Wildlife Program
Week of August 18-24, 2014

SCIENCE DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Agency Strategic Objectives

B. Washington's fish and wildlife diversity is protected at levels consistent with ecosystem management principles, established in the Conservation Initiative.

Scott Pearson is a coauthor on the recently published manuscript.

Thomas P. Good, Scott F. Pearson, Peter Hodum, Daryle Boyd, Bernadita F. Anulacion, Gina M. Ylitalo. 2014. Persistent organic pollutants in forage fish prey of rhinoceros auklets breeding in Puget Sound and the northern California Current. Marine Pollution Bulletin

Highlights:
- Persistent organic pollutants were measured in fish delivered to rhinoceros auklet chicks on Protection, Tatoosh, and Destruction islands.
- PCB and PBDE levels were generally highest in the Salish Sea.
- Contaminant profiles differed between the Salish Sea and outer coast locations.
- PCB and PBDE burdens for pre-fledging auklet chicks are considerable.

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

Agency Strategic Objectives

A. Conservation of fish and wildlife is widely supported by communities across Washington.

On Friday evening and Saturday, Mike Schroeder hosted Dorian Anderson. He is in the middle of a 'big year' bird watching trip, but with a twist. He is conducting the trip with human-powered transportation only (bike, foot, and kayak). He has observed 515 species of birds so far this year and is hoping to reach 600 species by the end of the year. After getting some advice from me, he went to the Conconully area and was successful at adding 2 key bird species to his list, including spruce grouse. He is planning to ride his bike to the west side of the state in a couple days and will be working his way south along the coast. His blog is at http://bikingforbirds.blogspot.com/ He wrote the following in his blog about Mike.

Michael Schroeder, with whom I stayed two nights ago, is Mr. Grouse - literally. He is a grouse researcher at Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. How much does Michael like grouse? Well, in every room in his house are pictures and carvings of grouse. His WiFi network is called "Grouse". His dog is named "Lek". I am not joking. I am willing to bet that he met his wife by doing some highly stereotyped dance at a bar back in the day! Anyway, Michael is probably the best source of information on grouse in the state, so when he offered up some information, I listened!

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

C. Achieve operational excellence through effective business processes, workload management, and investments in technology.

John Pierce, Rena Henson, and Shawn George spent last week training over 60 agency staff on using the new (in Devlopment) Novatus Project module. Project information will be required for all USFWS grants starting this fall and WDFW's new Novatus contract and project management system will allow WDFW employees to enter the USFWS required information directly into our agency information system, which will automatically feed data in the new USFWS TRACS system. We got excellent feedback from the training participants that will be useful in finalizing the development of our system. We hope that our Novatus system will be in production by the end of September.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Assisting Prairie Habitat Conservation Planning: Biologist Ann Potter completed an informational summary for 2 Pacific Northwest endemic butterflies, the Oregon Branded Skipper (*Hesperia colorado* Salish Sea segregate) and Hoary Elfin (*Callophrys polios* Puget Trough segregate), and provided the document to biological consultants, in support of the Thurston County, Washington *Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan* and associated planning efforts. The summary included information on conservation status, taxonomy, species range, detailed distribution within the south Puget Sound region, population size, life cycle, habitat, and references.

Conservation Action Reporting: Biologist Ann Potter submitted the annual report for the Prairie-Oak Butterfly Monitoring project (State Wildlife Grant-funded), summarizing project accomplishments for July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014, and detailing second quarter 2014 efforts. The butterfly monitoring component of this restoration-focused project is designed to assess the effects and effectiveness of prairie and oak woodland restoration for butterfly species of greatest conservation need (SGCN), and collect information on the current distribution and

life cycle of several little-known butterflies. Eleven prairie-oak dependent butterflies have been studied on 17 sites in Washington and 4 sites in Oregon. Butterfly monitoring is still underway for the 2014 season, and the project includes a third year of monitoring in 2015.

Shrub-Steppe Monitoring Initiative: Diversity Division and Science Division staff, led by Conservation Assessment Section Manager Bruce Thompson, further developed the sampling framework for monitoring shrub-steppe resources. The team identified 5 ecological systems and 6 general land ownership categories that will be used to define up to 30 strata to guide the collection of resource detection data. The overall intent is to compile detection data for a spectrum of animal and plant resources that will help to determine species occurrence associations among strata, describe relative ecological integrity, and provide inferences about prospective conservation targets among the stratum types.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE.

Aiding Preparation of Candidate Species Assessments: Diversity Division Manager Eric Gardner and Section Managers Penny Becker and Bruce Thompson finalized a Guide and Template to be used for preparation of Diversity Species Status Assessments. The Assessment process is being applied to candidate species during this Biennium with assessments targeted for completion by June 2015. The guide and template are intended to provide for staff consistency and efficiency in determining what information to seek as well as a standardized format for assessment documents to facilitate review and use as information media.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Preseason Deer Surveys: Biologist Atamian conducted a deer composition survey in the Greenbluff area of GMU 124. A total of 78 deer were observed, including 44 does, 23 fawns, & 11 bucks. In addition to the deer, about 100 turkeys were also observed. Biologist Lowe conducted a deer survey in GMU 136 and observed 23 mule deer does, 3 fawns, & 10 bucks. Lowe also conducted two surveys in GMU 139 and saw 118 mule deer (65 does, 22 fawns, & 31 bucks), and 48 white-tailed deer (35 does, 11 fawns, & 2 bucks). Other wildlife observed included pheasants, turkeys, and a badger. Biologist Vekasy conducted deer composition surveys in GMUs 149, 154, 162, and 163, and the counts haven't been summarized yet. In general, counts and composition appear similar to last year at this time.

Mule deer buck group in GMU 149

Bighorn Sheep: A local domestic goat weed control operator contacted District Biologist (DB) Wik this past week about moving their goats into the center of the Asotin bighorn sheep herd range. The operator, who we have been developing a relationship with this past year, stated they were hired for a weed removal job directly adjacent to the Wildlife Area in Asotin Creek where the Asotin bighorn sheep herd resides. DB Wik responded within an hour of the goats arriving and visited with the landowner. While visiting with the landowner, 22 bighorn sheep moved within ¼ mile of the domestic goats. DB Wik was able to convince the landowners and the operator to remove the goats that day, with biologists Wik and Fortin returning next week to remove the weeds manually. This was a very close call for maintaining the health of this herd as well as the current research project.

Group of 22 bighorns within ¼ mile of the 48 domestic goats on Asotin Creek

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

Wildlife Management

Three-year hunting season package public meeting: Wildlife Program staff from Headquarters and Region 1 hosted a public meeting on development of the new three-year package of hunting seasons. This meeting was held in Spokane Valley at the Center Place conference facility. This was one of six statewide public meetings held in each of WDFW's six regions which will conclude this week. An additional public meeting will be held in Colville at the Ag/Trade Center on September 10th. Public comments received at the meetings and through a public survey will play an important role in shaping hunting seasons and associated hunting regulations for 2015-17.

