

Wildlife Program

Week of August 11-17, 2014

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE.

Western Gray Squirrel Monitoring Approach Development: Diversity Division staff (Section Manager Bruce Thompson and Biologist Gary Wiles) met with Science Division staff (Research Scientist Matt Vander Haegen and Biometrician Ilai Keren) to further refine an approach to sampling western gray squirrel occurrence and habitat affinity. They examined GIS files of spatial and thematic details for an approach to selecting representative sampling areas throughout the species range in WA to ensure that habitat, landowner, and elevation strata are effectively included.

Golden Eagle Breeding Survey Analysis and Reporting: Staff from Diversity Division (Bruce Thompson, Gerry Hayes) and Science Division (Andy Duff, Gretchen Blatz, Ilai Keren, and Tom Owens) met to reconcile scheduling related to completing the golden eagle breeding territory survey summary for 2014. The team session led to establishing the data compilation, data analysis, and reporting schedule to complete work by mid-December 2014. This work involves an intricate array of work from both Divisions to compile and enter new data, using extensive software scripts to summarize spatial attributes of the territory data, and perform inferential analyses based on representative sampling. Maintaining the reporting schedule is necessary to meet requirements of federal contracting that provided some of the survey funding, as well as communication with funders from wind industry partners, and to maintain the WDFW status review track for this species.

Teanaway Community Forest: Section Manager Wilkerson participated in the August 14th Teanaway Community Forest Advisory Committee. The meeting focused on feedback regarding desired recreation uses on the forests and discussion regarding the initial development of management objectives mandated by the legislation regarding creation of the Teanaway Community Forest. Wilkerson also worked with Planner Winford to design a meeting to produce ecological priorities and sideboards to be integrated into the development of the management plan.

Annual Wildlife Program Barbeque: The majority of Wildlife Diversity staff attended an afternoon Wildlife Program meeting and barbeque at LBA Park. Two Wildlife Program staff were recognized for their recent work efforts, including Diversity Division Biologist Lisa Hallock for her efforts related to reptile and amphibian management in the state, which included a presentation to the Commission on the status of Washington's herpetofauna as well as one to the Wildlife Diversity Advisory Council on Western Pond Turtles. Congratulations Lisa!

REGION 1

NO REPORT SUBMITTED

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Rabbit Trapping: The team, with the assistance of Private Lands Bio Comstock, attempted another round of trapping and releasing kits from the enclosures; however, due to weather the Beezley Hill enclosure was not trapped this round. On Aug. 7 and 8, trapping occurred at the Sagebrush Flats (SBF) breeding enclosures. Over the 2 days, 44 rabbits were captured: 14 new kits, 11 recap kits, 4 new adults (kits that were missed in previous years), and 15 recap adults. On Aug. 13 the team trapped 46 rabbits at the Dormaier enclosure: 30 new kits, 10 recap kits, 1 new adult, and 5 recap adults. The new kits were released to the wild on SBF. All recap kits and adults remained at their current locations. To date we have released greater than 700 kits to the wild on SBF. A great deal of thanks and appreciation goes out to our volunteers, without whom we could not accomplish this task: Stephanie Batley, Laura Brown, and Lydia Weyland. Thank you, All!



Volunteers Batley and Brown assisting at processing station.

Sensitive Species Documentation: Biologist Fitkin followed up on a report of a massive migration of juvenile western toads. All told, thousands of toadlets dispersed from breeding ponds into the surrounding shrub-steppe and ponderosa pine forest. What makes this event particularly noteworthy is that the toads came from ponds created by beavers relocated as part of the Methow Valley Beaver Restoration Project.



Newly metamorphosed western toadlet – Photo by Scott Fitkin

Wildlife Areas

Frenchman Wetland Monitoring: Biologists O. Duvuvuei and E.

Duvuvuei classified wetland vegetation at random survey points within the Frenchmen

Regulated Access Area (FRAA). As part of a Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) contract for developing these wetlands, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is required to monitor habitat and vegetation within the project area. Although some Phragmites can be found in FRAA, the majority of vegetation within the wetland cells consists of millet, smartweed, dock, and bidens. Each of these plants provides important food sources for waterfowl through a robust seed head. Therefore, FRAA should attract an abundance of waterfowl when the project area is re-flooded.

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

Wildlife Areas

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Hunting: Biologist Duvuvuei met with Archaeologist Kelly to discuss cultural resources concerns for placing an ADA hunting blind at Frenchmen Regulated Access Area (FRAA). The meeting included a field tour of FRAA to discuss blind placement and searching for culturally significant materials. Archaeologist Kelly taught Biologist Duvuvuei how to dig test pits and decipher the stratification of soil, gravel, and minerals below the soil surface. During this field tour, Kelly and Duvuvuei did not find culturally significant material. Therefore, Archaeologist Kelly will recommend to DAHP that the ADA blind construction be permitted to proceed.



