

Wildlife Program

Week of March 31 – April 6, 2014

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) Program Funding Coordination: Section Managers Becker, Research Scientists Pearson and Olson, Biologists Potter, Hays and Linders participated in discussions to decide on funding for this year's ACUB program with Center for Natural Lands Management, Department of Defense, and other cooperators. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) had a large number of proposals funded and combined these will bring in more than \$500 thousand for prairie restoration and prairie species conservation! Including funds for our collaborating partners, more than \$1.6 million was dedicated to prairies this year.

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

Other

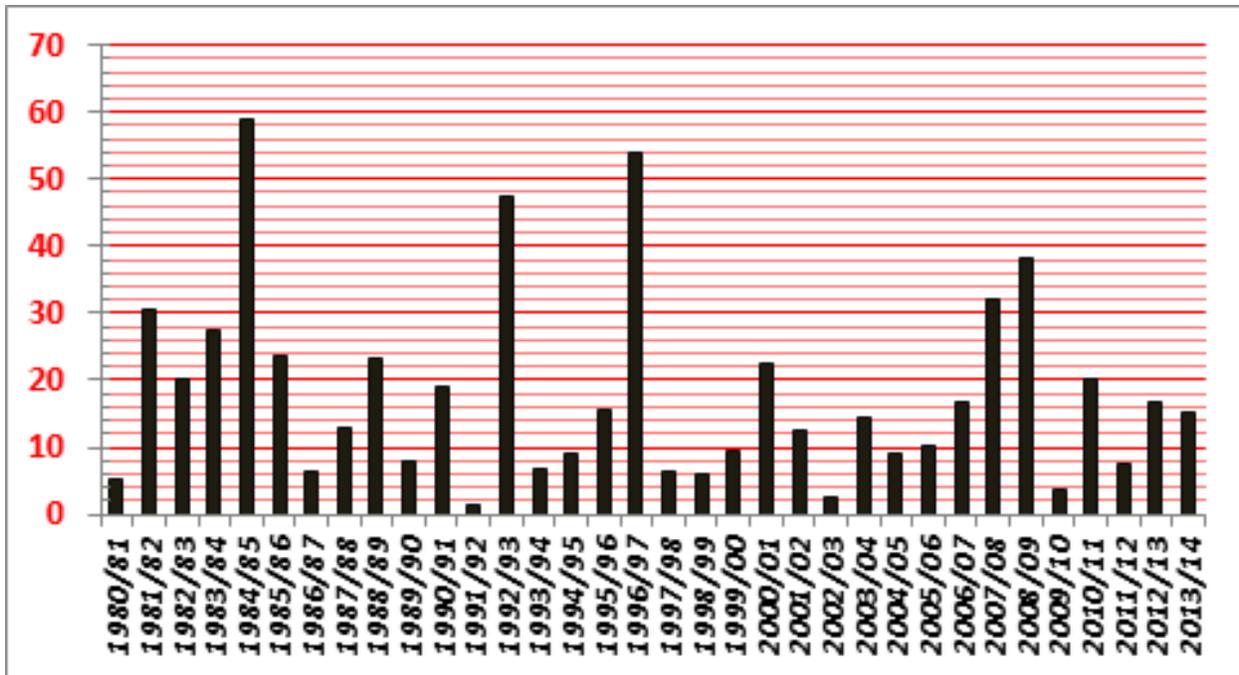
Citizen Science Capability Expansion: Recruitment began on April 3 (closing April 24) for a position in the Diversity Division focused on providing guidance, structure, communication and outreach processes to implement citizen science projects for collecting information relevant to status of biodiversity species. This position, supervised by the Conservation Assessment Section Manager, is intended to further implement visioning by the Wildlife Diversity Division to engage a broader array of people in compiling information statewide in a targeted way using new technology and volunteer service coordination capabilities of WDFW. This opportunity arose through re-description of a position recently re-assigned to the Division and vacated through retirement.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Northeast Washington Winter Severity: District Wildlife Biologist Base summarized last winter's severity from daily weather data received from six stations in northeastern Washington that report to the National Weather Service. The winter of 2013-14 barely made it into the "moderate" category (see graphic on next page):



Winter severity index scores for northeastern Washington based on temperature and snow depth readings received from weather stations at near valley bottom locations.



Golden Eagle Surveys: Biologists Dana Base and Annemarie Prince carried out ground-based surveys in the Colville District at two golden eagle nesting territories this week to help determine occupancy. Refrigerator Canyon and China Bend sites were surveyed. In the Blue Mountains District, Assistant District Biologist Vekasy completed a second occupancy visit for golden eagle nests on the Tucannon River; the territory is occupied but not nesting. The adult female is missing and has been replaced by female in subadult plumage. Vekasy also spent time in a new area with golden eagle activity. An adult was seen giving territorial display, but was too far away to determine nesting area.

Golden Eagle nest cliff on the west face of Eagle Rock within Refrigerator Canyon, both sites aptly named.

Lincoln County Prairie Grouse Project: A team of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and volunteer biologists conducted 10 nights of spotlight captures in southern Oregon. A total of 38 Greater Sage-Grouse (20 males and 18 females) were captured and translocated to Washington. Males received backpack GPS transmitters and females received necklace VHF transmitters.



Left: Male sage grouse captured by volunteer. Right: Male sage grouse being fitted with a GPS transmitter by Biologist Mike Atamian and WDFW Grouse Researcher Mike Schroeder.

Blue Mountains Elk Survey Data: District Biologist Paul Wik completed running the sightability model on this year's elk survey data. The Blue Mountains elk population estimate was 5,774 (90% CI of +/- 490). This includes approximately 500 elk that are counted along the border that likely stay in Oregon during most of the year. Calf ratios improved this year to 34.7 (+/- 1.2), the second highest recorded estimate since aerial surveys began in the 1990s. Bull ratios also increased this year to 29 (+/- 9.5), but had a high correction for poor visibility and a high confidence interval. The lack of snow at higher elevations resulted in the bulls being spread out more than normal and in higher cover than usual, which meant we did not observe as high of a percentage as normal. Unfortunately our surveys occur after the season setting process is complete, resulting in the loss of some opportunity this year with the increased numbers.