Wildlife Areas

West Branch Little Spokane Wildlife Area Dumping: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Palmer found where someone had dumped two pick-up loads of household and construction debris on the West Branch Little Spokane WLA, along the Horseshoe Lake Road. Palmer took photos of the site and collected evidence, which was turned over to Enforcement before cleaning up the extensive mess.

Two large piles of trash to clean up on WBLS.

The trash filled both the trailer and pick-up.

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

Wildlife Areas

Asotin Creek WA – Boundary Stock Fence: Biologist Woodall, Technician David Meisner, and volunteer Nick Steveson spent the majority of the week checking and repairing boundary fence along the USFS property line at Smoothing Iron and South Fork of Asotin Creek. The fence is up and the gates are shut. Though in poor condition in several areas, the fence keeps livestock from entering wildlife area lands from a USFS grazing allotment. David and Nick also widened a treacherous section of ATV trail near the South Fork of Asotin Creek while in the area to provide safe passage.

Volunteer Nick Steveson

Fence repairs on the Asotin Creek WA

What a view! South Fork of Asotin Creek.

ATV passable trail

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

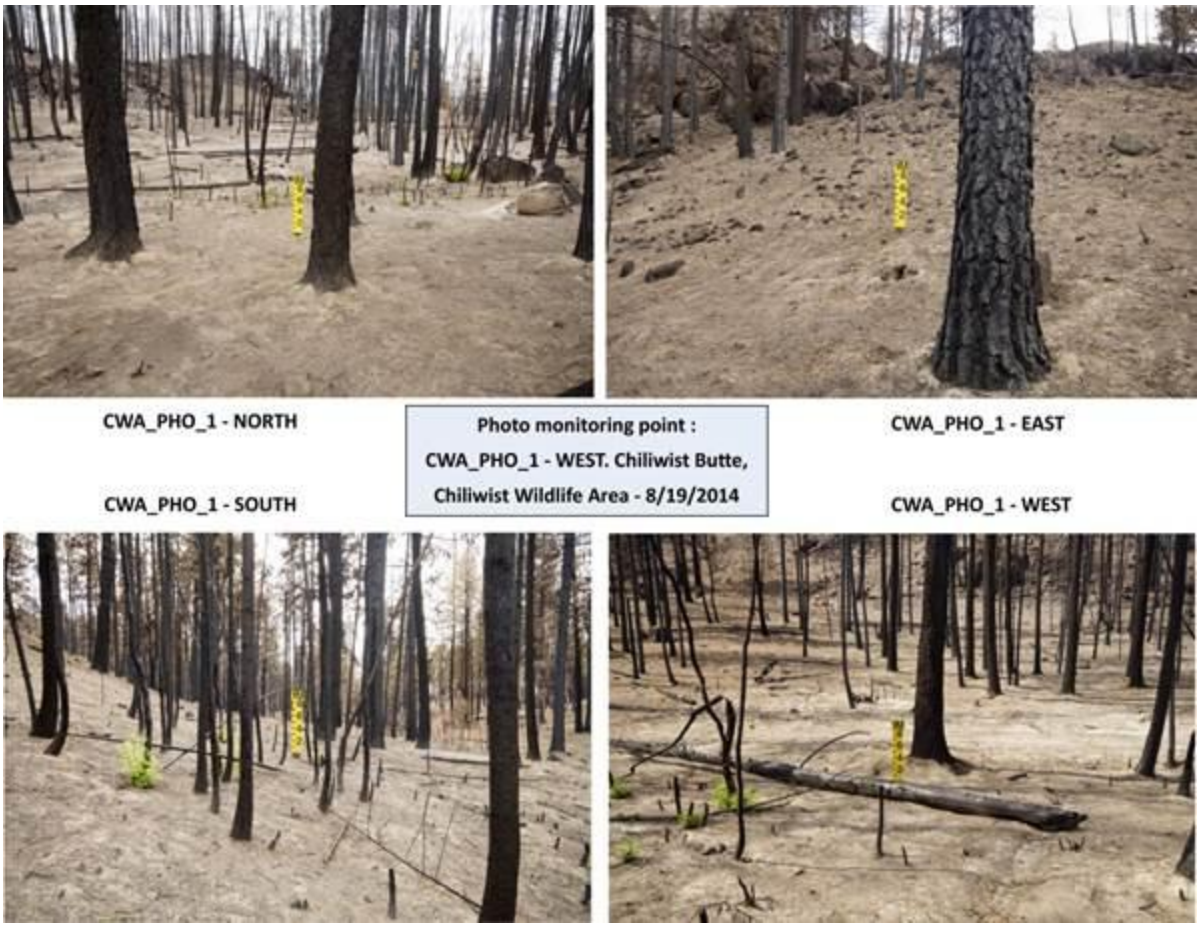
Wildlife Management

Northern Leopard Frog Reintroduction Feasibility: In coordination with amphibian trapping efforts on the Columbia NWR, Biologist E. Duvuvuei, FWS Technician Hall-Mullen, & FWS Intern Kelsey collected disease surveillance swabs from bull frog tadpoles. This effort will help determine if chytrids fungus is present at potential translocation areas for Northern Leopard Frogs. Biologist E. & O. Duvuvuei prepared equipment for the NLF metamorph surveys in the Potholes which will start on Saturday morning.

Pygmy Rabbit Trapping: A much needed break, both for rabbits and staff, was taken from trapping efforts this week. Technician Somers spent time updating trap data. To date we have processed 911 rabbits (this includes recaps); 752 of these have been new (not previously captured) rabbits, including 708 kits and 44 adults. The adults are rabbits that eluded capture last year as kits. Although we are not done tallying data we do know that over 640 kits and 15 adults have been released to the wild at Sagebrush Flats. Rabbits not released are being kept in enclosures for breeding. We will continue trapping and releasing rabbits at all enclosures until populations in the enclosures are reduced to sustainable over winter levels.

Wildlife Areas

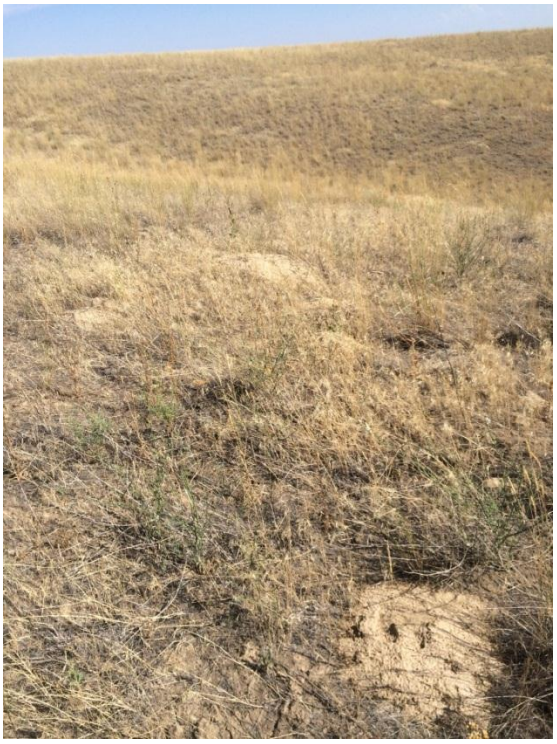
Chiliwist Wildlife Area Post-Fire Photo monitoring: Manager Haug and project forester Bass travelled to the Chiliwist to assess timber damaged by the Carlton Complex Fire. While there they installed numerous photo monitoring points within the burn (see picture below). Different habitat types were selected and photos were taken in each cardinal direction. The series of photos will help in assessing recovery over time.