Archaeologist Kelly assessing the stratification of soil within a test pit –
Photo by O. Duvuvuei

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

Private Lands/Access

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE): Biologist Dougherty finished the task of writing the SAFE conservation plan that has been weeks in the making. Biologist Dougherty's initial thinking was that the most difficult part of the planning process would actually be figuring out the plan. However, in actuality that most difficult and time consuming part was filling out all the associated paperwork. After finishing all the paperwork, the reward was that there are at least three more conservation plans that will need to be written. Biologist Dougherty spent time discussing planting techniques and strategies with Vegetation Ecologist Merg in order to sort out the best way to establish CRP field borders. Biologist Comstock and Supervisor Cotton met with a landholder regarding his SAFE fields in Douglas County. This landholder has had issues

with seedbed preparation and we provided technical advice and came up with a new plan to prepare his seedbed in time to plant grass seed this fall. Biologist Comstock continued contacting landholders with SAFE sign ups from 2012 who will need to delay their forb seeding for one year. Biologist Comstock created forb polygons and other maps for a SAFE contract in Grant County.



Private Lands Biologist Braaten continues producing forb maps for landowners for seeding this fall. He met with a landowner whose safe fields burned in a wildfire started by a vehicle, finished surveying burned fields, and was able to rewrite safe contracts for landowner and Farm Service Agency (FSA). 120 acres of grass and 26 acres of forbs will be reseeded this fall. He surveyed the wildfire fireline acreage so the landowner can plan on rehab this fall.

Columbia Basin Pygmy Rabbits Safe Harbor: Biologist Comstock worked with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) staff to correct discrepancies between maps and legal descriptions of covered properties. In one case an error had been made by the assessor's office, which resulted in a significant mapping error. This has now been rectified. FWS should be sending out baseline letters to landowners shortly. Biologist Comstock spoke with a landowner in the Beezley Hills area who is planning to sign up for Safe Harbor. This landowner is especially concerned about a pack of feral dogs in the area, which may cause harm to the pygmy rabbits once releases begin in 2015. Biologist Comstock agreed this could be a problem. Biologist Comstock received an update from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) with a copy of the letter sent to FWS requesting an additional 3,628 acres be added to their safe harbor agreement. Biologist Comstock spent time reading the FWS handbook for creating Habitat Conservation Plans.

Okanogan Fires (weather, fire, etc.): As of Friday, August 16, 2014 the Carlton Complex fire is holding at 256,108 acres and is 92% contained. The Little Bridge Creek fire is 5,217 acres and 19% contained. The Upper Falls Creek fire is 8,120 acres and 25% contained. Moderate to heavy rain significantly slowed all fires and dramatically improved air quality late last week. Prior to the rain, air quality had reached a low in the central part of the Methow Valley. Unfortunately, the rain also caused several mud slides. One along Cow Creek briefly closed Hwy 153 in the lower Methow. Another Sunday evening covered both lanes of Hwy 20 with debris just east of Washington Pass; DOT is currently directing traffic



and removing rocks and mud. The fires and related effects have strongly impacted many residents of Okanogan County both physically and emotionally. Some of those impacts have been creatively reflected in the local media as seen in the included illustrations.



Carlton Complex Fire: Okanogan Lands Operations Manager Swedberg continues to spend much of his time working on issues around the Carlton Complex fire. Specifically he worked with the Carlton Complex Incident Management Team to facilitate use of Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) lands at 3 locations –a new Incident Command Post (ICP) at Geestman place; a Staging Area that was converted to a Fuel Depot at Boulder Creek Campground Access Site; and a potential retardant batch mixing and off-loading site at the Upper Chewuck Access Site that has not and will likely not

materialize. Fuels Manager Leuschen continues to attend daily 6AM briefings to keep Manager Swedberg apprised of changes as they relate to DFW lands and fire operations.

Project Forester Bass has been continuing to conduct field assessment, compile research, and participate in an ongoing discussion as to what fire prevention methods will also benefit the restoration efforts previously planned in fire spread risk areas. Bass has been assisting crews and management with damage assessment for FEMA, using a combination of GPS, aerial, and ecosystem assessment data.



Smoky Methow Valley from Goat Peak Lookout – Photo by Scott Fitkin

Forester Bass also began researching alternative methods of lumber removal for the Methow Wildlife Area’s hazard tree treatment needs. Since there is a small amount of hazard tree acreage, it is unlikely (though will be followed through and researched) that there is a market for felled trees. Alternatives will be discussed in the future with other WDFW staff and biologists to find the best-fit use for felled hazard trees

Specialist Heilhecker met with an orchardist in Methow who lost a portion of his game proof fence to the wildfire. The orchardist has a current wildlife fencing cost-share agreement with the Department. She is working on getting his list of needed materials to fix the fence. In the meantime, he has tightened the fence as best as he can. A couple of deer have gotten inside the orchard. Specialist Heilhecker will issue a kill permit for the landowner, and with the help of Specialist Bridges, arrange for an Okanogan county disable veteran to hunt the property.

