

Wildlife Program

Week of August 3 – August 9, 2015

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Dirty Shirt Chronology: Supervisor McCanna updated the chronology of events and work being done to prevent further depredations for this week. McCanna will continue to update the chronology weekly.

Commissioner Contact: Supervisor McCanna was contacted by Commissioner Dashiell regarding five cattle producers in the Huckleberry territory who have not been contacted. As the collared wolf continues to move north, additional producers need to be contacted. Staff were notified of these producers and all have been contacted, except one, with in person meetings, with some scheduled for next week.

Range Rider Direction: Biologist Shepherd and contract range riders discussed strategies for an area with wolf depredations in the Colville National Forest.

U.S. Air Force: Biologist Shepherd discussed wolf issues for an area with wolf depredations in the Colville National Forest that the survival school is using. A date was set for a formal on base discussion later in the month concerning habituation and issues working in wolf-occupied areas.

Livestock Producer Contacts: Biologist Shepherd talked with several grazing permit holders in the Kettle Mountains and the North and South Chewelah Creeks in the Colville National Forest.

Wolf Activity: Natural Resource Worker Weatherman spent time in Ferry County in a federal grazing allotment looking for wolf sign. No sign was detected. Time was also spent in Stevens County in the federal grazing allotments east of Chewelah. No fresh wolf sign was detected.

Conference Calls: Biologist Shepherd participated in the monthly conflict conference call and a call concerning data and equipment sharing with the public.

WSU project: Biologist Shepherd and WSU employees talked about their project while travelling on the Colville National Forest.

Wolf Monthly and Equipment Conference Call: Supervisor McCanna, Wildlife Conflict Specialists Bennett, Shepherd, and Wetzell, Natural Resource Worker Weatherman, and Region 1 Wildlife Program Manager Robinette participated in two conference calls to discuss wolf related items. During the Monthly Wolf Conference Call, upcoming trapping, a media tour, and regional updates were provided. During a small group conference call the use of telemetry equipment for landowners and their staff was discussed. Further involvement from internal staff will be solicited for the use of telemetry equipment for landowners.

Wolf Monitoring Webpage: Biologist Earl worked with cooperators to address issues with the webpage.

Region 3 Wolf Activities

Conflict Specialist Wetzel and Ranger Riders McBride and Johnson monitored wolf activity near cattle and sheep this week. Wolf proximity to sheep has increased significantly this week. Graduate student Spence contacted Conflict Specialist Wetzel with wolf telemetry locations and cluster visit data. Spence is a tremendous help to the producer and WDFW in tracking wolf movements and activity.

SCIENCE DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Sage Grouse: Michael Schroeder (WDFW Research Scientist) estimated that the 2015 greater sage-grouse population in Washington was 1004 birds (386 males counted on 27 lek complexes). The estimate was about 3% higher than the estimate for 2014. The slight increase followed four straight years of declines (35% overall decline from 2010 to 2014). The decline appeared to be largely a result of transition in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in Douglas County (approximately 100,000 acres in various stages of conversion between 2010 and 2014). The overall decline of sage-grouse in Douglas County between 2010 and 2014 was estimated to be about 47% (increase of about 2% in 2015).

On July 13, 2015, Michael Schroeder (WDFW Research Scientist) met with Jon Gallie (WDFW Wildlife Biologist) and Michael Brown (Sage Grouse Initiative) in Wenatchee. The purpose of the meeting was to talk about criteria for inclusion of properties in the Sage Grouse Initiative and the write-up of the infrared survey for leks in spring 2015. Results from the infrared technique were very promising. The technique discovered a sage-grouse lek in Douglas County that was previously not known. The results for 2015 contrasted from the results in April 1994 when forward-looking-infrared (FLIR) was used to unsuccessfully search for leks. The techniques have clearly improved in the intervening 21 years.

The manuscript titled “Habitat selection by sympatric, translocated greater sage-grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse” has been accepted for publication in the Journal of Wildlife Management. Michael Schroeder (WDFW Research Scientist) is a co-author on the manuscript along with Lisa Shipley (WSU), Jason Lowe (BLM), Michael Atamian (WDFW Wildlife Biologist), and Mark Swanson (WSU). The senior author is Kourtney Stonehouse who conducted this research at the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area for her M.S. degree at Washington State University. The research was primarily funded by WDFW, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Washington State University (through Dr. Lisa Shipley).

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Colville District Summer Deer Surveys: District Wildlife Biologist Dana Base teamed with other agency partners this week initiating summer deer counts on both traditional and standardized survey transects within District 1. So far four of 20 survey routes to be covered this month have been surveyed. Both white-tailed and mule deer were observed with classifications made for doe, fawn, and buck deer, including an antler point category, along with age class on bucks.



