

Wildlife Program

Week of October 28-November 3, 2013

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Pygmy Rabbit Breeding Enclosure Habitat Enhancement: Technicians Duvuvuei and Hastings attached bird spikes to the new small enclosure divide fence at Sagebrush Flats and monitored for any fence breaching activity. While working at the enclosure they noticed a rabbit with potential health issues and were able to capture it. As it turned out it had an abscess from tooth shards that had shattered. Technician Hastings (trained as a veterinarian technician), under the guidance of Dr. Mansfield, was able to treat the rabbit. It was released with a dose of antibiotics and will be monitored during husbandry activities.

Pygmy Rabbit New Breeding Enclosure at Beezley Hills: Building the new enclosure began in full force this week under the guidance of the private landowner and Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) grant recipient, with building expertise provided by Ed Pierson from Wells Wildlife Area. Many staff and volunteers are and will be involved in this endeavor; a great deal of thanks is owed to all. As of November 3, we have completed installation of the first layer of the entire perimeter and back filled three-fourths of it.

Invertebrate Conservation: Fish and Wildlife Biologist Ann Potter discussed invertebrate species potentially of mutual conservation concern with Jennifer Heron, invertebrate specialist with the British Columbia Ministry of Environment. The endangered species listing and management agency in Canada, Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), recently completed status assessments and listed as threatened, endangered, or special concern four invertebrates that also occur in Washington.

Two of these species, the Dun Skipper and Oregon Forestsnail are more common and widespread in Washington (and Oregon) than British Columbia, and unlikely to be of conservation concern here. However, the Island Tiger Moth and Georgia Basin Bog Spider depend on rare and endangered habitats in Washington and appear to have a limited range and distribution here, and likely warrant further investigation to determine their conservation status in Washington.

Spotted Owl Conservation: Natural Resource Scientist Joe Buchanan met with Deputy Director Joe Stohr and Terry Jackson (Habitat Program) to provide a briefing on aspects of Spotted Owl ecology, distribution and status. Joe Stohr will represent Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) on the Forest Practices Board, and upcoming Board meetings will focus on issues related to Spotted Owls.

REGION 1

Wolf Management

District 1: Assistant District Wildlife Biologist (ADWB) Annemarie Prince assisted agency Wolf Biologists Gabe Spence and Trent Roussin in carrying out a fixed-wing aircraft survey of radio-collared wolves in District 1.

District 2: Conflict Specialist Bennett is working with Summit School to present information about wolves and their relationships with hunters, ranchers/farmers, and how they are managed.

Conflict Specialist Bennett gave a PowerPoint presentation to the Spokane Valley Sunrise Rotary Club about Washington wolves at Shari's Restaurant. A book was donated in the name of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to a local school in appreciation of the presentation.

Conflict Specialist Bennett attended the Trapping Training in Olympia presented by Carter Neimeyer and Rich Beausoleil at Wolf Haven International. Conflict Specialists Rasley and Shepherd attended the Chemical Immobilization Training at Wolf Haven and found it very beneficial. After the demonstrations and presentations, they were given a tour of the facility.

District 3: Report from elk hunters of a single black wolf in the Watershed Unit.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management



Bighorn Sheep Survey: District Wildlife Biologists Dana Base and Annemarie Prince carried out a traditional ground-based survey of bighorn sheep in the Vulcan Mountain area this week. A total of 31 bighorn sheep were observed which included 10 rams, 15 ewes and 6 lambs.

Bighorn sheep observed in the Vulcan area on October 30, 2013.

Moose Parasites and Disease Surveillance: District Wildlife Biologist (DWB) Base assisted Agency Veterinarian Kristin Mansfield, Enforcement Sergeant Pam Taylor, Wildlife Officer Severin Erickson, and other personnel in the recovery of bull and cow moose specimens (one of each) in Pend Oreille County for disease and parasitological analysis at Washington State University Veterinary School.

Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group (WHCWG) Columbia Basin Jackrabbit Project: Biologist Ferguson surveyed jackrabbit survey points in Lincoln County. Ferguson also made contact with several private landowners and has scheduled calls with them this coming week for discussing access onto their lands. Ferguson prepared and delivered a PowerPoint WebEx presentation on the jackrabbit validation project to the Olympia Wildlife staff.