Wildlife Areas

Sherman Creek Wildlife Area Prescribed Fire: Sherman Creek Wildlife Area staff participated in three days of prescribed burning on Sherman Creek Wildlife Area this week. The three Field Units were burned, totaling 140 acres. Fields are burned to provide disturbance.



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

Wildlife Areas

Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) Crew Assistance: Access Manager Scott Young worked with an assigned WCC crew from the Department of Ecology, performing general spring cleaning on access sites including Liberty Lake and Newman Lake in Spokane County.



Washington Conservation Corps crew working at Liberty Lake Access Site.

WT Wooten Wildlife Area – Cummings Creek Closure: Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Dingman took down the “winter closure” signs for Cummings Creek. The area is now open to public entry for the summer. The Wooten Wildlife Area website was also updated to reflect the winter closure ending. The Cummings Creek drainage is closed for human entry during the winter to protect wintering big game.



Cummings Creek is now open for the season to public entry.

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

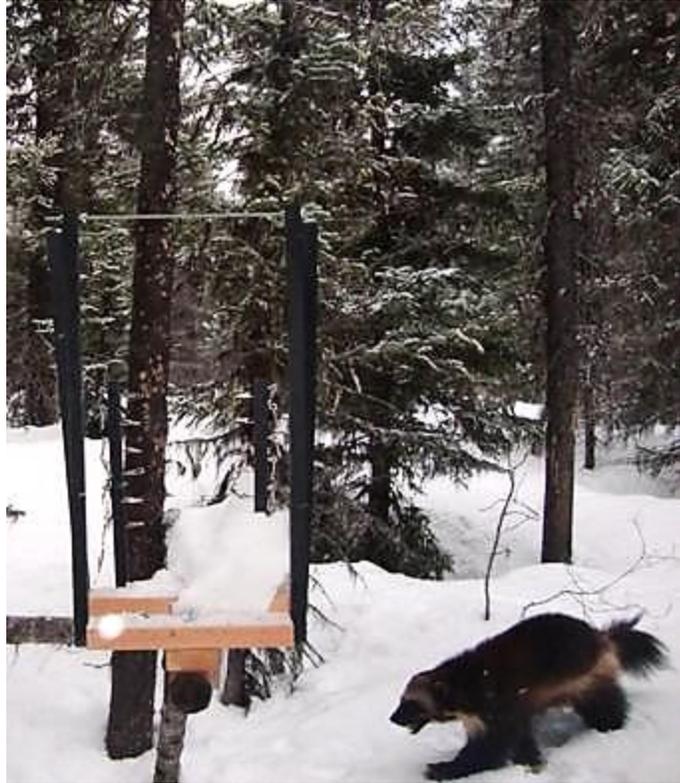
Wolf Conservation and Management

Lookout Pack Territory: Specialist Heilhecker and a Wildlife Services employee toured the Twisp-Winthrop area to familiarize him with the Lookout pack territory and location of livestock.

Wildlife Management

Wolverine Research Highlights: Biologist Fitkin and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) staff closed the last of the wolverine traps for the season, but reactivated some run-pole camera stations for the coming months. All told, our results this season were mixed. We had eight total captures but they only involved two males (Logan and Hobbes). Logan appears to be the resident male in the southern half of the study area and continues to give us good data. Hobbes' collar became stationary in mid-winter and is located in an avalanche chute in remote country.

Hopefully the young male simply slipped his collar, but given the location, he may have been killed in a slide. We will try to retrieve the collar and determine his fate this summer when the snow has melted. In addition to the captures, the Slate Creek run-pole camera site captured photos of a male wolverine that was also photographed just north of the border by our Canadian partners (see photos). He may be the current resident male in the northern half of the study area. As a result we may attempt to install a trap in Slate Creek next winter for the final year of the project. This site often gets visits from many other non-target species (see photo).



Unknown male wolverine – Photos by U.S. Forest Service (remote camera).



Lynx at Slate Creek camera site – Photo by U.S. Forest Service (remote camera).

Washington ground squirrels: Biologists Duvuvuei and Finger trapped Washington ground squirrels to collect DNA samples as a pilot effort to genotype samples from translocated and non-translocated populations. This effort may guide potential development of a larger study for the future. Samples will be processed at University of Idaho. Twenty-four samples were collected from adult ground squirrels. Reproductive status of captured individuals suggests a late season as only 2 of 14 females were showing evidence of nursing. Pups are typically emerging

this time of year. Dry conditions and a late emergence could result in low overwinter survival this year, particularly if dry conditions persist.



Washington ground squirrel captured in the Beezley Hills. Photos by Rich Finger

Golden Eagles: Biologist Gallie continued surveys for occupancy at selected Golden eagle territories in Chelan and Douglas counties. We are about 80% complete with the first round of occupancy checks. Currently most birds are incubating on the nests, allowing for easy assessment of territory occupancy. Occupancy checks (first round) are nearly finished, with a couple ones remaining due to poor access. We will begin the second round of occupancy surveys on the remaining territories where we have not confirmed birds yet. In Douglas County, 9 of 13 territories were occupied, whereas Chelan County only had 5 of 10 territories occupied.



Adult Golden Eagle perched on the edge of a nest, above Rufus Woods Reservoir, Douglas County. Photo by J. Gallie

Wildlife Areas

North Central Washington Prescribed Burn Team –

Despite weather predictions, conditions were favorable for three days of burning on the Sherman Creek and three days on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. Units burned were the Field 1, 2 and 3 units on Sherman Creek, and three days were devoted to burning the Forde 7 Unit on Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. The team burned a total of 234 this week. One contracted squad of five joined us at Sherman Creek, and a different contractor provided a squad of five for Sinlahekin. Sherman Creek Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Daro Palmer and Technician

Chris Christenson joined our burning efforts at Sherman Creek, which bolstered our resources during implementation along with providing valuable advice and logistical support. By Sunday, April 6 the team has been working for seven days.



North Central WA Prescribed Burn Team Member Delcie Peters igniting the Field 1 Unit on the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area – Photo by Ray Guse.



A prescribed fire backs through a ponderosa pine stand on the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area – Photo by Ray Guse.

