

Wildlife Program

Week of January 5-11, 2015

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

Division Meetings: Most Wildlife Diversity Division staff attended the combined Game and Diversity division meetings in Wenatchee. Diversity led a host of both informational and interactive sessions for combinations of HQ and Regional staff on a wide variety of our work. These included sessions on the overall Diversity Division, Candidate Assessments, Species Status Reviews and Recovery Planning efforts, Landscape Conservation Actions, Statewide Priority Landscapes, private lands conservation tools/ Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances, Shrub-steppe priorities, Citizen Science processes and capacities, and a focused effort of activity planning for the upcoming 2015-17 biennium.

Species Status Documents: Biologist Wiles finished the Tufted Puffin Status Report and Steller Sea Lion Periodic Status Review. These are now available for a 14-day period of SEPA review (http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/sepa_comment_docs.html). The reports recommend that Tufted Puffins be state listed as endangered and Steller Sea Lions be state delisted. These recommendations will be presented to the Fish and Wildlife Commission at the February 6-7 commission meeting in Tumwater.

Golden Eagles: Biologist Gerry Hayes completed a report of the two-year survey effort (2013-2014) by WDFW to update the agency's golden eagle database on occupancy status and productivity at golden eagle nesting territories in the state. A report was submitted to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, wind power companies, and district wildlife biologists. Following completion of the surveys, Gerry has initiated a review of the status of the golden eagle in the state.

Sage Grouse: Division Manager Gardner, Section Managers Wilkerson and Becker, and Private Lands specialists Cotton and Comstock attended a meeting in Ephrata with the USFWS, NRCS, Sage Grouse Initiative, the Cattlemen's Association, and a dozen agricultural producers in the range of the sage grouse. The discussion was centered on the upcoming Douglas County Multi-Species Conservation Plan and the developing Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for sage grouse. All parties agreed to continue to work together and will be following up the meeting with two workshops in central Washington to engage more producers in the review of the details of the CCAA.

REGION 1

NO HIGHLIGHTS THIS WEEK

REGION 2

WOLVES: Nothing to report.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Chiliwist Wildlife Area Deer Fence Construction: Manager Haug met with technician Brad Zabreznik from the Chelan Wildlife Area WCC crew to discuss the re-construction efforts on the deer fence near the east boundary of the wildlife area. The crew has made significant progress on the fence to date and plans are to begin putting up the wire this week (see pictures below). Manager Haug is working with WDFW staff and adjacent landowners to tie two damaged fences together separated by approximately 1800 feet. The crew(s) should be able to stay busy with existing fence reconstruction until a solution is worked out. Assistant Manager Wehmeyer traveled to the Lacey construction shop to pick up surplus deer fencing to be used on the Chiliwist fence.



Above – WCC crews working on the Chiliwist Deer Fence – Photos by Justin Haug

Methow Post-fire Forest Management Project: This week, Project Forester Jamie Bass finalized contracts with the harvester and purchasers on the Methow Post-Fire Forest Management Project. Once contracts are signed by both parties, equipment will be moved onto the Methow Wildlife Area timber sale units (after passing inspection for cleanliness). Work will begin, and log trucks will be hauling from the units in Bear Creek and Cougar Flats out Bear Creek Road. The USFS road permit was completed and signed this week for the haul road use, and is pending approval by Methow District Ranger Michael Liu. Bass collected log brands, ticket books, and signage for the timber sale, and put together information regarding resource protection and the prescription for the harvesters. Before work begins, a pre-work meeting will be conducted between the Contract Administrator (Bass) and the contracted harvesters. Forester Jamie Bass also explored options for removal of what is usually characterized as “chipwood” material, including having an interested private party collect the unmerchantable material for other uses than timber. Forester Bass spoke about the USFS road permit, as well as the

complexities of two contractors using the road, and then signed two copies of the permit. Wottlin spoke about the USFS permit, our planned post-harvest roadway improvement efforts, and in-kind service for the RCO grant.

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

Wildlife Areas

Carlton Complex Fire – Deer Management Issues: Wildlife Area staff assisted Managers Ron Fox and Justin Haug with the continuing deer fence construction projects on the Pateros and Chiliwist units.

Friday, Maintenance Mechanic Ed Pierson, Natural Resource Technician Brad Zabreznik, and Manager Dan Peterson deployed and filled several deer feeders adjacent to an apple orchard owned and operated by Gebbers Farms. In the past week, Gebbers reported an influx of deer into this orchard. They report that as many as three hundred animals have been browsing recently planted apple trees. This has resulted in significant damage to the trees. Orchard manager, Hawkins Gebbers, thanked us, profusely, for taking this step, but seemed somewhat perplexed that we declined his offer of dump-truck loads of culled apples near the feeders. It is hoped that by feeding in this location, the numbers of deer in the orchard can be reduced. This is a rather faint hope, to say the least, as this orchard has deer fence on three of four sides. Following the Carlton Fire, Gebbers rebuilt approximately two miles of deer fence, much of which is on the DFW/Gebbers property line. The entirety of their orchard that overlooks the Columbia River, however, is unfenced. This situation, obviously, allows the deer easy access to the orchard. The long-term solution is for Gebbers to fence the entirety of the orchard. Wildlife Area staff will monitor feeder use and make needed adjustments.