Specialist Heilhecker sent letters to 11 individuals notifying them that they own land associated with a wildlife fencing cost-share agreement. She is hoping to get their current contact information and a list of materials needed to fix any fire damaged fence. Once that is completed, she can complete site visits and start ordering fencing materials with the limited funds available.

Deer depredation: Specialist Heilhecker visited with a landowner in Tonasket who is experiencing deer damage to her alfalfa field. This individual called last year at this time with the same concerns of not being able to get a third cutting. Specialist Heilhecker issued a kill permit and a damage permit valid until the start of general season and reminded her that she needs to open her land to some public hunting. Whether public hunting is allowed on the property will more closely monitored.

Winter Range: Biologist Heinlen, working with GIS staff in Olympia, made a first attempt at quantifying the affected deer winter range within the boundaries of the Carlton Complex fire. An estimated 20% of all deer winter range in District 6 west of the Okanogan River is within the Carlton Complex Fire boundary. Quantifying the deer winter range by density shows that 40% of all high density deer winter range in District 6 west of the Okanogan River is within the Carlton Complex Fire boundary.

Biologist Heinlen continued to get out on the ground investigating the severity of the burn within the deer winter ranges. WDFW lands burned with varying intensity from hot with most all vegetation consumed to areas with current regrowth in some shrubs (see attached photo). The rains that fell this week will help regrowth.



Choke Cherry regeneration (Methow Wildlife Area) –
Photo by J. Heinlen

Methow WA – Impacted Winter Range – Photo by
J. Heinlen

DFW Grazing Permitees Impacted by Fires: A meeting comprised of 22 people representing DFW grazing permittees and representatives from Methow Conservancy, Okanogan Conservation District, U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). DFW employees in attendance included DFW Range Ecologist Burnham, Sinlahekin Manager Haug and Assistant Manager Wehmeyer, Scotch Creek Assistant Manager Bryan Dupont, Methow Assistant Manager Lindsey, and Operations Manager Swedberg. Opportunities for emergency and alternative grazing were presented for each Wildlife Area and discussed. Specific pastures were reviewed and several met needs of a few of the producers. Temporary permits will be developed for the pastures and producers who can use them. Many burned pastures will need rest for more than one season necessitating development of longer term permits to help them through this time of need.

Post-fire Natural Resource Fair: Manager Swedberg, RM Brown, Sgt. Christensen, Habitat Biologist Iten, and Conflict Specialist Ellen Heilhecker attended a “Natural Resource fair” where representatives of agencies and organizations had tables and provided information and answered questions from landowners and the general public.

Emergency Grazing Meeting at Methow Wildlife Area

Manager Haug and assistant manager Wehmeyer participated in an emergency grazing meeting at the Methow Wildlife Area headquarters. The meeting grouped grazing permittees on WDFW lands affected by the Carlton Complex Fire with land managers from numerous agencies. Agencies represented were the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management and WDFW. The Methow Conservancy was also in attendance. The livestock operators gave the group their assessment of their current needs (this year and next) and the agencies in turn offered lands currently available for emergency grazing. Most lands available require some work to get ready – fencing, water, etc. Local livestock operators were grateful for the meeting and for the opportunities WDFW is offering. WDFW will work in the coming weeks and months to make sure available pastures are ready as needed.

Methow Forest Habitat Rehabilitation Project

Project Forester Bass continued to work on setting up restoration treatments for the Methow Wildlife Area’s unburned forested acres. This included prepping prescriptions and marking guidelines, preparing environmental assessments, creating maps, researching history of logging in higher elevation sites, and beginning layout of possible landing and road use to minimize impacts on fish and wildlife while improving recreational activities.

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Areas

Sunnyside Wildlife Area-Manager Greg Bjornstrom: Assistant Manager Sak and NRT2 Medina began banding ducks with the help of local volunteers at the Sunnyside HQ Unit. The total for the week: 79 ducks.



Local volunteers help with duck banding on the Sunnyside HQ Unit

Wildlife Management

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Bernatowicz participated in a conference call with Section Manager Harris, Dr. Cassier (Idaho), and Dr. Besser (WSU) to discuss a research funding proposal that will be presented to SCI. One option is to expand the current Yakima Canyon project.

Colockum Bull Study: A mortality came up on an animal that has been residing in the Teanaway. Biologist Moore investigated early in the week and found only a collar and a large piece of hide at the coordinates provided by the GPS collar. After reviewing pre-mortality GPS data Moore returned to the site along with Conflict Specialist Wetzel to search for the remains and determine the cause of death. The kill site was found approximately 500 meters from the collar and only one GPS data point was collected at that location. The bull was likely killed



sometime after July 31st and the collar sent a mortality signal on August 8th. This was most likely a predator kill.

Kill site of bull 34396

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Moore caught up on monitoring the CWU Interns progress. All is going well and they are typically observing most of the collared animals within two days of observation.

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

Wildlife Areas

Wenas Wildlife Area-Manager Cindi Confer Morris: Staff installed the last reader board and kiosk for the summer at the Four Corners. There are two more sites, but we are waiting until the elk fence rebuild has been completed before installing them.