Above – A series of photos taken on Chiliwist Butte within a stand of Ponderosa Pine burned up by the Carlton Complex Fire – Photos by Justin Haug

Private Lands/Access

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE): Biologist Dougherty spent some time refining and proof reading the conservation plan for the CRP-SAFE signup in Adams County to ensure that everything was correct. Additionally, Biologist Dougherty conducted a vegetation inventory for another CRP-SAFE signup in Adams County. Fortunately, this sign-up will have a conservation plan that will be much simpler to write. The vegetation was characteristic of existing CRP grass stands, dominated by undesirable grasses and broadleaf weeds and 1-2 species of nonnative perennial grass, with poor stand structure. Biologist Comstock and Supervisor Cotton met with a landholder regarding his SAFE fields in Grant County. This landholder has had issues with seedbed preparation and we provided technical advice and determined where/when forbs should be seeded. Biologist Comstock met with NRCS-Waterville staff to visit a SAFE field in Douglas County that has significant cheatgrass problems, coupled with very poor emergence of perennial grasses from 2013. We also toured other CRP fields in the area to make comparisons and discussed the relative uncertainty of arid grassland restoration programs. Biologist Comstock finished contacting landholders with SAFE sign ups from 2012, who will need to delay their forb seeding for one year.



Nonnative CRP grass plantings that will be converted to native shrub-steppe habitat. Photo on the left is dominated by sheep fescue and Sherman big bluegrass. Photo on the right is dominated by cheatgrass in the foreground with Sherman big bluegrass in the backdrop….. Note the lack of stand structure and diversity – Photo's by Sean Dougherty

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

<u>Wildlife Areas</u>

Chiliwist Wildlife Area flash flooding and road damage: On Friday, large thunderstorms hung over the Loup just west of the Chiliwist Wildlife Area and dropped a significant amount of rainfall over the area. As a result, Chiliwist Creek and the surrounding watersheds were overwhelmed, washing out numerous roads and causing major property damage (see picture below). Okanogan County is working on getting the road repaired and working closely with WDFW to make those repairs more quickly.

Above – Flood damage on Chiliwist Road intensified by Carlton Complex fire near the Chiliwist Wildlife Area – Photo by Brandon Boulger

Private Lands/Access

Carlton Fire Fencing: Specialist Heilhecker has received eight of the 11 certified mail receipts for the letters sent last week to individuals with wildlife fencing cost-share agreements. Six people have returned the questionnaires listing the amount of fencing materials they need. The amount of requested materials varies from one individual needing 22 wood posts to a couple individuals asking for more materials than their original contract states. So far, everyone has stated they were not covered by insurance.

Hunter Access: Biologist Dougherty updated all online hunter reservations for the upcoming hunting seasons for private lands. The hunts begin Sept. 1 with dove season and run through the end of the waterfowl hunting season. Additionally, Biologist Dougherty shared his vast knowledge of the online Private Hunting Lands Opportunities database with Assistant District Biologist O. Duvuvuei. There were many attempts by Biologist O. Duvuvuei to persuade Biologist Dougherty to take over entering all the information for the Winchester Regulated Waterfowl Hunting Access Area, but to no avail. Biologist Dougherty feels strongly that Biologist O. Duvuvuei should go forth and master all the tricks and tactics required to manage information that is entered into the online Hunt by Reservation system. Biologist Comstock renewed a HBWP contract in Douglas County for 1,894 acres. Biologist Comstock continued entering details for private land hunting opportunities into the DFW web-based database.

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

Wildlife Management

Sinlakekin Presentation: Biologist Fitkin attended the public meeting held in Moses Lake regarding scoping for issues associated with the next 3-yr hunting season package. Biologist Heinlen and Fitkin continued to field calls from deer, moose, bighorn sheep, and dove hunters seeking information on seasons, locations, and fire impacts.

Biologist Fitkin gave a presentation on reptiles, complete with live critters, for the continuing Sinlahekin 75th anniversary celebration. There was a very engaged audience and it was noteworthy that the women were generally much bolder when it came to handling snakes than the men.

Gopher snake and reptile ambassador extraordinaire – Photo by Scott Fitkin

Wildlife Areas

Explore the Sinlahekin – Past and Present: The fourth of five summer-long weekend events took place on the Sinlahekin this week (see pictures below). The wildlife area hosted a variety of presentations – Okanogan Lands Operation and Prescribed Burn Program Manager Dale Swedberg along with WDFW Fuels Manager Tom Leuschen and retired US Forest Service manager and researcher Richard Schellhaas discussed dendrochronology and the use of prescribed fire for land management purposes and proper ecosystem functionality. The Geology of the Sinlahekin was presented by two local geologists: Don Hruska and Gary Mundinger. A presentation about snakes and other reptiles was given by WDFW District Biologist Scott Fitkin. Scott brought live specimens which was a big hit (for most) in attendance. The weekend turned out to be a good success and WDFW appreciates all those who made it possible.

Above – WDFW's Dale Swedberg discuss the post-fire effects of a prescribed burn on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area – Photo by Justin Haug.

Resident snake specialist Parker Haug holds a Gopher Snake provided by district biologist Scott Fitkin – Photo by Justin Haug.

Private Lands/Access

Depredation Investigations: Specialist Heilhecker worked with Officer McCormick on two depredation investigations. The first involved two dead lambs in the Malott area. They received the report two days after the lambs were killed. The owner had moved the carcasses offsite so they were not able to examine the lambs and no definitive conclusion could be reached as to what killed the lambs. The second investigation involved a missing dog south of Methow. The 10 year old springer spaniel, which slept on the front porch, was missing in the morning. After searching the area for an hour, the neighbor's dog located a cougar in the brush adjacent to the Methow River. The missing dog was found nearby. The severely emaciated cougar was put down. The 4 year old male cougar had four burnt paws.

Other

Random picture of unidentified wasps? visiting some green rabbit brush flowers – Photo by Sean Dougherty

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area---Manager Pete Lopushinsky: Assistant Manager Hagan released more bio-control insects (*Cyphocleonus achates*) for diffuse knapweed this week. Insects were placed along the power line road. John coordinated with Jennifer Andreas from WSU Cooperative Extension to get these insects.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area---Manager Ross Huffman: Manager Huffman met with Fuels Manager Leuschen and TNC Forester Dahlgreen about the Oak Creek Forest Restoration Project. Leuschen was down laying out burn units in preparation for burning next year. Dahlgreen has finished a majority of the field work until thinning can start again.