Staff placing deer feeders with Gebbers orchard in the background – Photo by Dan Peterson





Deer in Gebbers orchard – Photo by Dan Peterson



Typical dump site for culled apples. This is on private land near Pateros – Photo by Dan Peterson

Brewster Public Meeting “Planning for Fire Season 2015”: Manager Swedberg and several other DFW staff attended the public meeting sponsored by Representatives Brian Blake and Joel Kretz. When Jason Paulsen, ED of Methow Conservancy, gave his “report” from the Methow Long Term Recovery Steering Committee. He made comment that the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife needed to be recognized for the effort put forth to help ranchers displaced by the fire. He emphasized the leadership demonstrated by this effort and the affected ranchers and community were very appreciative. Jason did say that DFW was only able to provide emergency grazing permits for one year and asked the legislators to look into the possibility of extending the permits for a longer term until pastures were fully recovered.

Winter Conditions

District 5

Past Weather: Temperatures have been mild with lows in the 20s and highs reaching 40.

Short-Term Forecast: The ten-day forecast is relatively warm with temperatures ranging from the high 20s to high 30s.

Long-Term Forecast: The winter season is forecasted to be warmer and drier than normal.

Habitat: Forage is available at all elevations. Winter wheat and cool season grasses are available due to lack of snow cover.

Snow Depths: 100% snow-free.

Animal Concentrations: No unusual concentrations noted to date.

Animal Condition: No reports of animals in poor condition that can be attributed to winter conditions. Animals observed to date appear to be in great condition.

Mortality: None reported or expected in short-term.

District 6

Recent Weather: The district experienced near normal temps over the past week and mostly dry weather prevailed after a light snowfall last weekend.

Short-Term Forecast: Near normal temps and dry to start the week with some light snow or rain by the week's end.

Long-Term Forecast: Warmer and drier than normal weather still forecast at least through February.

Snow Depths: There has been little change since last week throughout most of the district. No snow pack exists at the lowest elevations in the Okanogan Valley. In the Methow, bare ground on south facing slopes is evident as far up valley as NW of Winthrop and little snowpack exists below 2000 feet down valley from Twisp. Snow pack continues to be slightly above average at higher elevations near the Cascade Crest.

Snotel sites:

Hart's Pass (6500 ft): 75 in

Salmon Meadows (4,460 ft): 18 in

**No snotel sites exist in core deer winter range areas.*

Habitat: With considerable bare ground, forage is available throughout the District on most deer winter range areas, particularly outside of the burn. Within the burn, forage exists in unburned patches and some residual green-up is still available in bared off areas.

Animal Concentrations: In general, deer remain well distributed on the landscape and the low snowpack has allowed some animals to drift back up to higher than average elevations for mid-winter. Significant numbers of deer still remain concentrated around some orchards near Pateros.

Animal Condition: Deer generally look to be in average to better than average condition for this time of year. Some particularly small fawns are beginning to look thin, but this would be anticipated under any conditions.

Mortality: A couple cases of mortalities of smaller than average fawns have been reported.

