens and Technician Sample worked with volunteers this week to facilitate weekday hunting access to Weyerhaeuser's St. Helens Tree Farm. The volunteer turnout was good with about 10 volunteers each day. Most hunters did not drive into areas that were signed as closed to motorized access, but a few opted not to follow the rules. When license plate numbers are collected from these vehicles, trespassing citations can be sent or they may be banned from accessing Weyerhaeuser's property.

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

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Conflict: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin worked with landowners in the Packwood/Randle area and with Wahkiakum County residents to provide advice and further information on the roles of conflict specialists. Several landowners appear to be motivated to work with WDFW to further relationships when it comes to elk damage on their lands.

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

Private Lands/Access

New Wildlife Conflict Specialist: Region 5 Wildlife Program would like to welcome Bonnie McDonald to our team. Bonnie is the new Environmental Specialist for District 9 (Klickitat, Skamania, and Clark counties) and will be working on wildlife damage issues and private lands access. Bonnie is from San Diego and has worked on several projects in many different places including greater sage-grouse in WY; coyotes at the National Wildlife Research Center Field Station in Logan, UT; at the Mexican Wolf Project (USFWS) in Alpine, AZ; and with captive wolves at the California Wolf Center in Julian, CA. Bonnie will be working out of Cook, WA at

the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Fish Research Station. Bonnie brings a diverse background and experience to the program and we are very excited to have her join our team!

REGION 6

None.