Deer observed on survey transects this week

Blue Mountains Deer Surveys: District Biologist Wik conducted two pre-season deer surveys during the week.

A mature buck observed during August surveys



Wildlife Areas

WBLS & LCWA Habitat Improvement:

Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Daro Palmer assisted WDFW Forester Rod Pfeifle on review and edits of the thinning prescriptions for the LeClerc Creek Wildlife Area project this week. WAAM Palmer then sent the prescriptions out the district team for review. Additionally, Phase 1 of the West Branch Little Spokane (Rustler's Gulch) Wildlife Area project was initiated, as the operator began logging on Thursday.

Private Lands

Lacrosse Badgers: Biologist Lewis and Natural Resource Worker Clements conducted a site visit to assess a report of excessive badger activity at a residence approximately five miles southwest of Lacrosse. Upon arrival Lewis and Clements realized that there is a very large amount of badger activity in the yard, driveway, and all around and under the buildings on the property. Lewis and Clements located at least 15 holes that looked like active dens with fresh digging, and tracks with many, many more small diggings. Lewis contacted WDFW Biologist Lewis, who is doing badger research, to make plans for documentation and data collection. Also, plans will need to be made about the badgers in the yard and around the house.



Badgers at a residence in the Lacrosse area

REGION 2

NO REPORT SUBMITTED

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman received a request from Becca Wassell with the Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group (MCF) about possible short term pool enhancement projects to benefit fish due to low flows. Huffman checked out the lower section of Oak Creek, which has multiple pools from beaver dams but minimal shading and cover. Oak Creek was at pretty low flows, but was actually higher than expected. Huffman located about four beaver dams in the first quarter mile, finding them all abandoned and only about one third full of water. Each pool had dozens of small (one-two inch) fish with minimal to no cover or shading. Another pool was still full, which may be the one actively being used by a beaver. MCF may come down this coming week to complete some brush cutting to place in the creek for added shading and cover.



Beaver pond on Oak Creek that is only about one third full and contains numerous small fish

Wildlife Management

Duck Traps: District Biologist Fidorra, Private Lands Biologist Stutzman, and Technician Kaelber installed and baited three duck traps on the Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area. Ducks have located the bait and trapping will take place on the Bailey Youth Ranch and Windmill Ranch sites from August to early September. A fourth trap will be installed when ordered material arrives in the coming week.



Stutzman and Kaelber installing a duck trap on Sunnyside-Snake River, WA

Bat Monitoring: District Biologist Fidorra placed bat detectors at two sites in Franklin County, including a site along the Snake River. This began the third and final month of bat surveys for the year.

Dove Banding: District Biologist Fidorra conducted mourning dove banding at the Ringold Fish Hatchery one evening this week. Hatchery Specialist Roberts assisted with baiting efforts. Trapping success increased just slightly this week. Thirteen new bands were deployed. The total amount of doves banded this year in District 4 is currently 147, including 29 AHY (5F, 22M, 2U); 117 HY; 1 unknown age. Dove banding will continue through August 15.

Dove Banding: Biologist Bernatowicz scouted for possible new dove trapping locations. Doves were located, but birds/acre of wheat was relatively low. Trapping was attempted one evening at the historic banding site. No doves were trapped due to hawk activity. The annual total is 151, with 60 adults and 91 Hatch-year birds banded.

Western Gray Squirrel: Biologist Bernatowicz checked tubes on four transects. No western gray squirrel hair was found. This was the last check of the four transects and tubes were pulled.

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Bernatowicz took part in a conference call to the Bighorn/Domestic Sheep risk of contact model with other WDFW Bighorn Sheep Managers and the US Forest Service Consultant. Biologist Moore did an excellent job of presenting the model and inputs. Risk outputs can change significantly depending on how the model is run and values entered. There was a good discussion on elk fences and sub herds (Rock Creek) vs entire (Clemans). A decision was made on how to run the model that best fits bighorn sheep biology. The outputs are a rough estimate of predicting the probability of bighorn sheep dispersing into domestic sheep allotments during the grazing season.

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

Wildlife Areas

Wenas Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Taylor ran GPS in an area at the elk fence entrance of the Buffalo River Road for the possible creation of a parking area. Manager Confer Morris will create a shape file for BPA's Environmental Compliance staff for cultural resource review.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Berry constructed a new gate for the elk fence at Waterworks Canyon Trail. Berry and Forester Mackey installed the new gate and removed the old wood gate.