New Reader board and kiosk at Four Corners (just west of Mt Vale)

Access Areas

A portion of Snively access was closed Thursday afternoon after staff found that several large limbs on two adjacent trees had broken and were hanging from the trees (widow-makers). The city was contacted and agreed to send a crew out to remove the danger limbs. A portion of the boat launch was included in the closed area due to its proximity to the trees. The site will fully re-open as soon as the city lets us know they've completed work.



Danger trees at Snively Access near boat launch. Posted Temporary Closer signs and taped it off.

Three-Year Package: Biologist Bernatowicz completed posters that covered regional issues for the upcoming public meetings.

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

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area-Manager Shana Winegeart: Manager Winegeart and Tech Schnebly assessed three properties identified for restoration as part of a cooperative WDFW/Mule Deer Foundation bitterbrush planting project. These properties are located on

quality mule deer winter range, but were burned in the Taylor Bridge fire. On Saturday, Winegeart, Schnebly, and Habitat Bio Teske also participated in a MDF habitat improvement project to fence livestock out of an overgrazed aspen stand.

Manager Winegeart and Bio Bernatowicz met with Kittitas Field & Stream members Bill and Deb Essman to explain the purpose and design of the Parke Creek spring enclosure. The Essman's were concerned that wildlife did not have access to the water, but after looking at the site, evidence of recent elk use was found inside the fence.

Wenas Wildlife Area-Manager Cindi Confer Morris: Manager Confer Morris and Assistant Manager Taylor coordinated with Damage Specialist Wetzel to address approximately 40 elk that are going through the section of elk fence near Cabin Lane that burned during the Cottonwood #2 fire. The landowner on the other side of the fence called to report elk in his irrigated alfalfa field. Confer Morris provided cost estimates for rebuilding that section to RPM McCorquodale, and was authorized to move forward with purchase of materials for the project. She was also in contact with the WCC supervisor regarding availability of the crew to help with repairs in August and/or September. They are checking schedules and will be getting back to her.

Manager Confer Morris and Assistant Manager Taylor met with neighbors that border Mt Vale to discuss fuel reduction opportunities in the local area. They are concerned about fire risk. The group had a good discussion about fire behavior and risk reduction around structures. They discussed fire wise and the update to the Yakima County Community Wildfire Protection Plan that may be good resources for ways to protect property. It was also suggested that the group look at organizing neighbors and developing a community wildfire protection plan for the Wenas Valley. Manager Confer Morris will provide some examples of other wildfire protection plans, as well as information on the Yakima County plan.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area-Manager Ross Huffman: On Friday, 31 volunteers from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) arrived to spend the day working on an elk fence project. Assistant Manager Berry and NRW 2 Smith organized the volunteers and completed orientation. The group then headed to Cleman's Mt where they worked on rebuilding a section of fence across private property. The group was able to clear a lot of brush and set 12 posts including 1 break away across a dry channel, a new gate, and 1 side of the breakaway across Meystre Creek, totaling 5 H braces. It was a great day and thank you to the RMEF volunteers for all their hard work. The work day coincided with the RMEF annual Summer Rendezvous at White Pass.

RMEF volunteers clearing brush along the fence early in the day.





RMEF volunteers finishing up work on a section of elk fence.

Colockum Wildlife Area-Manager Pete Lopushinsky: Manager Lopushinsky toured Colockum roads with Engineer Kristen Kuykendall looking at road issues related to the timber salvage project. They flagged work sites and discussed methods to satisfy the FPA IDT Team's concerns about stream adjacent roads and drainage.

Wildlife Management

District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist-Don Hand: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand responded to a complaint of elk in an orchard at Fewel Farms during the middle of the day, so a local youth hunt was coordinated resulting in the herd being hazed from the area and a young hunter harvesting his first elk.

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

Wildlife Areas

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area-Manager Shana Winegeart: Assistant Manager Hunt gathered information, cost estimates, and presented a proposal to Section Manager Dahmer for improvement of the Joe Watt barn compound and hay stack yard. Hunt was able to line up fill material at no cost in cooperation with a local irrigation district, and the source is pretty close, which cheapens up hauling costs.

Assistant Manager Hunt spent Tuesday on our Gnat Flat acquisition, and was able to tour portions of it in the morning with Steve Griswold of Plum Creek Timber (former owner of the nearly 5,000 acres). Steve is quite familiar with the land, worked RMAP issues, and is a great resource for information pertinent to our future management. We plan to meet with him again soon to look over more maps and documents, including their HCP.

Colockum Wildlife Area-Manager Pete Lopushinsky: Assistant Manager Hagan attended three days of Motorboat Operator's Training in Olympia.

Colockum staff worked on rebuilding another section of boundary fence burned last summer in the Colockum-Tarps Fire.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area-Manager Ross Huffman: Assistant Manager Berry and NRW 2 Smith finished painting the elk viewing platform in the parking lot.



Oak Creek Elk Viewing Area before and after painting.