Sunday afternoon Manager Huffman found a dead spike elk on the sidewalk viewing area. The elk had been dead for a while, but was not there the previous evening. There were no noticeable signs of trauma outside of the blood running out of its nose. The legs were in the fence but did not appear stuck, though it had kicked in the fence enough to move gravel around. A best guess is the elk came out the gate during the night, was spooked by something (most likely a car) and ran into the fence or gate post hard enough to cause some type of head injury.

Dead spike elk found on the viewing sidewalk at the Oak Creek Wildlife Area. The elk died of unknown trauma.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area---Manager Greg Bjornstrom

Assistant Manager Sak and NRT2 Medina continued banding ducks with the help of local volunteers. The tally for the week: 194 ducks. NRT2 Medina baited duck traps.

Wildlife Management

District 4 Private Lands Biologist --- Ryan Stutzman

On Thursday, Biologist Stutzman and Access Technician Kaelber banded ducks at Mesa Lake and the Baillie Memorial Youth Ranch. It was a good day, with over 150 Mallards banded and a handful of other species, including the first three Northern Pintails that either Pat or Ryan could remember. After two days of trapping, District 4 is up to around 250 total birds banded for the year.

Access Technician Kaelber shows off one of the Northern Pintails that was banded at Mesa Lake WMA last week. WDFW banded three pintails in Franklin County last week, after not banding any for a number of years.

Technician Kaelber, who is 6'8", trying to catch the last stubborn duck in the trap

District 8 Wildlife Biologist—Jeff Bernatowicz.

Waterfowl Banding: Biologist Bernatowicz banded ducks one morning at Sunnyside with Section Manager Kraege, Waterfowl Specialist Wilson, Wildlife Area staff, and volunteers. It was a good opportunity for Specialist Wilson to see the Wildlife Area and meet some of the staff and volunteers. About 34 mallards were banded. Section Manager Kraege showed off his athleticism on a mallard that tried to escape without a band.

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Bernatowicz met with a landowner in the Yakima River Canyon regarding bighorn sheep. There are 40-50 sheep visiting irrigated fields. At this time the landowner is more concerned about the pneumonia and what can be done than any damage to crops. The landowner agreed to allow sampling to occur and Biologist Bernatowicz constructed 3 blinds to allow darting.

Status and Trend: Biologist Bernatowicz finished drafts of regional Elk, Mt. Goat, and Bighorn sheep reports.

Waterfowl banding at the Sunnyside WA

Colockum Bull Study: A GPS collar from the Colockum Bull Elk Study has failed to update for 31 days. Biologist Moore searched for the VHF signal in and around the Stemilt Basin where its last known locations were. A VHF signal was not found. Moore was unable to search other likely locations due to fire closures in the area. Hopefully a flight can be scheduled for next week to search all possible locations.

Cooperative WDFW / Mule Deer Foundation Restoration Project: Biologist Moore is assisting LT Murray, Manager Winegeart, and The Mule Deer Foundation on a cooperative restoration project. The project will focus on restoring native vegetation on private property that was affected by the Taylor Bridge Fire. Moore will use aerial photos, soils and ecological site data to select restoration sites.

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

<u>Wildlife Areas</u>

Oak Creek Wildlife Area---Manager Ross Huffman: Manager Huffman attended 1 day of the 2 day NRA / WDFW staff field trip on options for shooting ranges on wildlife areas. The morning was spent looking at options on the Wenas Wildlife Area. In the afternoon the group had lunch at the Oak Creek Visitor's Center and then checked out the rock pit at Bear Canyon. There was general agreement that the Bear Canyon site is a great location. Later in the week it was learned that there is a golden eagle nest in the vicinity so there will need to be more evaluation of the feasibility of this site.

Manager Huffman received several calls from hunters who were drawn for road access permits for the ADA hunts on the wildlife area. Huffman provided them with some information and let them know more details would be mailed out to them soon.

Wenas Wildlife Area---Manager Cindi Confer: Manager Confer Morris and Assistant Manager Taylor participated in the two-day NRA shooting ranges site visit. Confer Morris also put together maps and GIS layers for the sites. The tour was very informative, and the group was

able to draft possible range layouts for three of the sites. For the Sheep Company area, the discussion centered on identifying the best location, and four sites were examined. All had positive and negative aspects, and the group decided that a matrix needed to be put together to more clearly display the issues. NRA National Liaison Hyder will contact the North Carolina Department of Wildlife engineers and put them in touch with DFW staff, so they can pull together possible design concepts for the sites.

Group discussing Durr Road range site

Regional Access Program—Jorge Garcia

Access Staff spent a day picking up a large dump pile (1,100 LBS) at King Horn Slough. They also continued installing caps on the new outhouses, with five left to do for the region. The city of Richland removed the widow-makers from the danger trees at Snively access on Friday. Access staff will finish removal of the danger trees next week.

Photos from King Horn Slough garbage dump

LT Murray Wildlife Area---Manager Shana Winegeart

Tuesday, Manager Winegeart participated in a group discussion about general design and development of shooting ranges, and specifically scoped a shooting facility on the Quilomene Wildlife Area. The group continued with tours of the Wenas and Oak Creek Wildlife Areas on Wednesday.

Wildlife Management

District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist---Don Hand

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand coordinated two LHP hunts in the Silver Dollar area. Two very happy young men harvested their first elk ever and were very appreciative of the hunting opportunity they were granted.

(Left)Young hunter with 7x5 bull elk taken on Roberts Ranch.

(Right) Young hunter with 8x5 bull elk taken on the Martinez Ranch.

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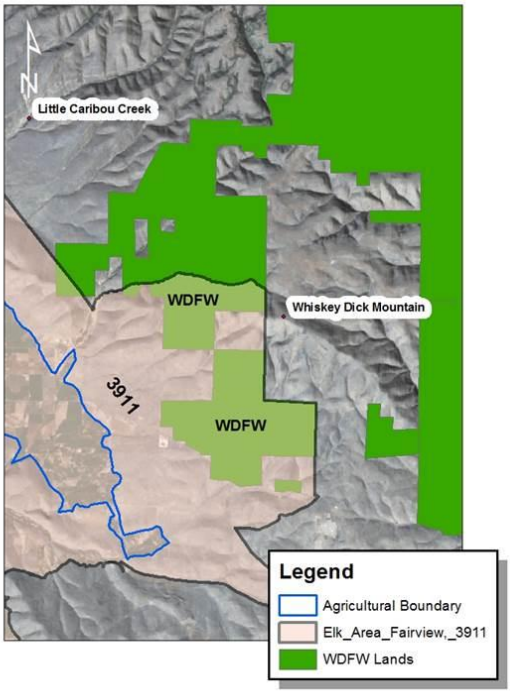
Three-Year Package: Biologist Bernatowicz reviewed the issues and participated in the public meeting in Ellensburg. Twelve people from the public attended. There were more questions/concerns over low deer and chukar populations than the three year package issues.