Wildlife Areas

Grouse tracking at Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area (SLWA) – Volunteer Ann Brinley and WDFW District 2 Assistant Wildlife Biologist Mike Atamian both came out to track this week, for a total of three tracking days. Brinley located four sharp-tails on November 1, and eight total sharp-tails and sage grouse on October 29. Atamian confirmed locations for six grouse on October 30, and got a visual on two male sage grouse without signals, but couldn't tell if they were wearing collars due to distance. A grouse tracking flight is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, November 6. Volunteer Dr. Kim Thorburn will be back tracking after this week.

Habitat restoration grant off Telford Road on SLWA – Wildlife Area Manager Juli Anderson received notification this week from the state Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) that a proposal submitted in late 2011, for 120 acres of grassland restoration, has now been funded. Due to the cost of native grass seed going up, the funding will now only cover 85 acres. Anderson will be submitting a milestone worksheet to RCO this week to get the ball rolling.

Private Lands/Access

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Demonstration Plots: Private Lands Biologists worked on CRP Demonstration plots across the Region. These demonstration plots are important in that biologists are experimenting with various management activities on existing CRP lands to improve habitat for wildlife. Successful techniques can then be showcased to local landowners.

CRP Demo Plots – Garfield County: Biologist Earl and Natural Resource Worker 2 Wade continued to work this week to gather equipment for use on the CRP Demo plots in Garfield County. Earl and Wade were able to get the soil prepared where it called for a light disc and harrowing.

Biologist Earl prepares seed bed in a CRP Demonstration Plot in Garfield County.



CRP Demo Plots – Lincoln County: Baarstad transported equipment from Wells and Scotch Creek Wildlife areas to assist with test plot preparation and seeding. Baarstad disked the Lincoln County plot.

CRP Demo Plots – Whitman County: Biologist Lewis and Technician Clements worked with Kurt Merg on completing management practices at Smoot Hill, the Whitman County demo plot sight. Soil disturbance was completed as well as fall dormant no till and broadcast seeding. Next round of restoration practices are scheduled for late winter/spring 2014.

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

Wildlife Management

Blue Mountains Elk Season: District Biologist Wik spent one day talking with elk hunters in the eastern portion of the Blue Mountains. Approximately 10 groups of hunters were contacted during the day. Most relayed that opening weekend was fairly crowded, but the majority of hunters only hunted during opening weekend. Reasonable success was observed for the number of hunters checked (three spikes and one cow). Numerous groups of hunters and camps were observed but not contacted. Assistant District Biologist Vekasy spoke with US Forest Service (USFS) enforcement over the final weekend; no elk had been checked on Saturday, but snow in the mountains improved visibility for the last day of the hunt.

Wildlife Areas

Access site repairs and maintenance – With the assistance of a volunteer, Access Manager Scott Young started repairs at Hog Lake, replacing the restroom door, patching holes in the restroom walls, replacing posts and stolen signs, removing a downed tree top, and removing an unauthorized fire pit and several pounds of nails from the parking area. He ran out of mortar to finish the toilet patching work on the first day, having patched two-thirds of the holes. Young will return next week to finish repairs on the concrete and Fiberglas.



Hog Lake toilet before (left) and after (right) repairs (two-thirds complete).

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

Wildlife Areas

Chief Joseph Wildlife Area – Pond cleaning project: Cuevas Winegeart spent a day trimming brush and trees along Green Gulch Road on preparation for arrival of an excavator next week. The excavator rental is being paid for by Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) and it will be used to clean out several mudded stock ponds along the road. Wildlife Area Manager (WAM) Bob Dice made arrangements with Peters & Keatts equipment in Lewiston for the excavator. The excavator will be delivered Monday morning to the wildlife area. WAM Bob Dice hauled the wildlife area John Deere cat to the Chief Joseph HQ buildings from Clarkston on Tuesday. We plan on using the cat to blade boulders and debris off the road before the excavator moves up Green Gulch. Debby Flynn will run the excavator and other wildlife area staff members will assist. The excavator will be on site for one month.

REGION 2

Wolf Management

Nothing to report.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Areas

Prescribed Burn Operations: The prescribed burn team continued to monitor the Aspen Draw Burn Unit that was implemented last week on the Chesaw Unit of Scotch Creek Wildlife Area to ensure the fire remains contained. The last report is that there are only two small smokes on the interior of the unit boundaries that continue to burn duff, thereby enhancing objectives and posing virtually no risk of escape. Wednesday we had excellent weather and fuel conditions to burn black lines on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area with a minimal crew size at the Forde 7 and Farm 3 and 4 units.