Assistant Manager Berry and NRW 2 Smith repaired the elk fence across the Tieton River. This past spring a boulder came loose rolling down the hill and taking out part of the fence and knocking down the gate. The gate is heavily used to access the Tieton River Nature Trail and the Royal Columns climbing area. Because of low elk use in the area the gate was removed until

repairs could be made. Berry and Smith were able to reuse most of the existing materials to keep a consistent look to the elk fence.



Assistant Manager Berry and NRW2 Smith cleaning up the area and preparing to rebuild a section of elk fence along the Tieton River.

Manager Huffman met with Pat Aga from Department of Enterprise Services Motor Pool and showed him vehicles used on the wildlife

area and drove him around on some of the roads. While driving Huffman and Aga discussed needs for wildlife area vehicles and concerns with things like tires and bulk fuel. Aga seemed confident that a new lease rate that would not include fuel could be developed for remote wildlife areas.

Repaired elk fence along the Tieton River accessing the nature trail and the Royal Columns climbing area.



REGION 4

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

Wildlife Management

Waterfowl Trapping: Biologist DeBruyn continued trapping ducks at a private gun club in Edison, Skagit County. He has banded 69 mallards at this site this month. DeBruyn is working



on getting permission to trap at a site on private property in Whatcom County that looks very promising. Yearly mallard banding is done in cooperation with western flyway managers to assess survival and recruitment of local ducks.

Trapped mallards revealed by remote surveillance camera

Public Safety, Elk Road Kills: Biologist DeBruyn documented elk road kills on highways 20 and I-5. He is working with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to develop strategies to facilitate safe wildlife crossings of highway 20. Discussions with WSDOT regarding movements of a GPS equipped collared elk as they relate to crossings and mortality are ongoing. Trail cameras have been deployed to monitor elk movements in “hot spots” along highway 20.



Co-managers are working on learning more about road killed elk along Hyw 20.

Wildlife Management Consultation/Permitting Requests; Municipal, Private Utilities, other: Biologist Anderson provided permits and management consultation assistance regarding projects requiring wildlife consideration (often osprey, herons, and peregrine falcons). Some were private and some were municipal requests for needed permits from WDFW or general management suggestions per Growth Management Act.

Biologist Anderson followed-up with the city of Seattle in regards to an emergency road repair less than 200 feet from currently active nesting herons. The city was intent on meeting its own code of providing for the herons. Anderson provided recommendations to assist in avoiding disturbance via phasing of project and monitoring of the nests for eventual fledge.

Citizen Science Bat Survey: Biologist Anderson coordinated with volunteers and conducted the last acoustic survey of Cherry Valley Wildlife Management Unit for this pilot project.

Wildlife Areas

Fir Island Farm Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan: A complete draft of this plan has been finished by Habitat and Wildlife Program staff, and was submitted to the project Independent Technical Review (ITR) Team this week. The ITR Team consists of consultants who are experts in various engineering, restoration, and construction fields. These consultants review and provide feedback on project documents before they are finalized.

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP): Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Habitat Planner Theresa Mitchell, and Habitat Planner Brian Williams met with The Nature Conservancy and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Restoration Center to discuss an upcoming public comment period on PSNERP. The group planned ways to engage agricultural, flood protection, and restoration organizations using already existing forums in Skagit County to give a status update on PSNERP. More information on PSNERP is available at www.pugetsoundnearshore.org.

Port Susan Bay Monitoring ESRP Pre-Proposal: Projects Coordinator Brokaw communicated with staff from Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, and Western Washington University regarding a proposal to monitor intertidal habitats and birds in Port Susan Bay. The groups submitted two pre-proposals to a grant opportunity offered by the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP), with agreement to further coordinate their efforts with other groups interested in monitoring at Leque Island before submitting full proposals in October.

Leque Island Groundwater Monitoring Plan: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Ducks Unlimited met with a groundwater consultant regarding groundwater quality monitoring needs for Leque Island. The consultant will prepare a draft monitoring plan for review in early September. Regardless of which design alternative is eventually selected, WDFW is interested in data to record baseline conditions before modifying drainage features. For more information on the project, visit the project webpage at: http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/skagit/leque_island_project.php.



Leque Island Feb., 2011

Rainbow Pond Water Control: Manager Kessler coordinated with Ducks Unlimited managers on the water control replacement project at Rainbow Pond. Permitting for the project continues. Manager Kessler will

be providing information on neighbors of the area for the SEPA process.

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

Wildlife Management

Two Tulalip employees, 4 Stillaguamish, and 3 Sauk Suiattle and 2 State employees were involved in fencing 46 acres in temporary fence and about a quarter mile of permanent fence. Stillaguamish purchased additional supplies for both fences.



The Carstens is the first fencing project that the \$14k post driver has been used on and the landowners are thrilled with the progress, quality of work and how professional the crew has been.