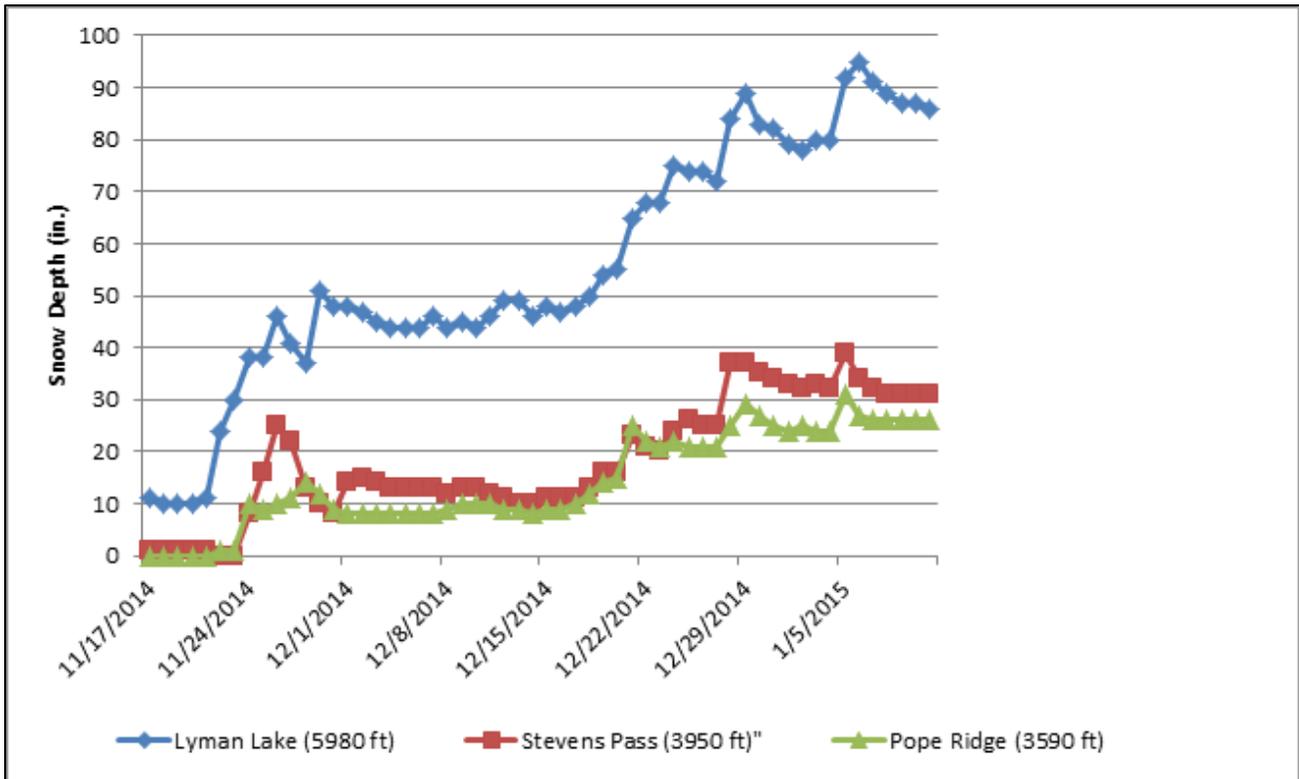


Methow Wildlife Area Observed Environment (weather, fire, etc.): Total snow accumulation for the winter: 41 inches. One snow event for the week provided an additional six inches with temps ranging between 6 to 31F. There is occasional thick fog in the Methow Valley area.

Our icicles have icicles!

District 7

Snow depths on winter ranges have increased as of the end of December, yet the predicted winter of warmer temperatures with less snow seems to be holding. Snow depths on Chelan County winter ranges are below normal and there is no data suggesting impacts on deer. The delays in snow accumulation benefit deer by allowing access to higher quality forage for longer periods, giving them more resiliency as winter progresses.





Mixed use mule deer winter range south of Wenatchee in District 7 (snow depth in this image is less than 6 inches total)



A pair of Long-eared Owls on Driscoll Island. There were approximately seven of these owls grouped in dense brush, which my sons and I came across while bird hunting – Photo by Justin Haug



Left: Winter on Driscoll Island – Photo by Justin Haug

Scotch Creek Recreational Opportunities

(Weekender): This is the time of year for birdwatchers to visit the riparian areas along Scotch Creek for a sighting of the elusive Sharp-tailed Grouse (STG). Wildlife Area Manager Olson counted seventeen STG in three locations on January 3rd. Their presence is not guaranteed, as they seem to visit their winter habitat at varying times of the day, and week. However, it seems like mid-morning is the most consistent time to see the birds feeding in water birch trees.



Sharp tailed Grouse in Water Birch

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Colockum staff worked with volunteers from the Wenatchee Sportsman's Association to service upland bird and turkey feeders in the Tarpiscan and Tekison drainages.

Winter Weather Conditions: Weather conditions were mild with high temperatures in the 30's and low temperatures in the 20's. No snow has accumulated on the lower elevations of the winter range, and only 50-100 elk are using the West Bar area, which is completely snow-free.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area

Peak Elk Counts for Week:

Headquarters-

Junction-

Nile-250

Sheep-158

Cowiche-

WINTER WEATHER CONDITIONS: Weather warmed up early in the week to about 60 degrees. Later in the week more seasonal temperatures and fog arrived. Highs in the upper 30's and lows below freezing are expected for this coming week with chances of rain/snow by the end of the week.

Elk left the feed site area when the weather warmed up but continue to be nearby. Access to vegetation remains good with hillsides open and free of snow.

Elk are in seasonally good condition.

Wenas Wildlife Area

Winter Feeding

Mellotte Feed Site elk numbers: 667+ animals.

Elk feeding continues, with animals staying close to the feed site. Assistant Manager Taylor fed out the triticale grain hay and is now feeding the off-grade grass/alfalfa mix hay. Snow has left most of the north slope, above the feed site, but not much forage is available. Assistant Manager Taylor saw a cougar (90% sure) ~200 yards west of the feed site. Elk have been acting skittish. Elk are in seasonally good condition.