Assistant Manager Berry showing off the new gate installed on Waterworks Canyon Trail on Clemans Mountain



Wildlife Management

Hunting Prospects: District Biologist Fidorra worked on updating the District 4 Hunting Prospects and Status and Trend reports and will complete revisions to these documents by their due dates next week.

DPP Permits: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand monitored the harvest of DPP permits in Elk Area 3721. Four antlerless and one spike bull elk were reported harvested this week. Total harvest for the current permit season is 11 antlerless and five spike bull elk.

Elk Hunting Prospectus: Biologist Moore reviewed data collected during the Yakima Elk Study to determine the mean starting date and duration of the annual elk fall migration. Moore began working with location data from the study to develop a general home range illustration for each PMU. These products haven't been completed since there have been difficulties with the software involved.

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: Assistant Manager Hagan coordinated with Jennifer Andreas at WSU Cooperative Extension to receive more biological weed control insects. This shipment is *Cyphocleonus achates*, a diffuse knapweed root weevil. Hagan received the insects late in the week and released them over the weekend, since they are highly perishable.

An example of Cyphocleonus achates, a diffuse knapweed root weevil



Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris and Assistant Manager Taylor completed litigation information checklists and provided them to ATG Engle, as requested, on the Cottonwood #2 fire claim.

Loose Horses: Wildlife area staff were contacted by the regional office regarding several calls about two horses being loose in the Sheep Company area of the wildlife area. Assistant Manager Taylor was able to locate the animals and make contact with the owner regarding their removal. He also followed up with one of the neighbors and Officer Myers. One of the animals is a stud donkey that gets aggressive towards other animals. This is not the first time these animals have been out on the wildlife area.

Access Program: Natural Resource Worker 2 Barbosa discovered an abandoned vehicle in the tunnel at our Wapato Dam access area. He called it in to the sheriff's office and was informed that the vehicle had been involved in a tribal police chase. A deputy arrived at the site and advised him to have it towed.



Abandoned vehicle at Wapato Dam



He squeezed around the closed gate

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman and Forester Mackey met with staff from the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest about developing a Cooperative Road Management Agreement for roads in our checkerboard ownership. Both Forest Service staff members are new to their positions, so they wanted to discuss the agreement and see some of the roads in the area.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Bjornstrom coordinated with Dave Heimer on availability of the Marsh Master rental. Manager Bjornstrom will be using the rental for two weeks for wetland management. One week will be allocated to the west side of the complex and one week will be allocated to the east side of the complex. The goal is to provide open water for the upcoming waterfowl seasons in areas that have been degrading due to encroachment by narrow-leaf cattail and other undesirable vegetation.

Duck Stamp Projects: Manager Bjornstrom coordinated with Ducks Unlimited on upcoming Duck Stamp projects to be completed this fall/winter. The main focus of this year's projects will be on the WB-10 Wasteway Unit. Ducks Unlimited will be evaluating seasonal water flows and impoundment designs for Phase 1 of a multi-phase project. Vegetation management is needed in order to provide an environment conducive to accurate data collection.

Pheasant Release: Natural Resource Worker 2 Nnanabu helped Assistant Manager Sak release pheasant chicks on the wildlife area.

Sunnyside Headquarters Unit: Assistant Manager Sak worked on an electrical problem with one of the Sunnyside Headquarters Unit pivots. Due to the aging infrastructure, replacement parts are becoming more difficult to find. The pivot is in line for replacement in the near future.

Wildlife Management

Hanford Site Projects: District Biologist Fidorra met with staff from the Department of Energy (DOE) and Mission Support Alliance (MSA) biologists to discuss monitoring and collaboration on projects on the DOE Hanford Site. Fidorra completed a tour of the site to observe sensitive species locations and to compare sagebrush conditions in burned and unburned areas. The meeting and tour assisted in maintaining a positive working relationship with DOE and MSA, who are eager to collaborate on future projects.

Dead Crow: District Biologist Fidorra retrieved a dead crow from a Benton County location and coordinated with the USGS National Wildlife Health Center for disease testing. This carcass, along with two other dead crows collected in July, was processed, packaged, and will be shipped Monday.

Rattlesnake Mountain Wheat Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand evaluated wheat damage to two fields on Rattlesnake Mountain. Only minor trailing, bedding, and foraging was observed and no damage claim will be made. Wheat harvest was completed early this past week, and although most fields experienced some damage, overall damage was less than in previous years. Several factors contributing to less damage include: harvest almost one month earlier than normal, additional hunting pressure by damage permits, and fewer crops bordering the Hanford site.

CCAA Meeting in Ellensburg: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman attended the latest CCAA meeting in Ellensburg, where a few lingering issues were hashed out. Personnel from various state and federal agencies were in attendance along with several private landowners.