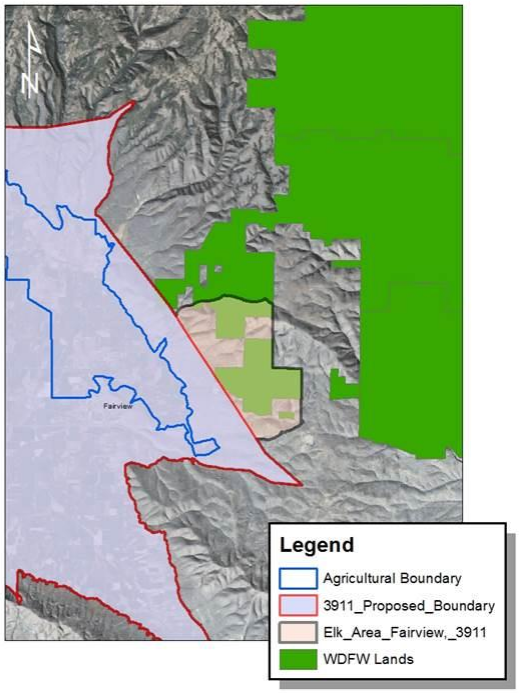
2015-2017 Season Setting Meetings: Biologist Moore attended and prepared maps for the 2015-2017 Public Season Setting Meeting that was held in Ellensburg. The maps prepared by Moore were used to depict elk use relative to Elk Area 3911and WDFW lands as well as the potential boundary change. The boundary change would remove WDFW lands from Elk Area 3911. The meeting went smoothly with plenty of staff available to discuss issues with the public.

Elk Area 3911, Fairview Boundary Change



Current 3911 boundary that includes WDFW lands.

Elk Area 3911, Proposed Boundary Change



Potential 3911 boundary change that would exclude WDFW lands.

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

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area---Manager Pete Lopushinsky: Wenatchee Sportsman's Association volunteers continued to help Colockum staff maintain livestock/boundary fencing this week. We repaired fence east and south of the game reserve that was damaged by the Colockum-Tarps Fire. Herb Troxel with WSA lined up 7 volunteers to assist us.

Assistant Hagan spent one day inspecting the north boundary fence with Webster Bergford from Engineering in preparation for putting the fence repair contract out to bid. Access to the fence will be a major issue, as most of it is difficult to reach by vehicle. We are in the process of prioritizing sections of fence to replace or repair, and talking with neighboring landowners about access and priorities.

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

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area---Manager Pete Lopushinsky: Colockum staff installed a mile of electric fence wire along the game reserve fence. We are trying this method to discourage trespass livestock from entering the game reserve.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area---Manager Ross Huffman: Manager Huffman was scheduled to meet with Ryan McCord from the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee who was coming out to see the Wildlife Area for a report on O&M on recent acquisitions. When he did not show up Huffman called his office to find out he had canceled the previous day. McCord asked to complete a phone interview later in the day. Huffman scheduled a time and spent about an hour on the phone answering questions for the report.

Manager Huffman checked on RMAP work in Oak Creek. Huffman drove the repaired road with the YCS crew and made a couple suggestions to build larger water bars. The crew was expected to finish up with all work by the end of the week. There is no word on permitting for the other work that is supposed to start in Rock Creek.

Assistant Manager Berry spent a day repairing elk fence in the Cowiche Creek bottom. Beaver activity had fallen several trees across the fence earlier in the summer. Berry cut trees off the fence and replaced several broken posts, pictures below. The holes in the fence have been actively used by elk. While in the area Berry also found a new section of fence down from Beaver activity north of the main channel. That section will probably take several days to repair.

Elk fence in the Cowiche Creek bottom with damage from fallen trees.

Elk fence in the Cowiche Creek bottom with damage from fallen trees.

Repaired elk fence in the Cowiche Creek bottom.

LT Murray Wildlife Area---Manager Shana Winegeart: Manager Winegeart and Assistant Manager Hunt inspected the Skookumchuck/Whiskey Dick fence project. Despite delays due to the Snag Canyon Fire, the contractor is making good progress and looks to be on schedule.

Assistant Manager Hunt worked with Kevin McDowell, owner of Old Mill Country Store, to address recurring problems with our solar fence chargers. McDowell was able to get the Gallagher sales rep to warranty the non-functioning sending unit that Natural Resource Tech Hill had brought in most recently. That and a new battery got the unit back on line. Hill checked all but one of the other solar electric enclosures, all of which were working, and there were no severed sections of hotwire. Hopefully, with the completion of the Skookumchuck/Whiskey Dick fence, and subsequently the Parke Creek fence, we'll be able to get by with far less temp electric wire to exclude trespass grazing, etc. Staff spends a lot of time maintaining it, and parts/repairs are expensive.

Wenas Wildlife Area---Manager Cindi Confer: Staff worked on installing enough wooden posts in the elk fence that burned near Cabin Lane to keep elk out of the adjacent hay field. The rancher called to say that it had kept the elk out through the weekend. Assistant Manager Taylor worked on getting prices for rebuilding the elk fence that is down near Cabin Lane.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area---Manager Greg Bjornstrom: Assistant Manager Buser spent much of the week coordinating efforts with Dave Miller of CAMP and Brashear Electric to begin installation of electricity services at the Windmill Ranch shop. Brashear Electric was able to build and set the panel rack; wire lights, outlets, and a heater in the work shop; begin wiring lights and outlets in the barn; and begin trench work for getting electricity from the power pole to each building.

New utilities being installed at the Windmill Ranch facilities

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Region 4 Urban Interface Cougar Study: Biologists Anderson and Smith assisted Carnivore Research Scientist Dr. Kertson in tagging cougar kittens, in District 12, for follow-up identification and tracking needs in this project. The kittens were located, sexed, tagged and returned to the den unharmed.

Biologist Mike Smith with Cougar Kitten

Biologist Anderson with Cougar Kitten

Carnivore Research Scientist Dr. Kertson, the lead on the Region 4 Urban Interface Cougar Study, with Cougar Kittens

Dead Bat Calls: Biologist Milner received three independent calls regarding homeowners who have had about a half dozen dead bats show up at their property in recent weeks. None of the sites are near each other. Milner received a specimen from Samish Island and searched the property for any obvious signs of a roost, but found nothing. Examination of the bat, coupled with the description of where the bats are found, indicates that the homeowner's cat has located a roost and is ambushing young bats that have not been flying very long. A site in Sultan reports two cats on the premises with dead bats showing up of the owner's deck. A frozen specimen will be picked up and examined this week.

Citizen Science Bat Survey: Biologist Anderson coordinated with volunteers and conducted the last acoustic survey of Crescent Lake Wildlife Management Unit for this pilot project. Volunteers and Anderson are now summarizing the three seasons of data as time allows.

Mt Goat Aerial Survey Data: Assistant District Biologist Cyra worked with Westside GIS Specialist Christopher to format goat location waypoints and then entered data into the Mountain Goat sightability program. Waypoint data was shared with cooperators.