Winter Weather Conditions: Weather temperatures were well above normal for the first half of last week, with a high Monday of 60 degrees. Temperatures had moderated by Thursday, with fog and highs in the mid to upper 30's and low 40's. Temperatures for the coming week are predicted to be near normal, with highs in the mid to upper 30's and low 40's and lows in the mid-20's to 30 degrees, and a chance of showers (likely rain) Thursday-Saturday.

LT Murray Wildlife Area

Winter Weather Conditions: Warming temps this week melted what little snow we had in the feed sites and surrounding slopes. Lows were 30-45 with highs in the mid-40s to low 50s.

There were 200+ head of elk near the Heart K property in Taneum, and 350+ head within a half-mile of Robinson, but elk are not yet congregating on the feed sites.

Wildlife Management

Colockum Bull Study: Biologist Bernatowicz investigated a bull elk mortality in the Reecer Creek Area. It was an obvious human related mortality as the head/legs were missing and the collar had been cut.



Cut radio collar



Remains of bull elk

Deer Survey: Biologist Bernatowicz surveyed deer on Pine Mountain (PMU 36) and northwest of Ellensburg (PMU 32).

Other: Biologist Bernatowicz shipped a Red-tailed hawk and Great Horned owl to the National Wildlife Health Center for avian influenza testing.

Wildlife Program Meeting: Conflict Specialist Wetzel and Biologists Bernatowicz and Moore spent all of last week in Wenatchee at the program meeting.

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

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Colockum staff fielded quite a few calls from people eager to access the Wanapum Reservoir, now that portions of it are open to public use. The Colockum's Yoyo Rock boat launch remains closed to the public, as well as portions of the shoreline where cultural resources are still vulnerable.

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 met with volunteers from the Wildlife Education Corp (WEC) to update the group roster and work schedule. There have been quite a few changes since last year. Currently the group has forty-nine members, including several new folks that have not had a chance to work yet due to the mild weather. Huffman updated the spreadsheet used to track all the volunteers' years of service.

Manager Huffman opened and reviewed bids from the contractors interested in the Oak Creek Timber Sale after bids closed. We received a total of three bids for the project. Huffman set up a spreadsheet to review road work costs and coordinated with The Nature Conservancy foresters to analyze cruise information, current mill prices, and costs for harvest from the three contractors. A spreadsheet was sent out to Foresters Kuehn and Pfile and Forest Lead Tveten for review before selecting a contractor. Hopefully a contractor will be selected this coming week.

Manager Huffman coordinated with a local contractor who was hired to install a security fence at the HQ. They set posts and began work this past week. Huffman also began researching solar powered automatic gate openers for the main driveway. The fence installation will be completed this coming week and an opener was ordered from a local vendor and should arrive soon. This will keep people from accessing the compound outside of business hours and hopefully cut down on strange people stopping by the residence at unusual hours.

Manager Huffman provided information to the habitat program on two old diversions on the wildlife area that need to be abandoned. The unscreened and unused diversions have been on the capital projects list for several years, but have not been funded to date. The habitat program may have a little funding to complete some work and was looking for projects that were ready to go and could be completed before June 30th.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Taylor did a couple checks on fence crew. They delayed coming one day due to weather; then came with a short crew on Tuesday and a full crew by Wednesday. They have had to drill more holes than anticipated, but are near enough to

completion that they've scheduled a walk thru this coming Wednesday (14th) to get a punch list from Engineering Tech Davidson and Assistant Manager Taylor.

LT Murray Wildlife Area: LT Murray staff all worked to remove old bridge timbers from the Shadow Creek drainage. These materials will be used to install the Beacon Ridge Road cattleguard next spring.

LT Murray staff loading bridge timbers

Assistant Manager Hunt checked streams on the LT Murray on Tuesday during our peak high water that came with sudden warmer temperatures. Although the Yakima River came up dramatically, and Taneum Creek showed high flows, neither Watt nor Robinson Creeks showed much change. Manastash was running fairly high. All water was roiled and murky from additional sediment, particularly the Yakima.



Tech Schnebly checked all winter closure signage in Taneum, Robinson, and Watt, and found all in good condition.

Tech Hill started putting grouse markers on the newly built Skookumchuck and Whiskey Dick stock fence. He is also hammering in large ring shanks to all large posts to keep predatory birds from perching on them. It is a slow progression but a good way to check on the entire newly built fence.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Sak and NRT2 Medina purchased materials and fabricated and mounted a water tank on a flatbed trailer to be used for spraying.



REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Westside Bear Project: Biologist Smith assisted Bear and Cougar Specialist Beausoleil and Carnivore Specialist Maletzke with ongoing bear den work. This portion of the project entails locating dens, placing cameras to document emergence and cub numbers, recollaring/adjusting collars on sub-adult males, and potentially collaring yearling cubs. Work where newborn cubs are known to be present will be limited (camera placement only) to avoid den abandonment.