The black lines consume fuels on unit boundaries creating buffers that will make prescribed burn operations expedient when fuels are drier and more combustible. We intend these buffers to allow spring burning without the need for extensive hose-lays that take time to install and then remove, and taking these steps should allow us to burn safely with smaller crews. These measures will reduce expenses and risk on future burns when conditions will allow fire to spread throughout the units. Fires did carry well through pine needle litter this week and objectives in those areas were being met, but open areas with grass and forbs largely did not carry fire. In some units, where there were reasonably large areas with a good bed of needles, fires were lit on the uphill sides and allowed to back down into units.



Prescribed burn operations on the Farm 3 Burn Unit, Sinlahekin Wildlife Area – Photos by Justin Haug.

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

Wildlife Management

Small Canada Geese – Biologists Wehland and Duvuvuei counted the number of small Canada Geese on Stratford Lake. Stratford Lake is a hunt free area and it is a historically important staging area for migrating Canada Geese. Biologists Wehland and Duvuvuei counted over 20,000 geese during the survey.

Wildlife Areas

Mansfield Pond – Biologists Finger and Duvuvuei spent the week mowing the tall emergent vegetation along the Mansfield Pond shoreline that was previously killed by herbicide

treatments. The biologists removed the standing dead vegetation to prepare the site for seeding smartweed, millet, and annual sunflower next spring. It is important to get the organic matter to decompose so that planted seed can have access to the mineral soils. Plantings into dense organic matter are often unsuccessful.

Spud Field – Biologists Finger and Duvuvuei monitored the water and soil depth at the Spud Field to prepare for construction work next spring/summer. The plan is to create open water “ponds” with adjacent islands of various vegetation types. Vegetation types will be determined by wetland hydrology after feed water is delivered. By creating this mosaic, the biologists will provide diverse waterfowl foraging and loafing habitat and increase hunting opportunities. The spud field is a 70 acre floodplain along Crab Creek that when flooded using the existing water control structure, is about 6-18” deep on average, potentially providing optimal foraging habitat for waterfowl. However, the flat is currently dominated by undesirable species such as quack grass and reed canary grass, which will be difficult to eliminate. Soil depth was typically around 24-36” to bedrock.

REGION 3

None.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Judson Lake Swan Abatement: Biologists DeBruyn and Smith spent the better part of two days establishing a swan exclusion zone in Judson Lake on the Washington-British Columbia border. Judson Lake is a shallow water lake and is a historic waterfowl hunting area. Relict lead shot in the lake is believed to be one of the major sources of lead poisoning of the overwintering population of swans in this area. Setting up the exclusion area involved installing new bamboo poles and affixing mylar strips to approximately