Assistance with Pigeon Guillemot Data: Assistant District Biologist Cyra provided a data summary and locational data to District 15 staff for use in consultations with landowners.

Waterfowl Trapping: Biologist DeBruyn continued trapping ducks at a private gun club in Edison, Skagit County. He has reached his goal of 100 mallards trapped (as well as several teal and pintail). DeBruyn will remove the Edison trap this week to make sure the bait is off the ground by the beginning of hunting season. A trap site in Whatcom County is in a no hunting area and may be maintained a little longer to justify the work done to set it up.

Biologist DeBruyn releases previously banded mallard.

Highway 20 Elk Crossing Project: Biologist DeBruyn worked with the Dept. of Transportation to set up proximity transmitters along the highway to increase the amount of data received from a GPS collar on an elk that has been crossing the highway in a high collision area.

Wildlife Management Consultation/Permitting Requests; Municipal, Private Utilities, other: Biologist Anderson provided three great blue heron management consultation plans for area municipalities per their code and request of permits. Anderson also provided for osprey nest removal permit needs.

Common Loon Breeding in District 12: Another loon lake was visited in King County that had known young chick earlier this season. It was confirmed that one approximately 7 week old chick was still present. It is appearing that District 12 will have at least 3 chicks making it for winter migration this year. Hopefully they make it through their first winter and continue on for the next 5-6 years to return to the area and attempt to pair and breed.

Status and Trend Reports: Staff worked on Status and Trend Reports.

<u>Wildlife Areas</u>

Stillwater Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Frohning Dairy to discuss the corn that was planted. The corn is not growing very well and they discovered an infestation of wire worm is in the field. The worms eat the corn roots and kill the plant. Discussions continue on how to proceed with this issue.

Flowering knotweed

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm conducted knotweed control on a number of patches around Crescent Lake. Additional trail maintenance, access road improvements and debris removal was undertaken by rental of a small dozer and volunteer operator.

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm conducted herbicide treatment to knotweed and phragmites in an effort to control the spread of these invasive weeds.

Spencer Island: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm conducted trail maintenance mowing along a portion of the dike trail in preparation for the waterfowl season. Dense blackberry thickets are encroaching on the trail in many areas.

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP): Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Habitat Planner Theresa Mitchell, and Special Assistant to the Director Jennifer Quan led a field tour of PSNERP projects for legislative and Army Corps of Engineers staff to view

potential future project sites. More information on PSNERP is available at www.pugetsoundnearshore.org.

Leque Island Groundwater Monitoring Plan: Projects Coordinator Brokaw continued communications with a groundwater consultant regarding groundwater quality monitoring needs for Leque Island, including possible locations and landowner permission needed to add monitoring instruments to existing wells. The consultant is preparing 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.

Leque Island Lead Entity Coordination Meeting: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Ducks Unlimited staff met with the new lead entity coordinator at Snohomish County for the Stillaguamish watershed. Leque Island falls within this watershed and the new coordinator is interested in the Leque Island Design and Alternatives Analysis Project. WDFW and DU agreed to present project status updates to Stillaguamish Watershed Council and Technical Advisory Group this fall.

Rainbow Pond Water Control Replacement: Manager Kessler coordinated with Ducks Unlimited managers working to replace the Rainbow Pond water control that collapsed earlier this year. Permitting continues.

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

Wildlife Management

Whidbey Island Deer Study: Biologist Milner reviewed and provided comments on a thesis proposal for a U of Montana graduate student who is focusing on deer on Whidbey Island. Milner also provided suggestions for a possible field tech to assist with work this fall.

Snohomish County Waterfowl Units: Natural Resource Tech Otto along with Biologist Caldwell toured potential waterfowl hunting units in Snohomish County. Caldwell and Otto also met with a landowner about his property enrollment as a snow goose reserve for the 2014 season.

418 Elk Unit: Biologist Caldwell and NRT Otto installed signage inside the 418 elk unit. These signs help hunters to remember to watch for logging truck traffic along with alerting the logging companies of the increased traffic from hunters.

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 worked on installing permanent elk exclusion fencing on a relatively large property in Skagit Valley. Smith and Cogdal also spent time troubleshooting and fine tuning a temporary electric elk exclusion fence. Cogdal spent time monitoring and hazing elk in various

locations in Skagit County as well. 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.

Permanent electrified elk exclusion fencing in Skagit County

A cow and calf elk exiting an agricultural field in King County.

<u>Wildlife Areas</u>

Skagit Agricultural enhancement program: Natural Resources Specialist Meis mowed Island Unit fields (Firemens 1 & 2, Crescent, and Lorenzen) and the dike top trail system. Meis monitored field drainage conditions and agricultural enhancements on the Island Unit. Meis met with lessee at the Samish Unit regarding mowing of the site and hay bailing issues.

Lindsey Road Access Trail Development: Manager Kessler used a small tractor to further clear out and improve the walking trail access to the 80 acre parcel located at the end of Lindsay Road near Lynden. Further work will be needed to connect the access to existing horse trails in the north half of the property.

Lindsey Rd Access Trail

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

Wildlife Management

GMU 418 and Elk Area 4941 Nooksack Bull Elk Special Permit Hunt Coordination: Biologist Caldwell coordinated with Sierra Pacific Industries Forester Sand to meet with a permit holder that was unable to attend the 8/9/2014 meeting. During this meeting the permit holder was informed on the rules and regulations for the hunt. Biologist Caldwell also collected hunter information and outlined specifications for the access agreement.

Biologist Caldwell and Technician Otto set up signs on Sierra Pacific Industries lands to inform Sierra Pacific staff, contract staff, hunters and others that hunting was in progress on these lands and to be mindful of logging operations.

Wildlife Impact Consultation: Assistant District Biologist Cyra worked with Major Projects Habitat Biologist Applegate to assess impacts of proposed Snohomish PUD Skykomish Hydro projects on Peregrine Falcons and other local wildlife.

Sign Posting: Staff posted signage at one of our enrolled waterfowl properties keeping fisherman from trespassing through un-harvested crops.

Private Lands/Access Management

Private Lands Contract Quality Assurance: Biologist Caldwell and Deputy Contracts Officer Thompson performed contract management operations on several Private Lands Access contracts in Novatus.

Wildlife Areas

Skagit Headquarters: Natural Resource Specialist Meis mowed around parking lots, fence lines, interpretive centers, and pheasant pens. Staff attended a legislative staff tour of Wiley Slough and FIF projects organized by the Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland.

Island Unit: Staff toured the Island Unit to examine remaining ditch maintenance project areas to finish and monitor purple loosestrife, crop plantings, and other natural forage crops.

Lake Terrell Managers Residence Energy Update Remodel: Manager Kessler worked with a Dept Engineer on the Lake Terrell manager's residence energy update remodel. The Contractor Walk-Through was held with a very good turnout. Six different companies attended, so it is hoped we get several bids for the project. The sealed bids will be opened this Thursday. The work is scheduled to begin in about a month, with the contractor having 45 days to complete the project. All windows will be replaced, one door will be replaced, duct work will be sealed, and all insulation in the crawl space and attic will be removed and replaced with new materials.