Elk Hazing: Conflict Specialist Wetzel was contacted by a concerned cattle operator at Taneum Creek. He has been using a hay field to graze cattle and elk have been breaking the electric fences entering and leaving the field. The elk use the creek to get through the elk fence to this field. Conflict Specialist Wetzel set up an emergency fence in the creek area to hopefully control elk for the next three weeks until the cattle are moved. The fence allows fish movement with 10" open square mesh, as well as a 20" x 32" opening in the main current of Taneum Creek.



Creek bed opening used by elk to access crop area



Temporary emergency fence to control elk movement at Taneum Creek

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

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman coordinated with Blue Mountains Wildlife Area staff to extend the position of a career seasonal on the wildlife area into a full time position. Natural Resource Worker 2 Steveson worked at Oak Creek last year for winter feeding and currently works for nine months at the Blue Mountains as a career seasonal. Steveson will now transfer up to Oak Creek for three months to assist with winter feeding, allowing some consistency in the position and saving time with recruiting each year. An updated PD and HR Action Form were submitted to Assistant Director Pamplin for approval.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Bjornstrom, Assistant Managers Sak and Buser, Natural Resource Technician 2 Kaelber, and Natural Resource Worker 2 Nnanabu attended the Region 3 Director's Meeting and Service awards ceremony. Assistant Manager Sak was recognized for meritorious service by Assistant Director Pamplin and awarded a Leatherman Multipurpose Tool for his efforts. Assistant Manager Buser and Manager Bjornstrom were recognized, as part of a team, for their contributions to land management efforts at the Ringold Springs Hatchery.

Vehicle Exchange: Assistant Manager Sak cleaned out the Ford truck and delivered it to Olympia in exchange for a new wildlife area truck. The exchange was requested by Business Operations Manager Miller in order to rotate out high mileage vehicles from the fleet.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Species of Greatest Conservation Needs: District 13 staff surveyed non-ferry islands in the northern San Juan archipelago for potential habitat for sharp-tailed snakes and Shaw Island voles. Locations needing further investigation were found for both species on several islands. While surveying, a pelagic cormorant colony and a peregrine falcon eyrie were both located for the first time in several years. Biologist Milner worked with landowners to plan trapping and habitat assessments for Shaw Island voles and sharp-tailed snakes on Guemes Island.



A pelagic cormorant colony in the northern Puget Sound. This colony has not been observed active for several years.



A peregrine falcon eyrie adjacent to the pelagic cormorant colony. This eyrie has also not been observed active for many years.

North Cascades Elk Herd Plan: Biologist Yarborough completed the first draft of the North Cascades elk herd plan. This plan will guide management of the elk herd for the next five years. The draft will now be circulated for WDFW internal revision.

Biologist Yarborough responded to numerous reports of a roadkill elk on SR 20. WDFW continues to collect important information such as sex, age, milepost number, etc. related to roadkill.

Bald Eagle, Heron Colony, Osprey Nest and Other Species of Concern and Protected Wildlife Management: Biologist Anderson provided state consultation for Endangered, Threatened, Sensitive and Protected species, including various Priority or Species of Concern needs. This most often includes nest take



authorization and/or habitat consideration recommendations. Most inquiries revolved around bald eagle management or osprey nest removal management and permit requests. One can assist WDFW with documenting wildlife via reporting at our Wildlife Observation Website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/viewing/observations/>

New Urban Peregrine Falcon Eyrie – SR 520 Bridge: Biologist Anderson was notified by a cadre of urban peregrine watchers and local researchers regarding a new (and latest to date) peregrine eyrie on the west high rise of the SR 520 Bridge. There are two chicks. One jumped too soon during SeaFair. The other is weakly trying to work wings. These are the latest date at eyrie urban peregrine chicks in the greater Seattle area since folks have been watching them reoccupy sites, including setting up shop on the multiple bridges and buildings in Seattle. There



appears, thus far, to only be one adult. Further observation is needed to confirm if a female is elsewhere or was perhaps lost some time after chicks started thermoregulation. So far, only the banded male from the old First Avenue South Bridge and Homer Hadley (west high rise of I-90) territory has been observed – in his new throne.

One of two young peregrine falcons off the SR 520 Bridge – Photo by M. Muller

Common Loon End of Year Survey: Biologist Anderson toured the known sites WDFW has monitored in District 12 this summer for the final status of chicks. All chicks were present and are now old enough that depredation is unlikely. This year, District 12 has produced at least five loon chicks

with three known territories still unknown, so there may even be more successes. It was a decent year for this local state listed species. Now these young just need to make it through their “teen years”, four to five years or so, and then come back to this area, establish a territory, find a mate, and join the resident breeding population. More on loon management efforts in WA can be found on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/loons/>

Bald Eagle Management: Biologist Milner attended a meeting with USFWS to begin discussions about understanding the two agency’s workloads and finding solutions that might streamline work issues, serve the public interest, and stay in alignment with federal rules and laws.