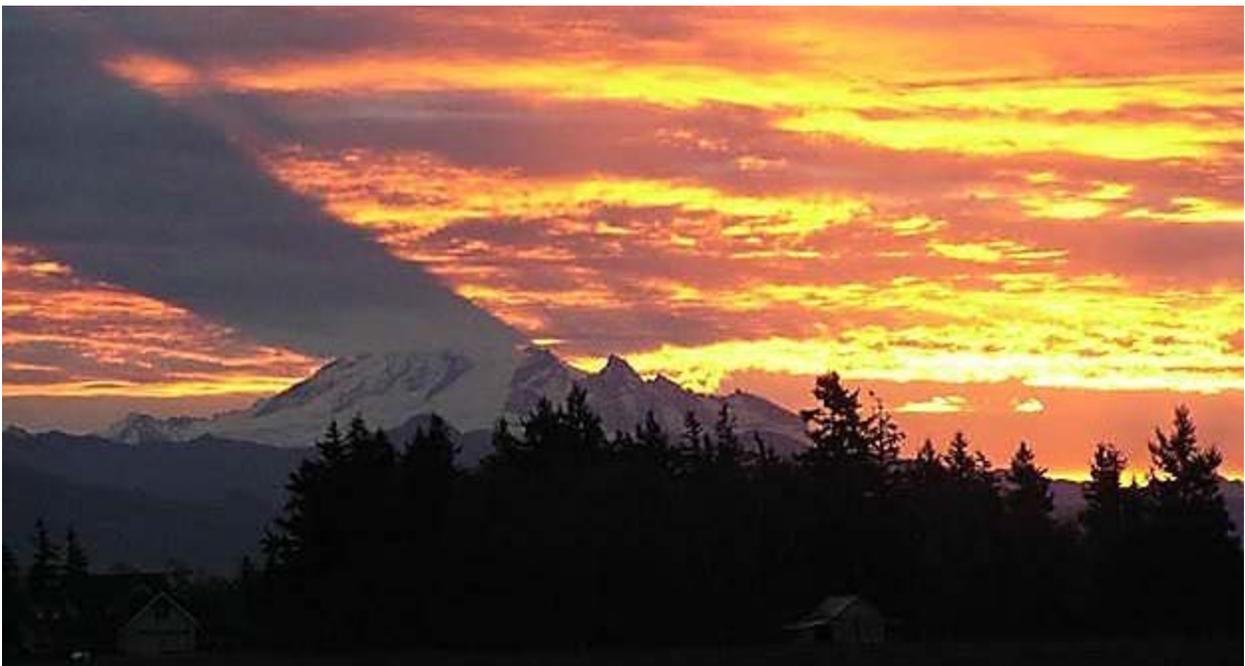


Biologist Mike Smith attaches mylar to a bamboo pole in Judson Lake.

3,300 old and new poles in shallow water areas of the lake. This exclusion zone has been implemented for several years and has successfully discouraged use of the lake by swans.



Above: A portion of the bamboo pole exclusion area at Judson Lake. About two-thirds of the lake is tiled with bamboo poles (mylar flagging attached to each pole) on an approximately 12.5 meter triangular grid to exclude swans from that portion of the lake. Below: The sun rising from behind Mount Baker as crews prepared to reinstall the swan exclusion at nearby Judson Lake.



Seattle Parks Integrated Pest Management “Urban Wildlife Conflict Avoidance” lecture: Biologist Anderson gave a presentation to 160 plus employees with Seattle Parks, City Light, Public Utilities, Everett Parks, and other surrounding municipalities at the “Seattle Parks 2013 Pesticide Recertification Seminar” regarding how to live with urban wildlife, not create a situation that may result in pest individual(s), urban ecology of common wildlife known for this occasional pesky behavior, and what is best biologically and legally to remedy a nuisance situation. General information on this topic can be found at the WDFW Living with Wildlife website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/species/>.

Osprey Management: Biologist Anderson returned multiple requests for direction and process regarding take authorization of osprey nests on cell towers and other structures. Anderson received complaints from citizens on Vashon about work removing a well-known nest in which the crew and communication company had not been in contact with WDFW. Anderson is in contact with the actual tower owner to provide information on Take Authorization needs for this and to request they pass it along to all of their lessees.

Game Health – Elk: Biologist Anderson received results back from WDFW Veterinarian Kristin Mansfield regarding hooves from an elk specimen in south King County showing a typical “ski” shape associated with laminitis; commonly called “founder”. Tests confirmed that this was the case. The animal, at some point, got into some very lush feed creating this physical reaction that can eventually lead to lameness in an individual. This animal was in good shape when taken by a hunter during archery general season. However, they noted the feet upon field dressing the animal and passed them on to WDFW.



Typical “ski” shape elk hoof associated with laminitis; commonly called “founder”.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo proposed listing of Western population: Biologist Anderson discussed District and Regional comments regarding yellow-billed cuckoo with Listing Section Manager Becker; what WDFW will be providing for comment, habitat availability, etc. per request to comment from regions for prep of agency comments to USFWS. Anderson will be kept in loop on comments developed from this section since this species has come up in Region 4 Species of Greatest Concern planning previously.

Everett Naval Base Integrated Natural Resources Planning: Biologist Milner participated in the annual natural resources review for staff at the Everett Navy Base. This annual review brings

agency staff together to review progress in all aspects of natural resource management on naval installations.

Great Blue Heron Management: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued to correspond in regards to concern over snag management along SR203 near a small Great Blue Heron colony.

Bald Eagle Nest Management: Biologist Cyra visited several Bald Eagle nest locations to confirm reports of blow downs/missing nests/new nests. Biologist Smith revisited a number of eagle territories to confirm nest locations in response to inquiries from the public. Biologist Anderson continues to provide direction to those inquiring about eagle management in King County.