Annual Marine Waterfowl Aerial Survey: After an extended break due to aircraft issues, Assistant District Biologist Cyra joined Marine Waterfowl Specialist Evenson and Assistant District 15 Biologist Murphie in a continuation of the 2014-2015 survey. These surveys, the longest running trend surveys of their kind on the west coast, are used to monitor the population health of waterfowl, marine mammals, and other marine avian species throughout the Salish Sea. Additionally, the data are used to help establish season setting along the Pacific Flyway.

Avian Influenza Surveillance: Biologist DeBruyn helped a biologist from the National Wildlife Health Center and a volunteer intern ship samples collected from hunter harvested waterfowl the previous week. Of the 368 samples submitted, 31 samples were AIV matrix RT-PCR test positive and a further 52 are matrix equivocal. Of the positive samples, three are H5 RT-PCR test positive and four are H5 equivocal. NWHC may conduct further testing on these samples.

Swan Mortality and Morbidity Project: Science Tech Anderson, Biologist DeBruyn, and intern Laura Krogman, as well as cooperators from Puget Sound Energy and the Trumpeter Swan Society, continued to conduct field surveys this week to monitor for sick and injured trumpeter and tundra swans. This week, fifteen trumpeter swans were collected in Skagit and Whatcom counties. Gizzard and liver samples were collected for contaminant analysis. Tracheal and Cloacal swabs were taken to monitor for other diseases. Power line strikes contributed to two mortalities recovered this week, with “unknown” cause of death making up the remainder. Swan mortalities recorded as unknown causes of death are swan carcasses recovered in and/or near roosting areas and appear to have succumbed to disease. Laboratory results will confirm or deny the suspected presence of avian diseases.

	Lead	Power line Strike	Trauma	Unknown	Feather Pile	Total (per county)
Sumas						
Whatcom		19	3	23	8	53
Snohomish	4	6	5	3		18
Skagit		19	3	22	6	50
San Juan				1		1
						122 (Grand Total)

2014-15 trumpeter and tundra swan mortality data

Wildlife Areas

Wildlife Area Flood Assessment: Due to heavy rains, Manager Kessler dealt with flood conditions on the Lake Terrell, Tennant Lake, and Nooksack units. The water level in Lake Terrell reached flood stage with water covering Lake Terrell Road. Kessler opened the overflow valve at the Lake Terrell dam to deal with the extra water. By the end of the week the lake water level had fallen and the road was clear.

The south end of the Nooksack unit dike was damaged by flood waters over topping it. The fast moving water dug deep scours in the dike. Manager Kessler coordinated with the Whatcom County River & Flood managers to get their input on repairs to the dike. They will meet onsite for an assessment this week.

The south end of the Nooksack unit dike on the Whatcom Wildlife Area was damaged by flood waters over topping it



Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw completed a draft of a Design Alternatives Analysis document that will be distributed to the

Stakeholder Advisory Committee for input on analysis of how each design alternative relates to the selection criteria. This document will eventually be used to assist WDFW in selection of the preferred design alternative. Also, Pacific Northwest National Laboratories completed a draft report of the Leque Island Hydrodynamic Analysis which will be posted on the project webpage

once finalized. Projects Coordinator Brokaw reserved the cafeteria at Stanwood Middle School for an upcoming Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting on January 22nd.

Samish River Unit (Welts) Wetland Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw discussed the next steps to complete permitting for this project with Skagit County staff. After providing Skagit County with a copy of the project authorization from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the County issued a Shoreline Exemption and indicated that review under their Critical Areas Ordinance is complete.

Ebey Island Unit: Waterfowl hunting continues to be strong with the additional sheet water in the unit.

Spencer Island Unit: Dike trail remains free of debris. A number of waterfowl hunters were seen on site and the word is that there are plenty of ducks to test hunter's skills.

Private Lands/Access Management

Cormorant for AI Testing: Tech Otto collected a double crested cormorant from an individual that found it dead in their Whatcom County backyard. Otto completed all notifications for shipping and lab submissions to conduct a necropsy. The bird made it to the Wisconsin lab the next day.