Marine Waterfowl Molting Surveys: District 13 staff met with Olympia and Region 6 staff to discuss timing, equipment needs, and survey routes in preparation for this late summer survey to identify molting areas for scoters in Puget Sound. High density areas will be revisited to obtain more precise information on species/sex distribution for potential use in molting captures and banding next year.

Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm discovered a trash dump site on the Ebey Island Unit that was cleaned up by a Department of Ecology work crew in the area

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm trained a Master Hunter volunteer who will provide nursery irrigation for the remainder of the summer. The native plant nursery was started as an Eagle Scout project two years ago. The plants will be used to replant areas that were overtaken by invasive vegetation. The first batch will be planted at Spencer Island later this year.



Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP): Projects Coordinator Brokaw participated in two conference calls with PSNERP staff to discuss the next steps of the project. PSNERP staff are preparing for outreach activities that will take place over the course of the next year for projects on the PSNERP list in Region 4. More information on PSNERP is available at www.pugetsoundnearshore.org.

Private Lands/Access Management

Avian Influenza Sampling: Natural Resource Technicians Deyo and Otto assisted District 13 Wildlife Program staff by capturing and sampling waterfowl in Whatcom and Skagit counties. The technicians sampled a total of 20 specimens, which included mallards and wood ducks. The team submitted the samples to the Washington State University Lab in Pullman.

Twenty waterfowl specimens were processed for avian influenza



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

Wildlife Management

District 12 Vashon Hunt Outreach: Biologists Anderson and Caldwell toured Vashon and Maury islands to examine public hunting areas, discuss damage with some complainants, and examine private lands opportunity.

Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm received 345 pheasants from the Centralia facility this week. The net pen was ready for action, thanks to two dedicated volunteers who worked at the net pen throughout the summer.



Samish River Unit Wetland Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw sent permit information to the Capital Asset Management Program (CAMP) in preparation for getting a construction crew scheduled to begin work. He also worked with fiscal office staff on entering a contract amendment and spending plans for the project agreement with the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Samish Unit Enhancement Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw checked in with Ducks Unlimited staff to get an update on the status of beginning construction. The site has been staked for the contractor to begin construction as early as next week.

Island Unit: Manager Rotton attended a meeting with Regional Manager Bob Everett, Regional Wildlife Program Manager Russell Link, Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Larry Carpenter, and Island Unit volunteers regarding the progress and funding status of the Island Unit Barn Field Tidegate repair project. The next steps will be focused on completing the permitting process and securing full project funding. Meis assisted with the ferrying of equipment and material to mow sections of the Island Unit fields, rebuild the footbridge, and transfer the WDFW Weed Crew marsh master to control cattails around the Island Unit. Cosgrove spent two days mowing low areas on the Island Unit with the John Deere 5300 and brush-hog. Areas were overgrown with reed canary grass, various spike rushes, and cattail. Mowing these areas will improve habitat for waterbirds this winter and allow for earlier areas of open sheet water. It will also improve waterbird use and hunting opportunities.

Western Washington Pheasant Release: The Skagit Wildlife Area received an early shipment of pheasants from the Game Farm. The hot, dry summer this year has put an added level of stress on the pheasants. All of the Region 4 Wildlife Areas have accepted early shipments to provide cooler and less crowded conditions for the birds.

Lummi Island Unit Hiking Trail Overlook: Manager Kessler traveled to and checked out the hiking trail overlook on the Lummi Island Unit. He reinstalled the interpretive materials sign box cover that he had refurbished back to new condition. In the box, he installed new interpretive materials on native bald habitats, like what the hiking trail overlook consists of.



WDFW overlook on Lummi Island

Intalco Unit Archery Course: Manager Kessler coordinated with the Custer Sportsmen’s Club member who manages the archery range on the Intalco Unit. They discussed past and present events, and how best to promote the archery range to the public. All archery events for this year are completed. Next year there are four archery events scheduled.