Methow Wildlife Area (MWA)

Wild Fire: The MWA had an accidental ignition at the shooting range on Monday at approximately 12:00 p.m. The ignition source was reported to be a spark from a ricocheting bullet. The shooter called in the Okanogan County Fire Department who arrived on the scene and initiated suppression operations at approximately 12:40 p.m. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and USFS fire crews arrived shortly thereafter. MWA staff member Rob Wottlin provided suppression support in the form of a tractor and disc. The fire was contained to approximately 40 acres with mostly 1-10 hours fuel burned. Those areas disturbed during suppression operations were re-seeded with a bunchgrass mix the following Wednesday.



The areas disturbed during suppression were quickly re-seeded with a bunchgrass mix.



The shooting range fire moved upslope and beyond the horizon before being contained.



The fire burned primarily 1-10 hours fuel and eventually burned approximately 40 acres.

Grant County Mosquito Control District – Assistant Manager Cole, along with all Wildlife Area staff, continued work toward addressing numerous Grant County Mosquito Control District (GCMCD) sampling access issues. The Real Estate Program is assisting with access permit questions, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is providing input and support with regard to activities on federal lands. Additional fact-finding is necessary to facilitate informed discussions and determinations. To date, WDFW has had an open dialogue with the GCMCD Field Supervisor as we work toward resolution. Assistant Manager Bechtold scouted ATV routes used by the Grant County Mosquito Control District in the Gloyd Seeps area, and assessed habitat impacts. Most routes were along existing or remnant roads and trails. However, the continued use of these routes may encourage illegal ATV use and habitat destruction, the spreading of invasive weeds, and may potentially spark a wildfire.

Private Lands/Access

Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit Safe Harbor Agreements: Biologist Comstock contacted 10 landowners about Safe Harbor Agreements, either by phone or by mail. Biologist Comstock met with two landowners in the Beasley Hills Area about entering into a Safe Harbor Agreement. An absentee landowner agreed to a Safe Harbor Agreement on their 160 acre parcel. Biologist Comstock completed pre-contract surveys on 480 acres of land to be put into Safe Harbor.

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

Wildlife Management

Deer Surveys: Biologists Fitkin and Heinlen continued spring deer surveys. To date we've classified over 1,800 mule deer and we still have several routes to go. Thus far, fawn:adult ratios are running a bit above average which is not surprising given the mild winter. We should have final numbers at the end of the coming week which will give us a good estimate of over-winter fawn survivorship.



Methow Valley mule deer – Photo by Scott Fitkin.



Sharp-tailed grouse habitat – District 6. Photo by J. Heinlen



Silver Star Peak – Photo by Scott Fitkin.



A White-breasted Nuthatch – Photo by J. Lindsey.



Trumpeter Swans at Conners Lake, Sinlahekin Wildlife Area – Photo by Justin Haug.



Over wintering butterflies, California tortoiseshell (left) and Mourning cloak (above), emerge on the Sinlahekin. Photos by Justin Haug

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management



Sage Grouse: Biologist Gregory spent the week participating in the annual sage grouse trapping effort based out of Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge in Oregon. Despite winter storms, by the end of the week capture wrapped up with 38 birds (20 males and 18 females) translocated to Washington.

A male sage grouse receives leg bands before being transported to Washington. Photo by S. Gregory

Golden Eagles Surveys: Biologist Bernatowicz continued to survey Priority 1 sites. Golden eagles could not be found on two previously occupied sites, which is unusual.

Colockum Elk: Biologist Moore modeled elk survey data using Aerial Survey. The model output estimates the Colockum population at 6,018 animals and all the ratios remained the same as reported last week. Moore also prepared bull elk data to illustrate collared bull locations relative to our survey area for a presentation that was given by Jerry Nelson to the Commission.

Golden Eagles: The second round of occupancy surveys began and Biologist Moore visited the east Dry Gulch and Robinson territories. Eagles were not observed at east Dry Gulch, but an adult Golden is incubating eggs at the Robinson site.

Incubating golden eagle at the Robinson Territory.





Prairie Falcon Nest Site: Wildlife Area Manager Cindi Confer Morris field reviewed an historic prairie falcon nest site that is in close proximity to BPA's powerline where they are planning to do some geotechnical exploration (digging). A single bird was seen soaring over the area, but gave no indication that there was a pair or active nest site in the area. Several marmots were seen and heard. She will check the area again in early May.

Left: *Cliffs in vicinity of historic prairie falcon.*
Right: *Marmot on the skyline.*



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

Wildlife Areas



Yoyo Rock Boat Launch Repairs: Terry Ellson brought his Lacey Shop crew to the Colockum this week to make repairs to the Yoyo Rock Boat Launch. There was a large bump at the end of the ramp that they were able to work on since the river level is extremely low during the drawdown.

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

Wildlife Management

Mule Deer Foundation Banquet: The local chapter of the Mule Deer Foundation had their inaugural banquet March 29, which was a great success. A total of 130 people attended, with significant funds raised for local habitat improvements, and many people signed up for volunteer projects. Another fence removal project is scheduled for mid-April in the Taneum drainage.

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Advisory Council: Shana sent out an invitation for the new LT Murray Advisory Council. Our first meeting is scheduled for April 15.

Wanapum Pool Drawdown: Shana worked with Jim Baugh, working for Archaeology Northwest and contracted to Grant County Public Utility District (PUD). Two crews are out surveying archaeological sites exposed by the Wanapum pool drawdown, and also inventorying cultural resources such as root grounds on the Quilomene, Whiskey Dick and Colockum wildlife areas. Leah didn't think the contractor's land access paperwork was in place, but we are working on a solution.

Whiskey Dick Fence Project: Shana continued to work with CAMP staff on the Whiskey Dick fence project. The SEPA was submitted for public comment and the JARPA is being processed, although there is now a question if sufficient Tribal consultation was conducted. Shana sent all past survey and consultation documents to Jessica Lally of the Yakama Nation to make sure we have met all consultation obligations. WDFW Survey staff is on site to confirm the Whiskey Dick fence location and establish the Parke Creek fence location.