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

Wildlife Areas

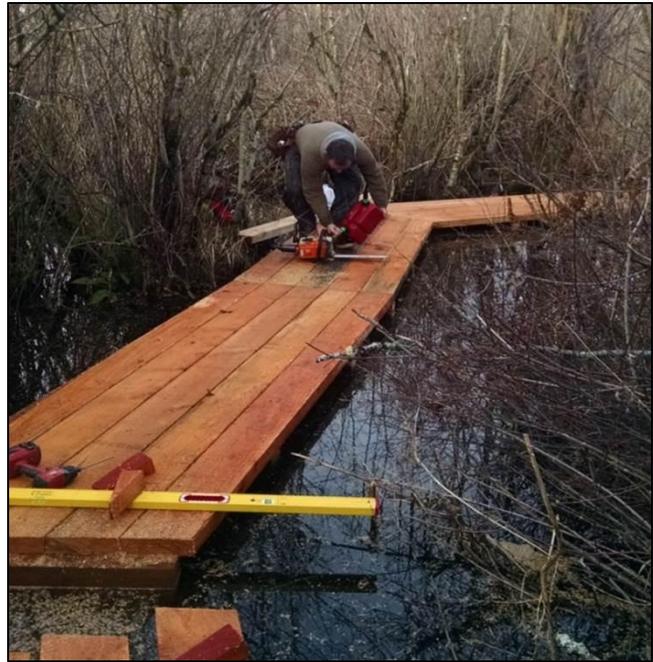
Skagit Wildlife Area Waterfowl Program: Tech Cosgrove and Resource Specialist Meis checked agricultural enhancements at the Johnson/Debays Slough unit and the Island unit and found a fair amount of corn yet to be fed upon. Use of corn has been high in areas of shorter corn or where it has blown down. Most remaining corn is that which is higher up the stalks. Barley, millet, and fava beans on the Island unit have all been heavily used by waterfowl. Hunting pressure at most areas was low throughout the week with mild weather and ducks spread throughout the Skagit Valley in ponded areas of private agricultural fields.

Samish Unit Enhancement Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton met with an adjacent landowner to discuss the project and how it relates to farming activities he has planned on his property. WDFW and the landowner agreed to work cooperatively in the future to plan when to close the water control structures that will be installed adjacent to his property for waterfowl habitat.

Lake Terrell ADA Hunting Blind:

Manager Kessler provided access to the Lake Terrell handicapped hunting blind to three separate parties of hunters with disabilities. This ADA accessible blind, which was built by the Whatcom County chapter of the Washington Waterfowl Association is becoming very popular, and is getting a lot of use.

The remodel of the Tennant Lake raised wood boardwalk continued with our Capital & Asset Management Program workers completing over two thirds of the loop trail



Private Lands/Access Management

Flood Survey: Tech Otto toured all the Waterfowl Quality Hunt sites in Whatcom, Skagit, and Snohomish counties. Otto witnessed extreme water levels at many sites, but fortunately found minimal damage to blinds and associated signage to the units.

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

Wildlife Management

Region 4 Ungulate Damage: Biologist Smith repaired/maintained an electrified fladry fence excluding elk from damaging Christmas trees in the Snoqualmie Valley. Recent flooding had brought some debris in contact with the fence and partially submerged a monitoring camera, but all were returned to working order.

Wildlife Areas

Skagit Wildlife Area Headquarters: Cosgrove continued follow-up grading of the Headquarters unit boat launch parking area and the Jensen unit access road after the WDFW grading crew worked on the areas in the past few weeks.

Samish Unit: Restoration Projects Coordinator, Loren Brokaw received a call from a neighboring land owner for the Samish unit with concerns regarding the proposed wetland enhancement project. A meeting with the land owner was scheduled to discuss concerns. Rotton and Brokaw from WDFW met with Brandon Roozen from the Western Washington Ag Association, the land owner, and a representative from Dike and Drainage District #5.

South Padilla Bay: Manager Rotton received a call from one of the Lessees for the South Padilla Bay properties. With this last rain event, the crops on site have been flooded and he is concerned about losing the crop. Manager Rotton and Meis met with Skagit County Dike District 12 Operations Manager Dan Lefeber to discuss the drainage issues and potential long-term fixes for this drainage system.

Island Unit: Manager Rotton continued to follow up on action items related to the barge lease agreement, tide gate repair process and ditch maintenance project for the Island unit.

DeBay Slough: Meis and Cosgrove repaired an access gate that had a broken post at the Johnson/Debays Slough unit. On the Hunt unit side, the culvert from a former Ducks Unlimited project has located a culvert that drains a swale on the unit. In the next few weeks, staff will remove all the blackberries around the culvert to get access and assess the condition and placement.



Access program staff removed derelict boat from the Tanwax Lake fishing access in south east Pierce County



Vandalism at the Shoecraft Lake fishing access over the holiday weekend included the destruction of the entry sign board at the site



The WDFW grading crew worked on the parking lot of the Lewis St. fishing access site located in Monroe. The crew graded and added gravel to the pot holed covered parking lot.

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm completed his report and record compilation concerning the PDR # 14692 grazing inquiry. Additionally, Manager Boehm continued to be in contact with WDFW Customer Service and Enforcement staff, as well as his Wildlife Area Advisory Committee members while compiling dog-use related regulations, rules, and restrictions. In response to the flooding that occurred along the Snoqualmie River, Manager Boehm visited each unit daily to monitor flood levels and debris in parking lots. Cherry Valley was under water for the week, but the Stillwater unit can be used by hunters. While at Cherry Valley, Manager Boehm confirmed reports that the dike had breached upstream of the pump house. An approximately 50' hole was seen in the dike. Manager Boehm contacted the Dike District Commissioner to report the incident and continues to work closely with the District on this matter.