Wildlife Areas

Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project: The Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project team kicked-off the project with a public meeting on the evening of October 30 at Stanwood Middle School. Approximately 60 people attended the meeting. Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton presented Leque Island site and background information, Projects Coordinator Brokaw presented project and process information, and Ducks Unlimited (DU) presented information regarding their involvement in the project. Meeting attendees completed surveys to volunteer for a Stakeholder Committee that will discuss project issues in more detail, and wrote down questions throughout the meeting. Questions were answered by a DU/WDFW



An answer panel of WDFW and Ducks Unlimited staff addressed written questions from the audience at the public meeting.

answer panel at the end of the meeting. Project materials are available on the project webpage at http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/skagit/leque_island_project.php.

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm worked with two volunteers to complete safety and informational signage on the new sign kiosks. Each of the three parking areas now has up-to-date sign kiosks and access gates.

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm began laying gravel on the access roads and bridge approaches. Additionally, Manager Boehm continued to coordinate the pheasant release program with volunteers. For the week, only one pheasant died and two escaped. This is in line with the previous week's results.

Spencer Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with volunteers to re-open hunter access that were overgrown with blackberries. Five access points were opened up using brush cutters and hand tools. Hunters can now access the tidal area for the waterfowl season from the dike.

Lake Terrell Dam Water Flows: Manager Kessler monitored the water level at the Lake Terrell dam on Terrell Creek. Beavers continue to dam and block the water flows at the edge of the lake.

Nooksack Unit Agricultural Lease: Manager Kessler evaluated the corn left standing in the Nooksack Unit's 100 acre corn field. During harvest, at least 10% is left standing for winter waterfowl feeding.

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

Wildlife Management

North Cascades Elk Management Wildlife Program Updates: Biologist Danilson facilitated a meeting of the monitoring and research committee of the North Cascades Elk Management Work Group. Committee turnout was low; however, substantial progress was made in developing potential methods for conducting ground-based surveys of elk in agricultural areas and areas outside of the existing aerial survey counting units. This addresses one of the objectives in the draft elk management plan and also one of the criticisms that some residents have about annual population estimates underrepresenting elk in these areas.

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

Lake Terrell ADA Hunting Information: Manager Kessler provided information on the new ADA Accessible Hunting Blind at Lake Terrell to two handicapped hunters. This blind was built by the Whatcom County Chapter of the Washington Waterfowl Association. The blind was used for the first time on Sunday. Manager Kessler met with the hunter who was very happy with the hunting opportunity.

Skagit Waterfowl Replacement Lands Proposal: Wildlife Area Manager Rotton, Lands Agent Iris, Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton, and Projects Coordinator Brokaw met to outline next steps to advance a proposal to acquire waterfowl hunting and forage replacement lands for areas displaced by estuary restoration projects. WDFW will work with local partners to continue to develop and refine the proposal.

Hunting Season Prep: Natural Resources Specialist Greg Meis and Natural Resources Tech Curran Cosgrove checked the boundary and closed area signs on the Telegraph Slough. There have been some questions about the status of the boundary signs and concern that hunters may access private land from our site.

Staff also checked hunter and bird use on the Johnson/Debay's Slough Swan Reserve, Samish, Leque Island and Island units. Ducks have yet to begin feeding in large numbers on any of the units. Wetter weather should begin ponding up areas on the Island and Samish units.

Pheasant Release Program: Pheasant release volunteers encountered a locked gate on the Bow Hill Road release site. Enforcement has been notified and will increase patrol of the area. 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 continued to coordinate the pheasant release program with volunteers. For the week, only one pheasant died and two escaped. This is in line with the previous week's results.

Private Lands/Access

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Unit Opening: Natural Resources Tech Otto worked with two different volunteers from the waterfowl community to open hunt units in Whatcom and Skagit counties. They were able to get four more units available for public access for the weekend. Otto surveyed and monitored units for use in Whatcom County on Saturday. "Fowl" weather brought the hunters out. There was 70% occupancy in WDFW private lands hunt units. Otto and Tech Deyo opened up the Region's first waterfowl unit for reservation on Friday.

Private Lands Access Program: Biologist Milner worked on maps and contracts for sites that will soon be uploaded onto the web in both the Feel Free to Hunt and Hunt by Reservation systems.