Private Lands/Access Management

Paul Dahmer, Russ Link, Steve Sherlock, Clay Sprague, and Derek Hacker met to discuss the needed improvement to WDFW Fishing Pier 86 located in Seattle





Boardwalk on WDFW's Pine Lake

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

Wildlife Conflict Management

Wildlife Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman responded to a WILDCOMM notification regarding elk damage in Skagit County. After speaking with the reporting party, Witman learned that the person has had ongoing property damage from elk. Natural Resource Technician Cogdal responded to the property and documented the damage. Cogdal installed electric fencing around the damaged area to protect any undamaged property. The following day the fence was found torn down and the elk had re-entered the area. As a follow up, additional fencing and audible deterrents have been installed. Witman responded to Friday Harbor on San Juan Island to assess an ongoing deer damage complaint. The landowner has an apple orchard and rhododendron farm that has been experiencing ongoing damage from deer. After

consulting with the landowner, the landowner has agreed to fence the critical areas of their farming operation. Witman is assisting the landowner with fencing designs and cost estimates. Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell responded to Vashon and Whidbey Islands for two deer damage complaints. Supervisor Caldwell assessed each landowner's damage and made recommendations to mitigate future damage. Follow up meetings will be held in the upcoming weeks to discuss Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements on their private lands. Witman began preparing several Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements for elk related damage in Skagit County.

Elk and Deer Damage: Biologist Smith responded to calls from residents of King County regarding elk and deer damage. Damage occurred to a variety of crops, gardens, and infrastructures (fences). Smith coordinated Master Hunter volunteers to assist a landowner with brush removal and maintenance to an existing electric fence. Smith also coordinated placing South Sound Master Hunter elk permit holders on properties with ongoing crop damage in the Snoqualmie Valley.

Wildlife Areas

Leque Island: Manager Rotton continues to coordinate with HPA Biologist Doug Thompson and WSDOT Permit Biologist Bobby Edwards regarding the damaged culvert located within the construction zone of the Highway 532 project. Meis sprayed poison hemlock at the Leque Unit around the parking lot area.

Skagit Headquarters: Manager Rotton met with Skagit ESA acquisition team members and Jay Krienitz from the WDFW- Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program. Jay has experience with a number of conservation easement programs and met with the group to discuss ways that conservation easements could be structured to help the agency meet some specific conservation and recreation objectives. Meis continues to create working drafts of Wildlife Area base maps of each unit and access for public information purposes such as updated sign boards.

Samish Unit: Manager Rotton continues to coordinate with Ducks Unlimited on details regarding construction preparations for the Samish Unit Wetland Enhancement Project. Work is scheduled to begin the second week in August.

DeBay's Slough Unit: Meis sprayed blackberries in the new grass plantings area along DeBay's Slough on the hunt unit side.

Private Lands/Access Management

Hunting Season Preparation: Biologist Hans continued contacting landowners for 2015/16 enrollment, prepared contracts, edited the GoHunt website, and updated unit details for the private lands access program team.

418 Elk Hunt and Coordination Meeting: Natural Resource Technician Otto verified packet content information and prepped the La Connor conference room for the upcoming hunter meeting. Supervisory Biologist Caldwell, District Biologist Yarborough, and Natural Resource Technician Otto hosted the 418 Coordination Meeting at the La Conner office. This meeting was held to provide access information and to inform hunters on rules and regulations related to hunting in GMU 418 over the duration of the hunting season.

Site Preparation: Natural Resource Technician Deyo posted "No Trespassing" signs for a partner landowner in Skagit County. This landowner has yearly fisherman trespass issues on the land. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement has been notified of the issue.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey activated four new hunter education classes in Region 4. Dazey ordered supplies from the warehouse for several instructor teams. Dazey delivered supplies to four teaching teams, including teams in Darrington, Mountlake Terrace, the upper Skagit Reservation, and Coupeville on Whidbey Island. Coordinator Dazey sent out two new instructor applicant packets. Dazey assisted Chief

Instructor Lance Chaar to hold an on-line field skills evaluation at the Region 4 office. Chief Instructor Chaar will be conducting evaluations at the Region 4 office each Monday during August. Dazey also assisted Chief Instructor Farstad for his upcoming class on the Upper Skagit. Hunter education policy calls for a reminder letter to be sent to all instructors who, as of July, have not taught a class in 2015. The letter reminds the instructors that policy requests that they teach at least one class a year or risk being dropped as an inactive instructor.

Volunteer Coordination: Volunteer Coordinator Dazey is assisting Brian Boehm, Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager, with the upcoming pheasant release, watering the nursery plants, brush cutting, and other needs. Dazey also sent out a request for volunteers to assist the cleanup effort at the Spencer Island Unit homeless camp. Dazey answered questions from the Skagit Wildlife Area manager on the requirements and expectations of Eagle Scout projects.

Master Hunter Permit Program: Coordinator Dazey sent out a reminder to 2015 Master Hunter applicants that the last two CORT classes in Region 4 are coming up. CORT classes are a requirement of the Master Hunter application process.