The Cherry Valley unit of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area experienced flooding, partially due to a dike breach

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordination

Hunter Education support: Hunter education coordinator Steven Dazey contacted all volunteer hunter education Chief Instructors and advised them of the new volunteer hunter education instructor application that has now been posted online. The new application incorporates the required release for the Department to conduct a background check through our new vendor. Coordinator Dazey also passed on tips and techniques to the chief instructors on ways to increase the size of their teaching teams. Dazey also worked on updating the contact information for Region 4 volunteer instructors. Several instructors have moved and/or changed their email addresses and were not receiving the information and updates from the Department. Dazey also added an instructor to the Kalkomey system who had not previously been receiving credit for her assistance at classes. She had certified last year but had been overlooked when instructors were added to Kalkomey partially since she certified in Region 6 and teaches in Region 6 but lives in Region 4. Two of our new instructors were having a difficult time getting hooked up with a teaching team in their area. Coordinator Dazey assisted both instructors in joining a teaching team near them. The teaching team was very appreciative of getting some new members.

Coordinator Dazey assisted the instructor from Friday Harbor in ordering supplies for his upcoming classes.

New Hunter Education Classes for 2015: Coordinator Dazey activated thirteen new classes for 2015. This was following an email requesting that Chief Instructors post their class offerings for 2015 on the Kalkomey website but that they do not start registration until several weeks before the start date of their class. This allows potential students to see when a class in their area is coming up and when they can register. This should decrease the number of no shows as now a potential student will see a class in their area is coming up and therefore not sign up for a class in another part of the state just to get in but not show up after seeing a new posting nearer to them.

New Kalkomey Power Point for Traditional Hunter Education Classes: Coordinator Dazey started a review of the new Kalkomey power point for traditional classes. Several slides contained inaccurate information in regards to hunting in Washington State and the Power Point presentation will require further review before it is ready to release to the volunteer instructors.

Master Hunter Advisory Group: Coordinator Dazey attended the Master Hunter Advisory Group (MHAG) meeting and presented on master hunter volunteer service efforts and projects. Coordinator Dazey also answered questions from current master hunters about what would be involved and how to apply for one of the vacancies on the MHAG.

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

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Winter Workshop: Region 4 Game and Diversity staff attended the week-long winter workshop in Wenatchee.

Flight Following: Assistant District Biologist Cyra completed a draft winter marine waterfowl survey Standard Operating Procedures that includes potential incident scenarios and their appropriate response by flight followers.

Radio Communications: Assistant District Biologist Cyra prepared radio training and call number data for transfer of duties to Olympia and Regional staff.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

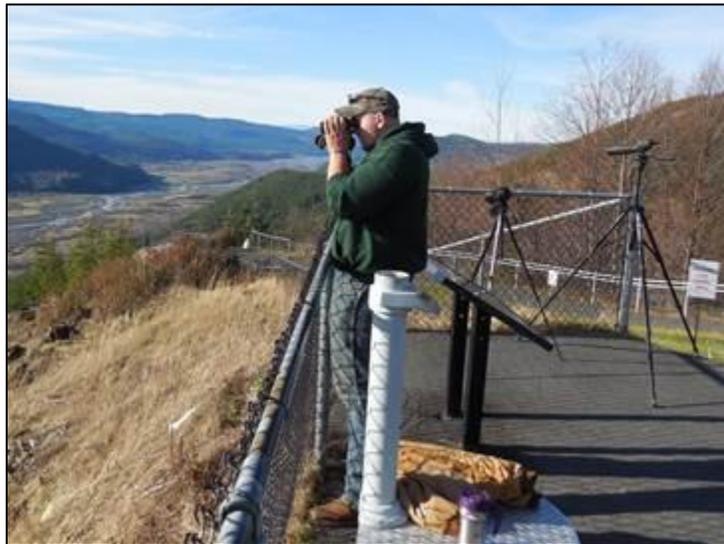
Wildlife Management

Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area January Elk Survey: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Assistant Manager Hand conducted the January winter elk survey on the Mudflow unit on January 6th and observed 145 elk on the valley floor. The composition of the elk observed was 51 cows, 20 calves, and 74 bulls. There was no snow at the lower elevations and the snow line was around 3,000 feet. Most animals appeared to be in good shape and no mortalities were detected.

Assistant Manager Hand conducting the January winter elk survey on the Mudflow unit

Columbian White-tailed Deer

Captures: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Assistant Manager Hand assisted the USFWS in capturing Columbian White-tailed Deer on Puget Island. Three deer, two does, and a fawn were captured and relocated to the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge to supplement the existing population that is there from the relocation



efforts of the past two years. The goal this year is to capture and relocate 25-30 additional deer, in the hopes of establishing a sustainable population in the Ridgefield area.