Private Lands/Access

Taneum Roads: Wayne checked roads and conditions in the Taneum area. It will be a while before we can easily access upper elevation roads due to fairly deep snow hanging on in shaded canyons and on north facing slopes. He also ordered and received herbicide from CPS and supplies from Grainger, and helped a local man get information regarding registration as a disabled hunter.

Land Management: Biologist Moore continued working with Colockum Wildlife Area Manager Pete Lopushinsky on the Stray and Tekison Road alternatives.

Kelley Hollow: Wildlife Area Manager Cindi Confer Morris walked the lower end of Kelley Hollow Road. Once past the first quarter-mile that has been rocked, the road is native surface, composed of soil that falls apart when wet. This section of road was graded in 2006 after the ruts became so deep they were high-centering full size pickups, but without substantial rock or

keeping vehicles off the road during wet winter/spring conditions, the rutting on this and other native surface roads will continue to be a chronic problem.



Deep ruts on Kelley Hollow road due to water flowing down tire tracks causing erosion.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Urban Elk management: Biologist Smith met with North Bend City planners to discuss Elk movements through areas of planned development. Smith also spent some email and phone time discussing this issue with developers and consultants.

Wildlife Planning and Conflict Permits: Biologist Anderson reviewed requests and provided recommendations regarding construction around heron colonies for various municipalities, removal of osprey nests regarding mostly communication utility infrastructure, and thoughts on common loon enhancement efforts as well as academic contacts in consultation with Puget Sound Energy staff.

Island Marble Planning Meeting: Biologist Milner attended the annual planning meeting for Island Marble Butterfly management at San Juan Island National Historic Park.

Caspian Tern Nesting colony Assessment: Biologist Milner evaluated habitat options for Caspian Terns that nested on the empty Kimberly Clark Building last year, but will be unwelcome guests this year. Refurbishing of the site entails the development of a huge gravel pad that will likely be very attractive to terns if they are excluded from the building.



The new, vast gravel pad adjacent to the Kimberly Clark building.



Flat topped Kimberly Clark building where Caspian terns nested in 2012.

Wildlife Areas

Fir Island Farm Final Design Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw calibrated and installed a new water quality monitoring device on the site, to replace a device that previously malfunctioned. There are 13 devices on the site that measure groundwater and surface water levels, temperature, and salinity. Data collected before construction of an estuary restoration project will be compared to data after construction to help WDFW and the project steering committee detect if any of the measured parameters change over time.

Stillwater Revetment Removal Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Habitat Biologist Doug Hennick visited the restoration site to complete the post-construction site visit with the Wild Fish Conservancy, as prescribed in the project monitoring and adaptive management plan. Over 2,000 linear feet of rock revetment was removed from WDFW property and an adjacent private property along the Snoqualmie River to restore natural erosion processes that will improve habitat for salmon. Also, 1,750 native plants were planted on the river bank. The project was funded by grants offered through the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and King County.



Removal of the hardened bank at the Stillwater Unit encourages gravels to deposit in this reach of the river, which benefits salmon rearing and spawning.

Lummi Island Overlook: Manager Kessler and Natural Resource Tech Deyo visited the Lummi Island Unit and cleared down trees from the access road and trail to the overlook. At the overlook they trimmed branches from trees to improve the view of the San Juan Islands. They also replaced the informational materials in the Sign Box.



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

Wildlife Management

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) grant review and scoring: Biologist Milner finished reviewing and scoring the grant applications submitted for ALEA funding, and went back and re-evaluated some scores based on input from others. A total of 57 grant applications were reviewed and scored.

State Listed Common Loon Efforts: Biologists Anderson and Smith checked on territories on the Snoqualmie Tree Farm. No loons were seen on Lynch, Calligan, Hancock or Klaus Lakes. Loon nesting platforms were deployed at Calligan and Klaus in anticipation of birds arriving. The platform at Calligan was used for nesting last year, however, the birds were unsuccessful. One of their eggs apparently hatched but the chick did not survive (predated?) and the other egg was non-viable.

Lead tack restriction signage erected by Fish Program had been vandalized and removed at Calligan. Anderson and Smith put a new sign up.

Monitoring of these (and other) areas will occur during spring and summer to document active territories and nesting attempts. While conducting this work western toads were observed just starting to call on Klaus; indicating breeding soon to come.



Biologists Anderson and Smith prepared loon platforms on area King County lakes.

North Cascades Elk Management Issues: Biologists Danilson and DeBruyn conducted the second of two rounds of aerial surveys for elk in Skagit and Whatcom counties. The survey data has not been compiled yet, but the total number of elk observed was lower than the first round of surveys conducted on March 17 and 18. Warm and more stable weather conditions are believed to have influenced the number of elk feeding in open areas during dawn and dusk hours when the surveys are conducted, resulting in the lower proportion of elk observed.



These surveys are conducted in partnership with the Point Elliott Treaty Tribe, with tribal staff participating in the surveys and the tribes covering 50% of the costs. The second survey is scheduled to occur during the week of March 31.

A young bull elk stares back at biologists conducting an aerial survey.

2013 Harvest Summary Data and 2014 Big Game Hunting Seasons: District Biologist staff reviewed 2013 harvest summary data products and provided feedback to GIS/Data Support Specialist Owens. Additionally, District staff reviewed the draft 2014 Big Game Hunting Seasons and Regulations pamphlet and provided corrections to Management Analyst Nielsen.

Wildlife Areas

Island Unit: Natural Resources Specialist (NRS) Greg Meis and Natural Resources Tech (NRT) Curran Cosgrove with the assistance of volunteers ferried tractor and fuel tank to the Island Unit. NRT Cosgrove checked field conditions and determined that some locations are ready for preparation for planting of early crops such as corn.

Manager Rotton and NRT Cosgrove checked the Barn Field tide gate structure with the underwater camera, but turbid water conditions allowed limited viewing. Seattle Pond tide gate was also checked. The interior flashboard riser on the culvert appears to be rusted in places limiting the ability to hold water.



Agricultural Enhancement work beginning in the Lorenzen field on the Island Unit.