Private Lands/Access

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordination

Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey evaluated the teaching team that teaches at the VFW hall in Mountlake Terrace. The class at the VFW hall was a traditional class which required 4 nights of instruction from the teaching team. At the end of the 4th night the students are given a 75 question test that they must get 80% correct to pass. They are then given a field skills test where they demonstrate such skills as loading and unloading a fire arm, working the five common firearm actions, crossing obstacles, and safe carry and muzzle control. This class included students from 9 years of age to several students in their 40's. 31 of the 32 students in attendance passed the course with all 3 of the 9 year olds passing.

Students received instruction from Instructor George Wells and then viewed a Shoot Don't Shoot video

Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey assisted Hunter Education volunteer instructor Rich Klinnert to set up two hunter education classes at the North Whidbey Sportsman Association this September. The previous Chief Instructor had moved on and we were in danger of losing this venue. With assistance from Coordinator Dazey and a newly certified instructor as well as several existing instructors in the North Whidbey area we are going to bring hunter education back to the Oak Harbor area.

Volunteer Coordinator Steven Dazey received 12 Wood Duck boxes from Master Hunter volunteer Dan Yirka who had purchased material and constructed them as part of his required service to recertify as a master hunter. Volunteer Yirka also took 8 boxes from the warehouse and performed the required modifications to them so as to meet Biologist Chris Anderson's specifications.

Volunteer Coordinator Dazey also sent out recruiting emails for volunteer help to release Pheasants at Ebey Island during this year's season on Saturdays. Dazey also assisted Whatcom Wildlife area manager Kessler and Rob Cogdal in the Concrete area to recruit volunteers for projects they have in their areas.

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

Wildlife Management

Radio Communications: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued to provide radio support to Program staff.

Aerial survey assistance: Assistant District Biologist Cyra provided equipment and documents to District 12 and 15 staff for upcoming aerial surveys.

Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Wildlife Areas: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continues to coordinate with WDFW Master Hunters to provide volunteer opportunities for them. With support from Steve Dazey, the WDFW Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator, one Master Hunter and two additional volunteers continue to conduct trail maintenance, maintenance mowing, and tend to nursery needs over the past week.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Resident Dark Goose Collar Mark-Resight Survey: Biologists George, Sample, and Bergh, along with retired Biologist Miller completed the second round of the resident dark Canada goose mark-resight survey. The purpose of the survey is to estimate abundance and distribution of resident dark geese in southwest Washington and northwest Oregon. Geese from this flock were marked with an individually-coded neck collars in early July for the purposes of resighting during this survey and identification for goose hunters during the hunting season. During the one day spent searching areas of Region 5, 252 resident dark geese were seen, 16 neck collars were observed, and of those, 9 complete codes were read. Other efforts were conducted in Region 6,

northwest Oregon, and on National Wildlife Refuge lands. A special thank you goes out to Miller for his continued help with the surveys.

Observing a group of RDG off of Miller Sands Island.

Elk Hoof Disease Prevalence Surveys: Two survey methods to assess prevalence of elk hoof disease are being tested during the last two weeks of August. A small group of volunteers was recruited and attended a training session put on by Region 5 Wildlife Program staff. Volunteers will drive in specific areas on specific days to look for groups of elk and determine the number of elk that are affected with hoof disease. This pilot study will help to refine the protocol for a broader effort to assess prevalence to occur this winter/spring.

Monitoring Wolf Sightings: Wildlife Biologist Anderson and Conflict Specialist McDonald followed up on two reported wolf observations that occurred on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest (GPNF), both in the last month within 5 miles of each other. Both observations were of a single animal, both with similar descriptions. There have been periodic reports of wolves in this part of the GPNF over the years but no confirmed sightings have been documented. Biologists Anderson and McDonald placed a remote camera near the latest reported sighting.

Wildlife Areas

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Fisher Hill Unit: Klickitat Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven and Range Specialist Burnham visited the two WDFW parcels that were included in the temporary grazing permit that was issued last spring. They evaluated range condition and effects of grazing, and considered what changes should be made to the permitted use.

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

Access

Oneida Access: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes posted additional Discovery Pass signs in the two parking areas across the street from the boat ramp. The access site is busy with high use; staff counted 78 vehicles with trailers parked on the site.

Oneida access site

Martin Access: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes had to move a boulder (that was being used to block a sensitive area) back into place after someone latched onto it and dragged it out in the middle of the parking area.

Martin access site

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

Wildlife Deterrents: Conflict Specialist McDonald helped a Ridgefield farmer/orchardist install a temporary double electric fence around young apple trees experiencing heavy deer browse. The deer should be repelled by the shock and three dimensional structure of the fence.

Off-set fence to repel deer

Gifford Pinchot National Forest Campground: Wildlife Conflict Specialist McDonald met with a Gifford Pinchot National Forest campground host to follow up on a possible wolf sighting in Skamania County in June 2014. McDonald answered wildlife questions and left the campground host with wolf brochures to pass out to curious campers.

Elk Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin performed a site visit to Fenn Farms in the Boistfort Valley area. They are experiencing damage to oat and wheat fields from elk. Conklin documented the damage and took photographs. In addition to wheat and oats, this farm grows carrots and Swiss chard for the seed market as well as peas. The crop acreage is approximately 480 acres of commercial crops. The farmers practice good non-lethal deterrents for elk and also allow public hunting.

Damage to oats from Elk.

Damage to wheat from Elk.

Conflict Specialist Conklin met with a dairy in the Onalaska area experiencing damage to corn crops from elk. Conklin issued a kill permit and will aggressively begin deploying master hunters to the area.

Damage to corn cobs from elk. Corn field damage from elk.

Conflict Specialist Conklin is working with a land owner in the Randle area experiencing damage to his 30 acre hay field. In addition, Conklin was contacted by a landowner in Packwood requesting a kill permit for elk damage on his hay fields. This farmer experienced heavy damage to his hay crop from elk and had suffered almost a complete loss (previously documented). Conklin will meet with him next week and issue the permit.