Wildlife Areas

Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area

Hoffstadt Unit Timber Stand Tour: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Assistant Manager Hand met with Forester Pfeifle to discuss possible timber thinning and stand enhancement projects on the Hoffstadt unit of the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area. Forester Pfeifle gave several recommendations on how the timber stands could be enhanced for late successional and climax plant species, and how those enhancements could benefit wildlife. He observed several stands of trees that could be enhanced by thinning projects and that would be self-supporting for the required enhancement work.

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Fuels Reduction Project: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis worked together to survey about half of the Phase III area for western gray squirrel nests.

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

Wildlife Management

Southwest Washington Management Area 2A and 2B Goose Hunt: The 2014-2015 SW Washington goose hunting season continued this week. As of Sunday, January 11th, 465 hunters have checked a total of 1,106 geese at three check stations at a ratio of approximately 2.38 geese per hunter. At the moment, all zones remain open for Management Area 2A. A total of 80 duskies are distributed amongst five zones in Management Area 2A and 2B. Zones may close to hunting geese if dusky quotas are exceeded. For information regarding up-to-date zone closures, hunters can call the Region 5 office at (360) 696-6211 and follow the menu options for hunting and waterfowl. Hunters interested in participating in this season can refer to pages 3, 6-7, and 9-10 of the Migratory Waterfowl and Upland Game Season Pamphlet for further details regarding requirements for participation: <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01535/wdfw01535.pdf>.

As a reminder to participating hunters, goose hunting in Management Areas 2A and 2B closes on Sunday, January 25th, 2015.

Access

Martin and Vancouver Lake Access Sites: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes reset boulders at Martin and Vancouver Lake that had been moved to prevent vehicles from entering after hours and in sensitive areas. They also installed a vehicle counter at Martin access and reset the counter at Vancouver Lake to obtain accurate counts on the number of vehicles entering the sites throughout the year.

Vehicle counter





Resetting boulders

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Wildlife Management

Game and Diversity Divisions Winter Workshop: Several Region 5 staff attended the winter workshop for the Game and Diversity divisions held in Wenatchee. Presentations were given on a variety of different current and upcoming activities in both divisions, along with work planning for the upcoming biennium. Talks were also given by people outside of the agency on topics including wolf management, current deer research, social science research on public attitudes towards hunting, and more.

Winter Conditions

D-10 & MSHWA Winter Conditions

Past Weather: November temperatures and precipitation were both below normal. Light accumulations of snow fell on the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area the last weekend of November and at the end of December. Temperatures for December were above normal with slightly less than average precipitation.

Short-Term Forecast: Snow levels will fluctuate between 4,000 to 9,000 feet during the upcoming week. The 6-10 and 8-14 day forecasts are for above normal temperatures and precipitation.

Long-Term Forecast: The January forecast and the three month forecast are for above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation.

Habitat: Forage is available at all elevations.

Snow Depths: Lower elevations are currently snow free, with minimal depths at the middle and upper elevations.

Animal Concentrations: No unusual concentrations noted to date. The second winter elk survey was conducted on the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area on January 6th, with 145 elk being observed. The composition of the herd was 51 cows, 20 calves, and 74 bulls.

Animal Condition: Animals appear to be in good condition.

Mortality: None reported to date.

Public Contacts: None to report regarding winter conditions.

The Public is reminded the portion of the Mount 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: There was some precipitation in the South Cascades this week but annual snowpack is still below 50% of normal for the year.

Winter Severity: The Klickitat Wildlife Area continues to be snow-free and forage habitat is available. There is little concern for the current severity of the winter conditions on big game populations in Skamania County and the western portion of Klickitat County. The eastern portions of Klickitat County have had no snow accumulation this winter and deer are reported in good condition.

Habitat: Habitat is open and forage available below 3,500 feet in most of the south Cascades. Snow pack at select SNOTEL sites in the South Cascades around 4,000 feet is approximately 30 inches.

Animal Concentrations: Normal elk concentrations are being seen in western Klickitat County and there are no reports of unusual concentrations of deer in the district.

Animal Condition: Animals appear to be in good condition and numerous deer have been seen in the past week with healthy fawns.

Mortality: None documented this week.

Public Contacts: No concerns raised by the public this week.

REGION 6

Most of the Region 6 wildlife staff spent the week at the Winter Workshop in Wenatchee.

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

Access Areas

Clear Lake Access: Brian Mitchell, Access Area Manager, reports that the Clear Lake fishing access in Thurston County was redeveloped using capital funds. Improvements included replacement of the existing old style double boat launch with a new single launch, parking lot grading, asphalt entrance aprons, and ADA parking stalls. A new double CXT replaced the old vault toilets. This was an excellent job by Engineering and Lacey Shop staff at this extremely popular fishing site.



Before



After



Before



After