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm completed the livestock exclusion fencing on the west portion of the unit. Manager Boehm toured the middle portion to examine places where exclusion fencing and watering stations are required. Installation will be completed prior to livestock entering the unit on April 15. While on site, Manager Boehm noticed one of the City of Everett's water lines was leaking and reported it.

Skagit Acquisition Team: The District Skagit Acquisition Team met to discuss its proposal to provide additional waterfowl forage and hunting opportunity in the Skagit delta. The team is considering which acquisition tools should be used to accomplish the goal of the proposal including temporary leases, permanent access easements, modification of management on current WDFW properties, and/or fee title acquisition.

Private Lands/Access

Wildlife Viewing Site Set-up, Use and Opening: Technician Otto set-up and opened a wildlife viewing site on Whidbey Island. He also performed trail maintenance and set-up a use survey for the location.

Spring Bear Hunt Coordination: Biologist Caldwell and DNR Forester Hurd coordinated and mapped North Skagit access gates for the upcoming Spring Bear Hunt.

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

Wildlife Management

Roaming Chukar: Biologist Danilson also interacted with several La Conner field office neighbors who had been observing a "strange bird" (later identified as a chukar) over the past week. This bird has either escaped from a captive facility or, more likely, been intentionally dropped off.

A lone chukar appears to have taken up residence in La Conner.



Master Hunter Volunteer Project: Biologist Milner prepared the list of hunters who need to be contacted relative to their stated hunt in Game Management Unit (GMU) 410. We believe many of them failed to notice that many of the islands in this GMU now have their own GMU number and therefore hope to get more accurate information from them about which island they actually hunted in 2013. Milner prepared a questionnaire and data sheet with Volunteer Coordinator Dazey and we hope to get some assistance from Master Hunters looking for volunteer hours.

Biologist Response to Public Inquiries: District biologist staff fielded calls from hunters drawn for the spring bear hunts, local hunting seasons, pamphlet publication dates and inquiries regarding upcoming proposed changes to the 2014 pamphlet. Additionally, biologists assisted Mill Creek administrative staff in responding to public inquiries received through the “Wildthing” and “TeamMillCreek” email addresses provided on the WDFW website.

Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm facilitated a Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC, formerly the Citizen’s Advisory Group) meeting on April 1. Four members attended to discuss changes to the roles and responsibilities of the group and to seek input for the Wildlife Area Management Plan update which is due by April 30. The Wildlife Area Plan was last updated in 2012.

Wiley Slough Restoration: Manager Rotton compiled edits on the Wiley Slough Pump station agreement and forwarded to the Dike District (DD) #22 for review during their next Dike District Commissioners meeting.

Rotton coordinated with representatives from DD #22 to develop a plan for worst case scenario of a tide gate or culvert failure. WDFW is currently responsible for function of the tide gate infrastructure and this area impacts nearly 20% of the valuable agricultural ground and private property on Fir Island. Manager Rotton contacted CAMP staff regarding permitting needs for the proposed tide gate and spur dike repair on the Headquarters site.

Private Lands/Access

Spring Bear Hunt Stakeholder and WDFW Coordination: Biologist Caldwell contacted all of the Spring Bear Hunt stakeholders and WDFW Enforcement staff about the April 12 meeting times and locations. At this meeting hunters will receive their hunter packets, which include maps, vehicle pass, and rules and regulations forms. Furthermore, WDFW Enforcement staff will also be attending to discuss rules, regulation and their overall involvement in the hunt.

Volunteer Coordination for Hunter Harvest/Success Monitoring: Biologist Caldwell met with Hunter Education & Volunteer Coordinator Steve Dazey to review a prototype survey box. Cost estimates design, and a timeline for completion were discussed. This project is approaching the final phase. Follow up will be conducted in the coming weeks to finalize the project.

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

Private Lands/Access

Migratory Bird Stamp Enhancements: Biologist Caldwell developed a payment scale approach to better utilizing Migratory Bird Enhancing money with potential landowners in 2014.

Upon finalization, the payment structure will be presented to landowners to negotiate potential payment plans for the upcoming waterfowl and farming season.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Oregon Spotted Frog Surveys: District Biologist Anderson, Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven, and Biologist Hallock from the Olympia office conducted the annual coordinated spotted frog egg mass survey for the Trout Lake Natural Area Preserve (TLNAP). In addition, Biologist Anderson surveyed the USFS Trout Lake Creek Beaver Pond with staff from the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Preliminary results indicate very good egg mass counts totaling approximately 1,000 compared to last year's high count of over 1,200. Favorable water conditions from this year's late season precipitation created good habitat conditions for spotted frog reproduction. Although Trout Lake egg mass numbers have been exceptionally good the last few years, there is still considerable concern for the state-wide population of this endangered species. We would like to thank those people from DNR and the USFWS for their assistance with this year's survey.



Spotted frog egg mass surveys

Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area Elk Survey: District Biologist Miller conducted the fourth monthly winter elk survey on the valley floor of the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area. The survey is conducted early every month, December through April, to assess the number of elk using the Wildlife Area, survey for elk carcasses, and evaluate winter conditions. A total of 157 elk were observed on the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area and were well distributed on the Wildlife Area east and west. No mortalities were observed on valley floor. There was no snow on valley floor and snow level was at 3,500+ feet on adjoining hillsides. A slight hint of green was observed, indicating that green up is probably starting to take place. Weather conditions were cold and windy.

Black-tailed Deer Research Project: A VIT (vaginal implant transmitter) triggered message was sent for one of the Coweeman study does indicating that the VIT was at air temperature. Since it is too early for fawning it was thought that either the VIT had fallen out of the doe or that the doe had died. Biologist Bergh found the doe's carcass near a creek with the GPS collar intact and the VIT nearby. The doe had been killed by predators – likely coyotes as fresh tracks and scat were nearby. Seven study does remain in the cluster although one of the GPS collars is sending a low-battery signal and no GPS or activity data. The one remaining fawn from spring 2013 is still alive.

Golden Eagles: District Biologist Anderson initiated the second round of golden eagle occupancy surveys for those priority nesting territories included in the state-wide survey. This week's survey focused on a historic golden eagle territory in the mid Klickitat River drainage. No golden eagles were seen on the second visit although a local resident reported a pair of eagles in the area earlier in the week.