Mammal Class – Seattle Audubon Finding Urban Nature Children’s Camp: Biologist Anderson went through many of the well-known mammals of western Washington for a large group of elementary aged children. Anderson discussed vegetarians through meat-eaters (trying to avoid herbivorous and carnivore type terms) why they are so cool, why we should care about them, how to see them with our parents and at camp, how to appropriately act around and observe wildlife, and what to do if wildlife are sick, acting too friendly (habituated), or being aggressive.

Mount Baker Wilderness Signage: Biologist DeBruyn finished posting signs at access points to Mt. Baker Wilderness alerting recreational users to a new high buck hunt opening in September. Deep snow had precluded posting some high altitude trails which were revisited this week.

Wildlife Areas

Samish Unit Wetland Enhancement Project: The Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA) was submitted and received by the Army Corps of Engineers for review to begin the permit approval process.

Lake Terrell Wildlife Area Pheasant Pen Repairs: Manager Kessler worked with a Master Hunter volunteer to repair the pheasant pens which were damaged during a snow storm last winter. Replacement of the netting support beams was completed. Patching the torn netting will be completed this week.

Tennant Lake Boardwalk Renovation: Manager Kessler coordinated with waterfowl hunters who will be using the Tennant Lake hunting blinds on opening day. The boardwalk renovation work may occur this October, and if so, hunting will be restricted during this time.



Wood Duck Nest Boxes: Manager Kessler met with a volunteer who has built and maintained many Wood Duck nest boxes on the Nooksack unit. He has completed assembly of six more boxes which will be installed next Spring.

Wood duck box

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Sites: Biologist Caldwell met with several Snohomish County residents to discuss new and sustainable recreational experiences. Two to three new sites were identified. Negotiations and habitat suitability monitoring will take place over the following months to determine whether each site is conducive with enrollment standards for the 2014 waterfowl season.

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

Wildlife Management

Region 4 Ungulate Damage: Biologist Smith responded to calls regarding deer and elk damage from residents of King and Skagit counties. Damage occurred to a variety of crops, ornamentals, and infrastructure (fences). Non-lethal measures to deter elk from entering properties were discussed, including fencing options. Smith, Technician Cogdal and representatives from several local Tribes installed temporary electrified fladry fencing designed to exclude elk from entering a potato crop. Smith and Cogdal also spent time troubleshooting and fine tuning the fence. Smith also monitored elk/deer activity on other area agricultural fields with the help of deployed trail cameras.

Region 4 (D12) 2014 Hunts: Biologist Smith responded to multiple members of the hunting community inquiring about prospective hunting areas, regulations, GoHunt interactive mapping, and prospects for the upcoming hunting seasons in District 12.



Electrified fladry fencing used to exclude elk from potato crop in Skagit County.

Electrified fladry fencing used to exclude elk from Christmas tree plantings in King County



Private Lands/Access Management

GMU 418 and Elk Area 4941 Nooksack Bull Elk Special Permit Hunt Coordination: Biologist Caldwell contacted and met several permit holders that were unable to attend the 8/9/2014 meeting. Biologist Caldwell met with these permit holders to discuss the rules and regulations for the hunt and collect hunter information.

Western Washington Pheasant Release Program: Biologist Caldwell contacted the final private landowner on Whidbey Island to go over access agreements for the 2014 pheasant hunting season. An agreement was reached. All available sites on the Island have now been submitted.

Waterfowl and Pheasant Hunting Questions: Biologist Caldwell answered several

questions about waterfowl and pheasant hunting options across Region 4. Biologist Caldwell directed each individual to internet options and answered all questions regarding hunting site and access rules.

Private Lands Contract Quality Assurance: Biologist Caldwell and Contract Specialist Thompson discovered and fixed a document error in one Novatus Contract. This error prevented the contract from being printed. Once fixed the contract was delivered to the landowner for a signature and submitted to Olympia contract staff.

Snohomish County Quality Hunt Site Review: Biologist Caldwell reviewed Snohomish County Quality Hunt sites crop plantations and blind placements. He also looked at potential diversity and quality hunt sites.

Wildlife Areas

Fir Island Farms Monitoring ESRP Grant: Project Coordinator Brokaw submitted a pre-proposal for a funding opportunity offered by the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) to fund post project monitoring and adaptive management associated with the Fir Island Farm Estuary Restoration Project.

Hunter Education Coordination: Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey attended and assisted newly certified Chief instructor Casey Green in presenting a Field Skills Evaluation class at the Region 4 office in Mill Creek. Casey Green was also assisted by two other certified hunter education instructors. Casey, as an employee of the DFW in Region 4, was well acquainted with the venue and was able to set up a viable field skills course utilizing the area around the office and several decoys to simulate actual field situations. The Mill Creek police were advised of the location and timing of the field skills course so that they were aware of any calls about students outside the Mill Creek office with orange guns. The class was a success, with all students who attended passing the review quiz and the field course safe firearm handling requirements. Congratulations to Casey on successfully conducting his first class and then agreeing to two new dates at Region 4 headquarters in September.



Doe moving through edge of agricultural crop in King County.

Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey evaluated one of the teaching teams that uses the Marysville Rifle Club's range and classroom. The classroom was full and after two days of instruction, field skills, and live fire, all students passed the 75 question Traditional Hunter Education course exam with better than 80% correct on the test. While there were no 100% tests many students only missed one question on the exam that covers Conservation, Safety, and Sportsmanship.



Instructor Rod Moore and guest presenter teaching to a full classroom of eager hunter education students

GOAL 4: SUPPORTING OUR WORKFORCE, IMPROVING BUSINESS PROCESSES, AND INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY

Wildlife Management

Anderson worked on internal report needs, many phone calls and emails regarding information on wildlife management direction, staff vehicle needs, admin needs, network drive issues with IT group, worked with customer service regarding requests for information and management guidance as well as how to handle various internal hunt data collection; and other general regularly occurring type items.

Hunter Education: Volunteer Coordinator Steven Dazey met with DFW's Volunteer Program Manager Christine Redmond to discuss the CERVIS program and strategies to better track volunteer hours in Region 4. With some new tools and ideas from Christine, Volunteer Coordinator Dazey hopes to be able to improve volunteer opportunities and tracking in Region 4. Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey attended a hunter education staff meeting at the NRB in Olympia. Challenges facing the hunter education division were discussed. Strategies to provide continued excellent service to our volunteer instructors and the students taking hunter education classes were also discussed.

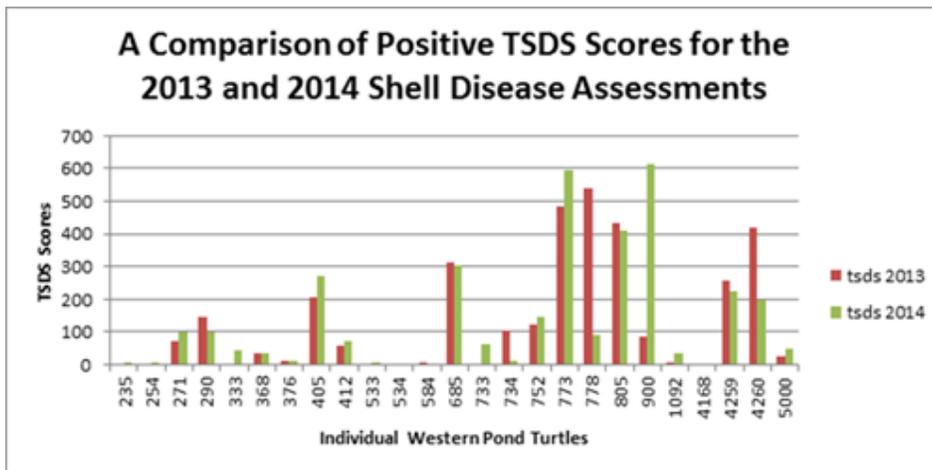
REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Western Pond Turtle: Biologist George summarized data related to the western pond turtle shell disease assessment which took place at the Sondino Unit throughout April, May, and June of this year. A preliminary review shows that 180 individual western pond turtles were assessed for shell disease, and of those, 91 were found to have the disease. Forty-four of the 57 turtles assessed and treated in 2013 were reassessed and treated in 2014. A comparison of these 44 turtles revealed that 20% showed some improvement in their assessment from 2013 to 2014, while 31% showed a decline, and 48% remained unchanged. Overall, the change between years for the 44 turtles that were reexamined appears to show a 2% decline in condition. A more detailed analysis of results will take place at a later date. The graph below shows the comparison of Total Shell Disease Severity (TSDS) Scores for individual turtles assessed for shell disease in 2013 and 2014. For purposes of assessing shell disease, the carapace and plastron are divided up into six regions and each region receives a numerical score from 0-5 for both extent and severity

of the disease detected. The highest (most severe) score that a turtle can receive is 900. A score of zero indicates that shell disease was not detected.



Total Shell Disease Severity (TSDS) Scores for individual turtles assessed for shell disease in 2013 and 2014.

Assistance to Habitat Division (WGS): Wildlife Biologist Anderson conducted a site visit with the USFS, Yakama Tribe, Friends of the White Salmon, and local residence to discuss the proposed Fordyce Road Ecolodge project on the lower White Salmon River in Klickitat County. The proposal includes residence, lodge, and over 25 tent cabins associated with the riparian corridor of the White Salmon River. Issues for the resource agencies include development impacts to salmon and western gray squirrel habitat currently associated with the property. Issues for the neighbors include increases in public use and disturbance of the area. A public hearing is scheduled for the proposed development this week and follow-up negotiations will be held to determine the suitability of the project.

Hoof Disease: Wildlife Program Manager Jonker presented an update to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Rendezvous this weekend on results to date of the WDFW hoof disease diagnostic investigation and proposed management approach. There was a lot of interest in this complex issue and a good Q&A and discussion followed.