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

Wildlife Management

Elk Conflict: Conflict Specialist Griffith spent all week working on elk damage issues in the Day Creek area. Conflict Specialist Griffith and Biologist Danilson both responded to numerous phone calls related to ongoing efforts to lethally remove elk from the Day Creek area in Skagit County. Biologist Smith met with landowners to discuss elk damage and potential hunter activities in the Snoqualmie Valley area.

North Cascades Elk Clover Trapping and Radio Collaring Project: Biologist Danilson met with tribal representative to develop a project budget and job description for a seasonal technician to be hired by Skagit River Systems Cooperative. The primary role of the technician will be to coordinate trapping efforts from January through March. This will be the third season of capturing and radio collaring elk from the North Cascades elk herd using Clover traps. The purpose of the project is to maintain a subpopulation of radio marked elk for estimating the population size, in conjunction with aerial surveys conducted in early spring.

Vashon Island Center Forest Hunt: Biologist Smith spent a weekend day at the forest interacting with management, hunters and neighbors discussing aspects of the hunt. Smith saw a couple does and a forked-horn buck (all just outside the hunt boundary). One doe was harvested by a private landowner near the park, but Smith met no successful Center Forest hunters on that day. Hunters expressed much appreciation for the hunt opportunity and none of the neighbors spoken with reported any problems.

District 12 Deer Surveys: Biologist Smith spent time planning potential deer spotlight surveys and routes that could be used in the future to better inform hunting seasons and other management decisions.

Wildlife Areas

Adaptive Management Planning: Projects Coordinator Brokaw participated in a video conference with other WDFW staff involved in restoration projects statewide to discuss adaptive management planning for habitat restoration projects on WDFW lands. The group will work to create a standard template for adaptive management plans on WDFW plans to increase consistency among plans throughout the state.

Cattail Control Project: Manager Rotton and Dave Heimer of the North Sound Weed Crew met with Greg Hood of the Skagit River Systems Cooperative to discuss the proposed cattail control project. Mr. Hood will assist the project by using previous vegetation models to assist with refining the treatment areas based on tidal influence and elevation.

Fir Island Farms (FIF): Skagit Wildlife Area staff posted game reserve signs at FIF in the northeast side of reserve. Manager Rotton continued to coordinate with the Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland on a Talking Fields sign that will be installed in early November. Staff created an updated map of the FIF site for the sign board.

Skagit Wildlife Area staff met with Mak Kaufman of the Department of Ecology to discuss the best management practices for the Island Unit ditch maintenance project and other upcoming permits on Wiley Slough.

Samish River Unit: Manager Rotton contacted the Natural Resources Conservation Service Project Biologist to discuss the upcoming Samish River Unit Project. The SEPA process for the project has been submitted and the agency is receiving public and agency comments as a part of the process.

Lake Terrell Residence Energy Saving Upgrade: Manager Kessler coordinated with a department engineer on an upcoming energy saving upgrade on the Managers residence at Lake Terrell. Kessler provided information on the current status of the insulation, windows and doors of the residence.

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

Wildlife Management

Trap Training Workshop: Several staff attended a workshop sponsored by Wolf Haven featuring presentations by Carter Niemeyer (Agriculture extension-Washington State University; retired wolf specialist with USFWS and US Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services) describing wolf trapping techniques; WDFW Carnivore Research Biologist Beausoleil describing cougar and bear trapping; and biologists from Mexico who described their work to restore the Mexican wolf.

Natural Resource Technician Hiring: Biologists Danilson and DeBruyn conducted interviews for the seasonal swan technician position. Conflict Specialist Griffith and Biologist Danilson also interviewed candidates for the temporary conflict specialist technician. Danilson and Griffith will be contacting references and proceeding with the hiring process next week.

Private Lands Access Biologist Hiring: Biologist Milner offered the Biologist 2 position to the leading candidate, prepared all the necessary hiring paperwork and notified unsuccessful applicants of the decision.

New Employee Meeting: Projects Coordinator Brokaw met with the new Diversity Division Lands Conservation and Restoration Section Manager to review restoration project efforts in Region 4, restoration planning documents used in Region 4, and the Region 4 Restoration Framework.

Radio Training: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued to provide assistance to staff with instruction on radio training, radio use requirements, and assigning radio call numbers.