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

Wildlife Management

Conservation Easement Meeting: Supervisory Biologist Caldwell attended a meeting that addressed and compared different conservation easement applications. Specific emphasis was placed on strategies, mechanisms for application, cross comparisons of similar systems that have been applied in other states, and critically evaluating the pros and cons of different strategies when applied towards different objectives for private, public, and federal agencies. A wealth of information was taken from this meeting that will help WDFW staff move forward on future projects.

Field Training: Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman, and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal conducted training for using chemical immobilization equipment. Each individual was trained on equipment familiarization, handling, and effective shooting distances.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Mount St. Helens Mountain Goat Survey: Regional Wildlife Biologists Holman, Stephens, Bergh, and George teamed with staff from the Cowlitz Tribe and U.S. Forest Service, along with several volunteers organized through the St. Helens Institute, to conduct a survey of mountain goats on and around Mount St. Helens. Goats have re-colonized the area in the decades

following the 1980 eruption. Initial survey results indicate that greater than 100 mountain goats now inhabit Mount St. Helens and the surrounding areas. The data is still being processed and reviewed to assure that no goats were counted more than once, so final results are pending. Thanks to all who participated in the second year of the Mount St. Helens mountain goat survey. The project exemplifies the importance and value of cooperation among tribal, state, federal, and private stakeholders related to this valuable wildlife resource.



Mount St. Helens mountain goat survey

Western Gray Squirrel Site Review: Biologist Anderson organized a site visit to review the Columbia Land Trust’s (CLT) forestry/western gray squirrel management strategy for their 320-acre Bowman Creek ownership adjacent to the Klickitat Wildlife Area. The field trip was developed as a follow-up to discussions about timber management on the Klickitat Wildlife Area as part of the Wildlife Area Planning Process. The Bowman Creek property, owned by CLT, has had two selective timber harvests since the mid-1990s and is an example of how forest thinning, when done properly, can be compatible with western gray squirrel protection, as well as reduce the chance of stand replacement fires. Lindsay Cornelius of the CLT provided those in

attendance with background information on their land management plan, which included pre and post western gray squirrel nest surveys, their timber harvest strategy, slash removal/burning, and understory development. Those in attendance from WDFW included Olympia and Regional Staff from the Wildlife, Habitat, and Science Divisions.



CLT Bowman Creek Property – Klickitat County

Resident Dark Canada Goose

Collar Mark-Resight Survey: Biologists Holman and Stephens, as well as emeritus Biologist Miller completed the first of two rounds of the resident dark Canada goose mark-resight survey. The purpose of the survey is to estimate the abundance and distribution of resident dark geese in southwest Washington and northwest Oregon. In July, geese from this flock were marked with an individually-coded neck collar for the purposes of resighting them during the survey so hunters can distinguish them from the Dusky Canada goose. During the two day effort surveying around islands in the Lower Columbia River, Grays Bay, and Grays River, 426 resident dark geese were seen, of which 52 had neck collars. Of those, 15 complete codes were read. Other efforts were conducted by WDFW Region 6 staff, ODFW, and USFWS. A special thank you goes out to Pat Miller for his continued help with these surveys.



Biologist Stephens and emeritus Biologist Miller conducting resident dark goose mark-resight surveys

Annual Region 5 Elk, Deer and Mountain Goat PR Reports: Biologists Holman and Bergh completed the annual Pittman-Robertson (PR) reports for elk, deer, and mountain goat management in Region 5. The reports summarize activities related to each of the species

undertaken in the past year, population estimates, hunting season structure, harvest, habitat conditions, etc. The reports will be compiled with similar documents on all hunted species in Washington and finalized this fall. Interested parties can read the annual reports from past years by visiting the hunting page of WDFW's website and selecting Game Status and Trend Reports.

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

Private Lands Access

Hunt by Reservation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin continues to work with a farmer in Wahkiakum County to get details finalized for a hunt by reservation contract. Conklin had to meet the farmer a second time to get a signature for the amended contract, which is now fully executed.

Access

Vancouver and Shillapoo Access Sites: A Clark County inmate crew spent a day picking up litter and weed whacking brush on a variety of sites around the Vancouver Lake area. They also spent time working on several yellow jacket nests around parking areas.



Clark County inmate crew picking up litter and weed whacking brush

Kress Lake Access Site: The vault restroom needed to be pumped. A vac truck was used to remove the trash thrown into the vault. Aside from the hundreds of cans and bottles, trash, coats, etc., a propane tank was sucked into the hose and blocked the passage. The unit had to be shut down and dismantled to remove the tank from the pipe.