Western Pond Turtle

Management: Biologists George and Holman prepared equipment and supplies for the upcoming effort to study western pond turtles at the Sondino site. Traps, boats, veterinary supplies, bait, a supply of water, containers for the animals, calipers, scales, notebooks, PIT tag readers, etc., all must be delivered to the central Klickitat County site. Furthermore, all equipment must meet the regulations associated with WDFW's efforts to minimize the spread of aquatic invasive species.

Western Pond Turtle capture equipment preparation.

Public Meeting: WDFW Region 5 Director Norman, Game Division Manager Ware, State Wildlife Veterinarian Mansfield, and Wildlife Program Manager Jonker along with Washington State Representatives Blake and Takko were on a panel as part of a public meeting on elk hoof disease hosted by Wahkiakum County Commissioners in Cathlamet. The meeting was attended by approximately 30 people. Following a brief overview presentation of results to date on WDFW's hoof disease diagnostic investigation, the remainder of the meeting provided an opportunity for Questions and Answers on a variety of topics related to hoof disease in elk in Southwest Washington.

Wildlife Areas

Klickitat Wildlife Area – Fence Repair: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis finished the new end braces for a gate on WDFW/Western Pacific Timber property line,

fixed the fence and gate, and replaced a faded sign. Technician Davis also did maintenance on another property line fence near Old Headquarters Road.



Gates fixed on the Klickitat Wildlife Area.

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

Wildlife Management

Spring Turkey Season: District Wildlife Biologist Anderson and Klickitat Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven responded to numerous inquiries about the spring turkey season in Klickitat County. This year there has been an increase in the number of requests for information on places to take youth for their first turkey season hunt. Most people are interested in the Klickitat Wildlife Area, but advice was given for other areas not so known about in other parts of Klickitat County. Wildlife Area Technician Davis replaced missing or damaged signs in preparation for more visitors on the Soda Springs Unit. Road gates on the Soda Springs Road network are presently closed, but will be opened the evening before the April 15 general spring turkey season.

Private Lands/Access



Mineral Lake

Mineral Lake Access: Access site staff Spangler and Rhodes limbed blackberries and branches along the road and parking area on the upper access of Mineral Lake and spent several hours cutting limbs around the parking lot, ADA trail to the dock, and around the restrooms on the lower Mineral Lake access. The high water and wind left quite a few logs along the shore and three wedged onto the boat ramp and under the dock. One of the logs was really heavy and difficult to move with the truck, but staff was able to drag the log onto to the west of the ramp.

Public Access: Conflict Specialist McDonald and a Trout Lake landowner signed an amendment extending a Hunt by Written Permission (HBWP) contract three more years. The landowner is very happy with the program and with the respect that hunters have shown the property. The landowner took a video of 100 elk crossing through his field on Monday morning. McDonald replaced faded and damaged HBWP signs on the private property perimeter.

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

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Conflict – Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement (DPCA): Conflict Specialist McDonald signed a Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement with a Trout Lake dairy owner. The dairy has been experiencing yearly elk damage to hay and alfalfa fields. Conflict Specialists McDonald and Conklin, Biologist Stephens, and the dairy owner installed two lines of turbo-fladry on six-foot posts around a hay field in an effort to deter the elk from browsing. Several Trout Lake Elk Area #5062 Master Hunters successfully harvested elk on the dairy's land this past season.



Turbo-fladry installed on six-foot posts around a hay field in an effort to deter the elk.

Bear Deterrents: Conflict Specialist Conklin and Biologist Stephens installed noise devices and trail cameras on a grove of private forest area that was damaged last year from peeling bears. The land owner was very appreciative of WDFW's efforts to assist him using non-lethal techniques.

Wildlife Areas

Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area – Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) Meeting: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald, Regional Wildlife Program Manager Jonker, and Technician Sample held a WAAC meeting for the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area this past week to discuss the Area Plan Update and ask for input from the committee members. Members attended with representation from the Toutle Valley Community, Eco Park Resort, Rocky Mountain Elk

Foundation, U.S. Forest Service, and Cowlitz County Weed Management. Topic of most interest included the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) plans on sediment management of the North Fork Toutle River, weed management, and off-road issues.

District 10 and Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area Winter Conditions

Past Weather: December and January temperatures and precipitation were below normal, with February and March having below normal temperatures and above normal precipitation. Temperatures have begun to moderate with warmer spring like temperatures.

Short-Term Forecast: Snow levels will fluctuate between 5,000 to 9,000 feet for the upcoming week. The 6-10 and 8-14 day forecast are for above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation.

Long-Term Forecast: The April forecast is for an equal chance for either above average, below average, or normal temperatures, and below normal precipitation. The three month forecast predicts above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation.

Habitat: Forage is available in lower and mid elevations, with green up starting to show signs in the lower elevations.

Snow Depths: Lower elevations are snow-free, with mid-elevation snow beginning to decrease in depth.

Animal Concentrations: No unusual concentrations noted to date. The monthly winter elk survey was conducted on March 31 with 157 elk observed on the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area.

Animal Condition: Most animals observed to date appear to be in good to fair condition.

Mortality: Wildlife Area staff has observed nine mortalities so far this winter on the Mudflow Unit while conducting other work.

Public Contacts: None to report regarding winter conditions.

The Public is reminded the portion of the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area lying east of a line defined by Hoffstadt Creek, The North Fork Toutle, and Deer Creek is closed to public access through April 30, 2014, to minimize disturbance and associated energy demands on elk wintering there.

District 9 Winter Conditions

Past Weather: Conditions this week were mild with snow accumulation still around 5,000 ft. in the south Cascades. Winter snowpack/water conditions for the basin are good and there is little concern for spring runoff.

Winter Severity: There is little concern for big game populations in Skamania County and the western portion of Klickitat County regarding impacts from winter conditions. Those portions of

Klickitat County east of Rock Creek are starting to green up and deer are reported in good condition.

Habitat: Habitat is in good conditions with good rainfall during the month of March. Habitat in eastern Klickitat County is in good condition.

Animal Concentrations: Deer are bunched in normal concentrations in good habitat at mid and lower elevations east of Highway 97.