Aircraft Safety: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued communication with the safety office on the proposed department Aircraft Standard Operating Procedures.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management



Jackrabbit Surveys: Biologist Anderson and Volunteer Biologist Flick conducted a jackrabbit pellet survey as part of a study designed to validate a GIS model of White-tailed and Black-tailed Jackrabbit Habitat Concentration Areas (HCA) in the Columbia Basin. Random plots are being surveyed to determine jackrabbit presence in relation to four different

Jackrabbit Surveys

habitat types. Survey sites have been chosen in Klickitat County, representing the western range of jackrabbits in Washington. There has been a noticeable decline in jackrabbit populations in eastern Washington over the past 20 years and these surveys are being conducted to better understand habitat associations of these native species.

Beaver Reintroduction: Biologist Anderson along with Biologists Wainwright and Caballero from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) continued their evaluation of wetland habitats on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest for potential beaver reintroduction sites. Several drainages are being examined to determine where vacant streams could benefit from beaver reintroductions. Both wildlife and fisheries biologists from both agencies are excited about the potential to enhance habitats on the Gifford Pinchot National Forests. Trout Creek and its tributaries are currently being surveyed for suitable unoccupied beaver habitat.



Trout Creek surveyed for suitable unoccupied beaver habitat.

Lower Columbia River Shorebird Survey: Biologists Miller and Berg met with USFWS and Point Blue to discuss logistics and schedule dates for a pilot survey on wintering shorebirds in the Lower Columbia River. This year we will identify potential high use areas and explore survey methods for this project which is being coordinated by USFWS in our area.



Region 5 Cackling Canada Goose Surveys

Cackling Canada Goose Surveys: In cooperation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Department of Fish and Game, as well as British Columbia the second repetition of the cackling Canada geese survey was conducted this week. Biologists Miller, Bergh and George surveyed a total of approximately 32,000 geese. The survey protocol involves two repetitions of the effort and will generate a mark/re-sight estimate for the total population of cackling Canada geese.

Most geese were again located in Clark County. There were 56 marked birds added to the 37 observed last week. There were 54 of the 56 collars observed this week read in full, allowing for individual identification which will later contribute to estimations of survival for this subspecies. Population estimates generated from past year's efforts have resulted in a total of approximately 250,000 cackling Canada geese. Please see photos below of cacklers on their wintering habitat in Southwest Washington.



Region 5 Cackling Canada Goose Surveys

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

Wildlife Management

Southwest Washington Management Area 2A and 2B Goose Hunt: The 2013-2014 Southwest Washington goose hunting season will open Saturday, November 9. This complicated season involves quota limits, zone closures based on the harvest of the dusky Canada goose, and requires hunters to be very skilled in the identification of Canada geese found in this area. Hunters interested in participating in this season can refer to pages 16, 19, and 20 of the [Washington State Migratory Waterfowl and Upland Game Seasons](#) pamphlet for further details regarding requirements for participation. 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.

For the 2013-2014 season, hunters will have a daily bag limit of four geese not to include more than three cackling Canada geese and one dusky Canada goose. The possession limit is 12 geese not to include more than 1 dusky goose and 9 cackling geese. The bag of one dusky goose is a season limit and hunters who harvest a dusky goose or do not comply with hunt requirements

will have their authorization to hunt geese invalidated for the remainder of the season. A total of 40 dusky will be distributed amongst 5 zones in Management Area 2A and 2B. Zones may close to hunting geese if dusky quotas are exceeded.

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. and 6:00 p.m. Check station locations 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 the upcoming season.

Private Lands/Access

Site Clean-up: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes removed 500+-pounds of trash from a large dump pile at the Barbers Access site. In addition, two rotting deer carcasses were dumped in the parking area. Spangler and Rhodes also had to pick up and haul 400+ pounds of trash including a mattress, old toilet, scrap lumber, and carpet at the Vancouver Lake Access site. They were also able to pack gravel on the ramp planks at the Langsdorf Landing Access Site.



Langsdorf Landing Ramp

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

Wildlife Management

Public Service: As the opening day of general bull season opens, the phone calls have been increasing, mainly inquiries about access and where to camp. Some folks waited until Friday to start to inquire about elk locations and access and their late timing puts them at a disadvantage in comparison to those who started earlier.