Wildlife Areas

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Soda Springs Unit: - Technician Davis treated canarygrass infestations with herbicide in various locations on the Soda Springs Unit. Some of these have been treated in previous years and needed a re-treatment; however many are new patches that have appeared recently.

Cowlitz Wildlife Area

Restoration of Seasonal Drainage: Wildlife Area staff repaired the bed of a small seasonal creek that had jumped its channel and began flowing out into one of the forage fields on the Swofford Unit. The creek is dry most of the year and funnels runoff from the adjacent properties uphill of the Wildlife Area. Sediments had filled the channel, diverting it away from the original course. Wildlife Area staff pulled the sediments from the channel to recreate the bank and then placed cedar logs along the bank to act as an energy dissipater and to reinforce the bank. No water was present at the time of construction.

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

Wildlife Areas

Cowlitz Wildlife Area

Hunter Education Class: Wildlife Area staff conducted a two day traditional hunter education class. Generally, only 15 students are accepted into these classes but to accommodate the last minute push before the season opener 19 students were registered. The students are educated on a variety of subjects including firearms safety, conservation issues and values, ethics, and what constitutes sportsmanlike behavior. They are also introduced to the topics of first aid and survival. At the completion of the instructional portion of the class, the students take a 75 question multiple choice true/false test passing with a score of no less than 80 percent. The written test is followed by a skills evaluation which is conducted on a simulated field course. Successful students are then able to participate in an optional live fire shoot at the local gun club. Of the 19 students registered, 16 students successfully passed the course.



Hunter Education Class

Wildlife Management Coordinating Committee (WMCC) Meeting: Cowlitz Wildlife Area staff and Wildlife Program Manager Jonker attended the annual WMCC meeting held at the Cowlitz Wildlife Area office. Attendees included representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Tacoma Power, and Department of Fish and Wildlife. Wildlife Area topics included 2014 planned projects, easement issues on the Peterman and Kosmos Units, land use permit cancellations, road maintenance and abandonment plan schedule, and grant planning for phase 2 of the conservation easement with a local timber company. The meeting ended with a site visit to an active 200 acre commercial thin on the Peterman Unit.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Waterfowl Survey BPOP- Data Review: Biologist McMillan reviewed the results from the recent BPOP 2009-2014 compilation. She focused on records that demonstrated the value of District 16's Waterfowl Breeding Habitat as it relates to the rest of the state. A few comparisons below show that the Dungeness Area holds a high density of many waterfowl species. Biologist McMillan recommends regaining the Dungeness Basin focus of wildlife inventory and documenting to better understand the distribution of these populations and other species of concern throughout the year.

- Mallard & Gadwall
 - Dungeness has about 3½ % of the Statewide Mallard and Gadwall Breeding Population 2014
 - Dungeness has about 9% of Western Washington Mallard Breeding Population 2014
 - Dungeness has about 25% of Western Washington Gadwall Breeding Population 2014
 - Dungeness Mallard Density is 1.7 times that of All of Western Washington during 2014
 - Dungeness Mallard Density is 1.2 times that of All of Western Washington 2009-2014 average
 - Dungeness Gadwall Density is 3.4 times that of All of Western Washington 2009-2014 average
- Green-winged Teal
 - Dungeness has about 15% of the Statewide Green-winged Teal Breeding Population 2014
 - Dungeness has about 20% of Western Washington Green-winged Teal Breeding Population 2014
 - Dungeness American Green-winged Teal is 2.7 times that of All of Western Washington 2009-2014 average
- Northern Shoveler
 - Dungeness has about 8% of the Statewide & Western Washington Northern Shoveler Breeding Population 2014

- Ring-necked ducks
 - Dungeness has about 6% of the Statewide Ring-necked duck Breeding Population 2014
 - Dungeness has about 9% of Western Washington Ring-necked duck Breeding Population 2014
- Scaup
 - Dungeness has about 28% of Western Washington Scaup Breeding Population 2014
- Dungeness densities of Canada Geese, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser are higher than the Western Washington average. Densities are lower than Western Washington average for wigeon and common merganser.

Mourning Dove Trapping and Banding: Biologist Michaelis completed banding a total of 45 mourning doves in two locations in Grays Harbor County. Forty one were captured in Satsop and the remaining 4 were captured and banded in Oakville. These are the only locations where doves are captured in western Washington and data from banded doves are used to estimate survival, harvest rates and migration distances. Photo attached is of an adult female. Note the dull brown coloration on the breast. Males have a much more colorful rosy hue on their breasts.

Female mourning dove captured and banded in Grays Harbor County.



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

Wildlife Management

Raptor Rendezvous Benefit for the NW Raptor Center: Bio Ament held the 19th annual Raptor Rendezvous party for the Northwest Raptor Center at her property on August 16th. The event was attended by 150+ people. There was great music, food, beverages, and fine weather for the event. The benefit was a wonderful success. A total of nearly \$5000 was raised for the center. Biologist Ament appreciated the donation of hand knit socks from Celia Roberts for the raffle and the fact that District Biologist McMillan and Officer Davidson (& family) attended the event.