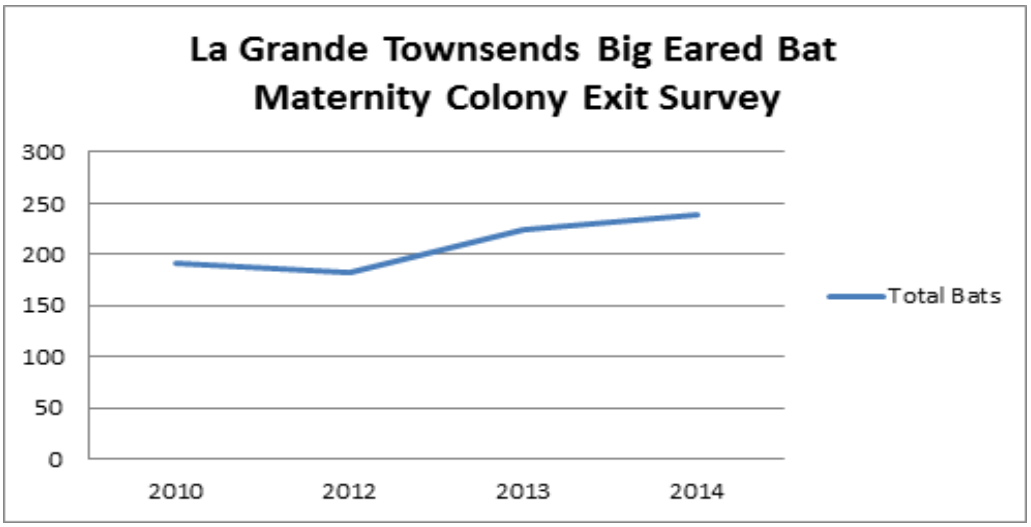
Coyote Damage: Conflict Specialist responded to the Bob Oke Game Farm after they reported another break in by coyotes. The farm has lost over 1000 pheasant to coyote depredation. Conklin is gathering volunteers to trim all grass around the perimeter fencing of the farm and then install electric fencing to protect the birds until they can be released to WDFW release sites for hunter harvest.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Townsend's Big Eared Bat Maternity Colony Count: Biologist Tirhi and Tacoma Power biologist conducted the annual colony exit count at the La Grande maternity colony. A total of 239 bats were counted over the 1.26 hour survey.



Clallam County Bat Count: On August 21th, a bat exit count was conducted at one of several World War II bunkers located west of Port Angeles in Clallam County. This particular bunker has been known to host a colony of bats over the past several years. Survey efforts are part of an ongoing search to locate roost sites, maternity colonies and hibernacula of Townsend Big Eared Bats, listed as a candidate Threatened or Endangered Species in Washington State. This particular bunker is located in a forested area. Bat gates with horizontal metal bars have been installed across all openings. There are three openings in the front, one in the back and one on top of the bunker. This bunker contains several rooms inside. Surveyors included District Biologist McMillan, Biologist Ament, and volunteers Bob Davies and Bruce Selleg. There were excellent weather conditions for the survey. The first bat exited the bunker at 2016 and the survey was ended at 2230. The total number of bats counted was 365. The count last year (highest ever documented) was 503. Biologist Ament was hoping to conduct multiple surveys in July and August this season but was unable to fit this in her schedule. If possible, more surveys may be completed in the next two weeks. She will provide a summary report of the surveys to Data Systems staff.

Taylor's checkerspot captive propagation: A total of 3,719 Taylor's checkerspot larvae are in diapause at the Oregon Zoo. During the first week of September larvae will be moved outdoors to a covered location and housed in inverted clay pots where they will experience ambient weather conditions until their emergence in January 2015. Biologist Linders is reviewing reports from both rearing facilities and will include these data in the annual ACUB report.

Western Snowy Plovers: Biologists Sundstrom and Michaelis conducted brood searches at Midway this week. Sundstrom was able to confirm the fledging of 4 more chicks from that location. Two broods remain active, each with only 1 chick. The last known nest, which has been dutifully tended to and incubated by an unbanded female since its initiation around June 16th and should have hatched no later than July 17th, was checked on August 21st. Two eggs remained in the nest and were still actively being incubated. Sundstrom removed the eggs from the cup. Examination of the eggs showed neither egg was viable. Removal of the eggs will now allow the female to join the rest of the post-breeding adults and juveniles along the beach. The incubation period for snowy plover eggs is typically 26-28 days but there was a report this year

that a nest did hatch after incubation of 40 days. Sundstrom allowed this nest to remain active beyond that timeframe, just in case. There are no known active nests remaining.

Sundstrom was unable to check on the broods at Graveyard Spit so Larissa Pfleeger from the Shoalwater Tribe did a quick inventory. Larissa found and confirmed the presence of 2 broods: 1 with 1 chick and 1 with 3 chicks.

Midway Beach											
# Nests Found	# Nests Currently Active	# Nests Hatched	# Active Broods	# Chicks Hatched	# Chicks Currently Alive	# Fledglings	# Nests Failed				
							Pred.	Sand Burial	Abandoned	Human Caused	Unknown /Other Cause
15	0	8	2	16	2	6	3	0	2	0	2

Graveyard Spit											
# Nests Found	# Nests Currently Active	# Nests Hatched	# Active Broods	# Chicks Hatched	# Chicks Currently Alive	# Fledglings	# Nests Failed				
							Pred.	Sand Burial	Abandoned	Human Caused	Unknown Cause
7	0	6	2	16	4	10-11	0	1	1	0	0

Other: Another humpback whale washed up on the shores of the Grayland Beach area this week. This is the 3rd such carcass this season. The carcasses are scavenged by ravens, crows, gull species, bald eagles, coyotes, and turkey vultures. Sundstrom observed an unusual and unlikely scavenger perched atop the most recent humpback whale carcass and took the opportunity to snap a picture.

A Great Blue Heron perched atop the carcass of a humpback whale at Midway Beach.

This week at Leadbetter, Biologist Hahn monitored and surveyed for active broods. The latter end of the week presented favorable survey conditions, to the biologist's delight. Since all known nests have hatched, the priority is now monitoring broods and observing banded and unbanded adults and juveniles. Benson Beach was also surveyed on Thursday, August 21st for Snowy Plovers and one juvenile SNPL was observed at the south end of the beach (W/L:V).

Over the course of the week, Biologist Hahn searched for the elusive brood from nest LBN024 as well as brood LBNX004. Dunes, swale and outer beach from MP 67-43 were searched for broods over several days. Although broods were not sighted during these surveys, the biologist did observe ≥5 unbanded juveniles foraging in the wrackline and suspect these are from recently fledged Leadbetter broods previously observed in this location. Brood LBN024 and brood LBNX004 are being counted as active until biologists are convinced these broods have failed. Both males from these broods are unbanded. As the biologist observed on Monday, August 18th, brood LBNX004 most likely lost one chick due to natural causes and this is reflected in the total chicks currently alive in Table 1.

This week, the greatest numbers of SNPLs were observed on Friday, August 22nd, with 25 adult individuals (10 females, 13 males, and 2 unknown), 8 fledglings/juveniles, and 5 chicks. The lowest numbers of SNPLs were observed on Monday, August 18th, with 4 adult individuals (0 females, 3 males, and 1 unknown) and 3 chicks seen. There are currently no active nests.

Of the 5 broods reported last week, all 5 are still active, though 1 of these has not been seen this week.

Juvenile SNPL from Leadbetter stretching its new wings.

Table 1. Summary of total SNPL nests and broods at Leadbetter.

Leadbetter											
# Nests Found	# Nests Currently Active	# Nests Hatched	# Broods Found	# Chicks hatched	# Chicks currently Alive	# Fledglings	# Nests Failed				
							Pred	Sand Burial	Abandoned	Human Caused	Unknown Cause
28	0	19	22	57	8*	20	1		5		3

This number represents pre-fledged chicks currently alive.