Kress Lake vault restroom pumping

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

D-10 Wildlife Conflict

Trapped Deer: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin responded to a complaint of a deer trapped in a fenced pasture in Clark County. The Vancouver office had received multiple complaints about the deer from neighbors who believed the land owner was keeping the small spike in captivity. Conklin contacted the land owner, who was an elderly disabled lady who said she had no way of chasing the deer out. The fences were extremely high and it was unknown why or how the deer could get in, but could not find its way back out. Conklin spent the better part of her day separating the deer from the cattle by using fencing panels. Once the deer was separated, Conklin was able to open a gate for the deer to leave on its own. Later in the evening the deer finally moved on. The young spike was underweight from being entrapped in a dry pasture with cattle for what was believed to be more than one month.

Nursery Deer Damage: A nursery in Morton that Conflict Specialist Conklin has been working with to deter deer has begun to install new fencing around the nursery to prevent deer damage. The fencing was purchased with cooperative fencing dollars.

Elk Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin spent two days in East Lewis County responding to elk complaints. A roll of fencing was issued to one land owner. Elk complaints are more prevalent this year due to the extreme weather conditions. Conklin set up the “scary man” on another property in the Randle area. Scary Man is a device that works off a timer where a plastic “man” bursts out of a box like a jack in the box and is placed in crops in order to scare away elk or deer.

Christmas Tree Farm Elk Damage: Conflict Specialist Conklin is also working with a Christmas tree farmer in Lewis County reporting damage to his Christmas trees due to elk scraping their antlers on them.

Elk Conflict: Conflict Specialist Conklin received a call from a dairy in Randle that has been deploying Master Hunters to deter elk damage. The Master Hunters so far have not been successful at harvesting due to timing. Conklin sent another Master Hunter onto the property to continue efforts of deterring elk damage to the alfalfa fields.

Osprey: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin worked with a business in Longview that had an injured osprey in an industrial yard. The osprey was transferred to Ocean Beach Veterinarian Clinic for further evaluation.

D-9 Wildlife Conflict

Deer: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin responded to a complaint from a vineyard experiencing deer damage in the Underwood area.

Bear: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin responded by phone to a bear complaint in the White Salmon area. Both Team Vancouver and Conklin gave advice to the concerned reporting party.

Elk: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin is working with two land owners in Klickitat County on elk damage to commercial crops.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Bat Exit Count: On August 6, 2015, 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's big-eared bats. This species is listed as a candidate for Endangered Species, Threatened, or Sensitive listing 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 Anita McMillan, Biologist Ament, and WDFW volunteers Tina Vogel and Bob Davies. There was a light drizzle of rain when the team met at the parking lot, but there was no precipitation during the survey. The first bat exited the bunker at 2048 and the survey was ended at 2245. The total number of bats counted was 379. The counts last year were 365 on August 21 and 288 on September 3. Unfortunately, Biologist Ament was unable to schedule any counts in July, but will likely conduct multiple surveys in August. She will be providing a summary report of the surveys to Data Systems staff.

Taylor's Checkerspot Rearing: Linders reviewed and commented on draft annual reports produced by the Oregon Zoo and Mission Creek rearing facilities. Comments were returned prior to a meeting at the zoo in Portland with representatives of both facilities. A range of topics were covered, including the performance of the facilities in this unusually warm year, needed modifications, training needs at Mission Creek to ensure a consistent and standardized approach, the need to develop emergency evacuation plans for animals in rearing facilities, plant propagation, and opportunities for inmate technicians once they are released. Seth Dorman, a new Master of Environmental Studies graduate student at TESC, was in attendance and will be replacing Lindsey Hamilton as they TESC liaison at Mission Creek. Lindsey just completed her Masters work and will be moving on. Congratulations to Lindsey and a big welcome to Seth!!

A total of 5,440 Taylor's checkerspot larvae (2,848 at Mission Creek and 2,592 at Oregon Zoo) are currently in diapause. Modifications (six intake vents along the lower perimeter and four exhaust vents in the roof) were made to the diapause shed at Mission Creek to increase air flow, and two new raised beds for plant propagation were also built.

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

Wounded Warrior Hunting Discussion: Program Manager Calkins and Captain Chadwick met with a representative of a timber company to discuss their desire to sponsor “Wounded Warrior” hunts on their lands. We explained that they could provide this opportunity without involvement from WDFW during general seasons by simply providing access to their lands. A number of other scenarios for enhanced opportunities were also covered that would involve the need for WDFW to create special permit opportunities or seasons. Calkins will explore the potential within the agency for some kind of provision that would facilitate these kinds of hunting opportunities, but made sure that the company representative understood that the options represented approaches that WDFW has not taken in the past.