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 would like to welcome Tammy Conklin to the Wildlife Program. Tammy is the new Wildlife Conflict Specialist for District 10 and will be covering Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, and Lewis counties. Tammy comes to us with a wealth of experience from the WDFW Enforcement Program where she worked for 11 years as an Enforcement Officer and for the past 2 years as an Investigator. We are very excited to have her join our team!

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Snowy Plovers: Biologists Hoenes and Sundstrom attended the annual Snowy Plover Recovery Unit 1 meeting in Salem, OR. Research Scientist Pearson also attended the meeting. Western snowy plovers are listed as threatened under the endangered species act and occur along the western coast from Washington to Baja California to Mexico. Because of that, there are four separate recovery units; Washington and Oregon comprise Recovery Unit 1. The intent of the annual meeting is to review Recovery Unit 1 objectives, strategies, progress, and identify issues that need to be addressed to ensure the recovery of this species.

Preliminary fledgling numbers for the Washington population during the 2013 nesting season appear to be 'average' although data from the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge (Leadbetter) could increase the outcome when that data becomes available. Oregon's preliminary numbers show steady progress, but there were a few pitfalls this season on key breeding areas. The issues were addressed and they managed to salvage the remainder of the breeding season with some success. Washington will be organizing its post-season snowy plover meeting in November.

Fisher Surveys: Biologist McMillan accomplished quality check editing, reviewing and updating of the 2013 records (photos and forms submitted to Olympic National Park project lead, Biologist Patti Happe).

Fisher Hex 564-Sequim – October 30 Check, Third Visit and Take Down: Biologists McMillan and Ament checked and pulled the two remaining stations for Hex 564, Station 1 (DNR land) and Station 2 (Jamestown ownership). No fishers were detected.

Western Pond Turtles: The Woodland Park Zoo reports that 65 of the 75 western pond turtle eggs recovered from Mason County by District 15 biologists successfully hatched out this year.

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

Wildlife Management

Goose Check Stations: Biologist Sundstrom and Scientific Technician Capelli operated the Raymond and Riekkola goose check stations. At the Raymond check station, Sundstrom reported that 5 hunters brought in 13 geese on Saturday; 6 cacklers, 6 taverners, and 1 white-fronted. This brings the total number of geese checked at the Raymond check station during the 2013-2014 goose season to 53 geese. At the Riekkola check station, Capelli reported that 9 hunters brought in 28 geese on Saturday; 7 cacklers, 15 taverners, and 6 lessers. This brings the total number of geese checked at the Riekkola check station during the 2013-2014 season to 72 geese.

Cackling Goose Surveys: Biologists Sundstrom and Michaelis participated in the second of four special cackling Canada Goose surveys; two surveys in October to estimate the pre-hunt population and two surveys in March to estimate the post-hunt population. The surveys are being conducted as part of a multi-regional mark-resight survey to estimate the number of cackling geese that winter in British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and California. Biologist Sundstrom observed 208 cackling geese and 3 were collared, while biologist Michaelis observed 2,570 cacklers with 3 of them being collared. It appears more geese were present during this survey than the previous one conducted last week. It is interesting to note that Biologists Michaelis and Hoenes conducted an Aerial waterfowl flight on Tuesday and observed very few Canada geese in and on adjacent lands around Willapa Bay.

Willapa Bay Waterfowl Surveys: Biologists Hoenes and Michaelis completed the first of three aerial waterfowl surveys scheduled in Willapa Bay during the 2013 season. Conditions were outstanding and there are tens of thousands of ducks currently using Willapa Bay. Final numbers have not been tallied, but biologists anticipate the final count will be upwards of 100,000 ducks. Surprisingly, Hoenes and Michaelis observed very few geese during their flight. The other two surveys are scheduled for mid-November and mid-December.

Private Lands/Access

Access Area Maintenance – Long Lake, Kitsap County: Staff worked to reclaim our fence line at Long Lake. Using pole saws, brush cutters, chain saws, weed eaters, loppers and blowers they beat back blackberries and other vegetation, resulting in a much improved access site!



Long Lake Access Site before (left) and after (right) maintenance.

Quality Waterfowl Hunting: Biologists Harris and Sundstrom worked with landowners in the Chehalis River valley to finalize and sign Quality Waterfowl hunting opportunities. Biologist Skriletz worked with landowners in Mason County as well. All locations will be displayed in GoHunt and potentially other locations on the WDW website.