Animal Condition: Deer and elk appear to be in good condition and little winter stress/mortality has been reported.

Mortality: No deer mortalities have been reported. One elk mortality was reported this week around Trout Lake.

Public Contacts: None this week.

MOUNT SAINT HELENS ELK HERD
 2013/2014 WINTER CONDITIONS - SNO-PARK SNOW DEPTH,
 NRCS SNOTEL DATA, AND SNOWPACK

From web page <http://www.fs.usda.gov/activity/giffordpinchot/recreation/wintersports/?recid=31178&actid=91>
http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/cgi-bin/sno_narr3_pl
<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/snotel/Washington/washington.html>

SNOWPARKS:									
Name	Elevation		12/6/2013	12/13/2013	12/20/2013	12/27/2013	1/3/2014	1/10/2014	1/17/2014
MARBLE MT	2,700'		No report	4" new snow	No new report	No new report	No new report	No new snow, 2" base	Slush. No new snow.
WAKEPISH	2,800'		No report		1-2" snow	1-2" snow	2" snow	2" base	No new report

SNOWTEL STATIONS:

Name	Elevation	Stats	11/30-12/6	12/7-12/13	12/14-12/20	12/21-12/27	12/28-1/3	1/4-1/10	1/11-1/17
		Avg Snow							
JUNE LAKE	3,340'	Depth (inches)	0.66	5	5.3	7	6.7	7.9	22
		Min Temp (F)	14	19	23	29	31	26	31
		Max Temp (F)	45	27	50	54	51	47	55
		Avg Temp (F)	30	22	36.2	38.3	39.5	36.7	39.8
		Year to date precipitation (inches)	27	27	27.7	30.9	31.3	36.6	43.5

Name	Elevation	Stats	11/30-12/6	12/7-12/13	12/14-12/20	12/21-12/27	12/28-1/3	1/4-1/10	1/11-1/17
		Avg Snow							
SPIRIT LAKE	3,520'	Depth (inches)	2.43	3	0.86	0.86	0	1.3	3.5
		Min Temp (F)	11	18	21	29	30	20	31
		Max Temp (F)	46	27	52	51	52	46	54
		Avg Temp (F)	29	25	36.8	36.8	39.2	36.8	38.5
		Year to date precipitation (inches)	17.5	17.9	18.3	22.1	22.7	25.5	30.5

Name	Elevation	Stats	11/30-12/6	12/7-12/13	12/14-12/20	12/21-12/27	12/28-1/3	1/4-1/10	1/11-1/17
		Avg Snow							
PEPPER CREEK	2,140'	Depth (inches)	0.31	2	0.3	0.42	0	0	0
		Min Temp (F)	14	16	24	28	29	25	29
		Max Temp (F)	48	26	46	46	51	46	51

Avg Temp (F)	31.5	22	34.5	34.8	36	35.2	37.3
Year to date precipitation (inches)	13.1	13.5	13.6	15.3	15.6	17.9	21

Name	Elevation	Stats	11/30-12/6	12/7-12/13	12/14-12/20	12/21-12/27	12/28-1/3	1/4-1/10	1/11-1/17
SHEEP CANYON	3,990'	Avg Snow							
		Depth (inches)	4		7	8.6	7.9	11.7	25.5
		Min Temp (F)	12		20	28	29	23	30
		Max Temp (F)	43		50	51	50	50	59
		Avg Temp (F)	26		35.3	36.8	38.8	35.8	39.3
		Year to date precipitation (inches)	23.1		24.4	27.8	28.4	32.5	38.5

Name	Elevation	Stats	11/30-12/6	12/7-12/13	12/14-12/20	12/21-12/27	12/28-1/3	1/4-1/10	1/11-1/17
CALAMITY	2500'	Avg Snow							
		Depth (inches)	1	5.5	0.1	0	0	0	0
		Min Temp (F)	16	18	27	32	33	30	34
		Max Temp (F)	47	27	55	52	53	48	56
		Avg Temp (F)	31	23	39.2	41.2	42.3	39.8	43.3
		Year to date precipitation (inches)	18.8	22	20.3	23.2	23.6	27.4	32.7

Snowpack % of Avg Snow Water Equivalent	12/6/2013	12/13/2013	12/20/2013	12/27/2013	1/3/2014	1/10/2014	1/17/2014
JUNE LAKE	5%		13%	21%	14%	23%	33%
SPIRIT LAKE	122%		100%	48%	33%	73%	77%
SHEEP CANYON	20%		20%	27%	22%	38%	55%

1/24/2014	1/31/2014	2/7/2014	2/14/2014	2/21/2014	2/28/2014	3/7/2014	3/14/2014	3/21/2014	3/28/2014
No new report	No new report	6" new snow	14" new snow	No new report	No new report	No new report	No new report	3" snow	3" old snow
No new report	No new report	5" new snow	No new report	12" snow	No new report	24" snow	12" snow	14" snow	No new report

1/18-1/24	1/25-1/31	2/1-2/7	2/8-2/14	2/15-2/21	2/22-2/28	3/1-3/7	3/8-3/14	3/15-3/21	3/22-3/28
19.7	18.7	30.3	37.3	52.3	65.3	57.6	49.4	46.4	47.8
32	31	5	16	28	27	27	30	27	32
57	60	37	41	42	41	46	53	50	56
43	40.2	21.2	32.2	33	33.7	37	40.5	35.5	39.3

1/18-1/24	1/25-1/31	2/1-2/7	2/8-2/14	2/15-2/21	2/22-2/28	3/1-3/7	3/8-3/14	3/15-3/21	3/22-3/28
43.6	48.6	51.4	58.1	71.4	72.8	86.6	91.5	95.8	99.6

1/18-1/24	1/25-1/31	2/1-2/7	2/8-2/14	2/15-2/21	2/22-2/28	3/1-3/7	3/8-3/14	3/15-3/21	3/22-3/28
0.1	2.5	7.6	3.8	12.2	15.9	5.1	0.3	3.3	0.5
34	31	7	18	28	24	28	26	28	32
54	60	45	48	48	42	50	54	54	55
42.3	39.7	21.5	34.3	33.5	35.2	39.2	41.5	36.2	39.7

1/18-1/24	1/25-1/31	2/1-2/7	2/8-2/14	2/15-2/21	2/22-2/28	3/1-3/7	3/8-3/14	3/15-3/21	3/22-3/28
30.6	33	33.4	36.8	44.6	45.4	51.6	55.5	58.6	60.3

1/18-1/24	1/25-1/31	2/1-2/7	2/8-2/14	2/15-2/21	2/22-2/28	3/1-3/7	3/8-3/14	3/15-3/21	3/22-3/28
0	0	2.1	7.7	2.8	12	11.1	4.3	0	0
30	28	11	17	32	30	28	29	29	28
56	55	38	45	44	47	48	62	57	65

35.8 35.5 25.5 33 34.8 36 37.5 40.5 38.2 40.3

21 22.9 23.2 27.8 35 35.4 41.1 43.3 45.2 46.9

1/18-1/24 1/25-1/31 2/1-2/7 2/8-2/14 2/15-2/21 2/22-2/28 3/1-3/7 3/8-3/14 3/15-3/21 3/22-3/28

24.1 22.8 32.2 37.6 53.4 67.4 56.6 49.8 52.3 54

33 30 3 18 26 21 30 27 26 26

54 56 37 40 41 45 46 53 46 55

43 40.2 20 32.8 31.5 34.5 37 38.3 33.5 37

38.6 42.3 43.4 49.4 60.7 62.3 73.8 79.7 84.3 87.5

1/18-1/24 1/25-1/31 2/1-2/7 2/8-2/14 2/15-2/21 2/22-2/28 3/1-3/7 3/8-3/14 3/15-3/21 3/22-3/28

0 0 1.1 1.7 2.1 2.7 0.5 0 0 0

32 34 9 17 32 28 28 32 32 31

54 54 37 39 46 46 51 56 55 58

43.3 42.2 24.2 26.5 35.8 35.5 41.2 44.2 39 42.1

32.7 36.2 36.7 37.3 51.2 52.1 58.5 62.5 64.7 68.2

1/24/2014 1/31/2014 2/7/2014 2/14/2014 2/21/2014 2/28/2014 3/7/2014 3/14/2014 3/21/2014 3/28/2014

27% 29% 30% 34% 57% 55% 53% 51% 51% 57%

42% 29% 44% 6% 107% 79% no data no data 110% 27%

47% 44% 48% 56% 87% 78% 71% 64% 62% 69%

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Western Snowy Plovers: Biologists Sundstrom and Michaelis installed 1.1 miles of signs at Midway Beach for the protection of nesting snowy plovers on State Parks land. Sundstrom and Michaelis also installed signs on approximately 1,140 contiguous feet of private property lands for the protection of crucial snowy plover nesting habitat. The public will see two different colored signs along the upper beach portion at Midway Beach this season. Signs on State Parks land are printed with black text and signs on private land are printed with red text. Both signs are triangular and mounted on 10-foot white PVC posts. Washington State Parks requires that regulatory signs be in black text on a white background which, under a newly adopted WAC, allows enforcement to administer monetary fines for violations into the posted areas. Trespass is enforceable on private posted lands.

Weekly monitoring and surveying for snowy plovers will begin the week of April 6 or as weather conditions allow. Eight snowy plovers were observed at rest in tire tracks during a morning clam dig tide while signs were being installed.

Lastly, Sundstrom spent a great deal of time editing and contributing to the writing of standard operating procedures manual for surveying and nest searching of the western snowy plover. The manual is being written to ensure continuity of data collection by all biologists involved with snowy plover recovery in coastal Washington State.



The Peregrine Falcon is a known predator of the snowy plover and is frequently observed at Midway Beach. This peregrine appeared to be quite tolerant of people and vehicles which allowed for a close-up. The raptor was not banded and remained perched on the log. No snowy plovers were observed in the immediate area near the falcon.

Northern Goshawk – Feathers

Collected: Biologist Ament has some friends, David and Vicki Miller, who live on 40 acres adjacent to DNR land above the Dungeness Fish Hatchery. They raise chickens, ducks, and turkeys on their property to provide eggs for several local businesses. They sometimes notify Biologist Ament if predators (bobcats, coyotes, raccoons, or raptors) have killed any of their birds or to report some exciting wildlife observation on the property.



They recognize they live in wildlife habitat and have never once requested that WDFW staff take any action to control any predators in the area. They realize that they will likely lose a few birds a year to the local wildlife and consider this to be the price for living off the grid in a beautiful place. A few years back they did report observing a northern goshawk on the property. At one point the goshawk killed one of their roosters. Vicki sent the photos taken below. Ament requested if they ever had a chance to collect any feathers from the bird please do so. They were successful at being able to collect a few feathers. Biologist Ament previously provided the feather to Steve Desimone who is the lead for looking at the genetics of northern goshawks for WDFW. He had requested that a GPS location be provided to him. Biologist Ament was on the Miller property on April 5, 2014, and got a location for where the feathers were collected. She will provide Steve this information and follow-up with him to see if the feathers were submitted for testing.



Northern goshawk that killed a rooster – Photos by Vicki Miller.

Harbor Seal Tagging: Bio Murphie assisted the Marine Mammal Investigations Unit of WDFW with attempts to catch and tag 12 harbor seals in the Bremerton area this week. Three adult male seals, ranging in weight from approximately 160 to 236 pounds, were captured by hand off of their rocky haul-out site near Bainbridge Island. The capture technique essentially involves a controlled landing by boat onto the rocks followed by either a sneak and grab or a more robust scramble over the rocks in an attempt to capture a seal using a modified salmon landing net. Seals were temporarily held in individual nets for processing, which included measuring weight and length, collecting a blood sample, and tagging with a small computer that records location and dive behavior data (depth and duration of dives), before being released on-site. These computers are temporarily affixed to the seal and will drop-off during the next molting period.

Western Pond Turtles: District 11 completed the first week on annual trapping of western pond turtles at the Pierce County recovery site. Trapping takes place annually to replace transmitters on breeding females, which are monitored during the season to locate nests. All additional turtles that get in the traps are also processed (weights, measurements, health). Trapping will continue this week.