

# Wildlife Program

Week of June 8 – June 14, 2015

## **WOLF ACTIVITIES**

### **Headquarters Wolf Activities**

**Performance Evaluations:** Spent one day in Wenatchee for performance evaluations.

**Wedge Scouting:** Spent one day scouting for wolf activity in the Wedge.

**Ferry County Scouting:** Spent one day scouting for additional wolf activity in Ferry County.

**Carpenter Ridge Scouting:** Spent two days scouting for wolf activity within Carpenter Ridge territory.

**Livestock Producer Communication:** Communicated with several livestock producers around NE Washington about wolf activity and capture plans.

**Dirty Shirt Pack Collar:** Coordinated with a USDA Wildlife Services employee working with us, who caught and collared an adult female wolf within Dirty Shirt territory on Sunday.

### **Region 2 Wolf Activities**

**Okanogan County Wolves:** Specialist Heilhecker received a report from Sergeant Christensen on the evening of June 1 regarding two wolves killing Guinea hens and a pet duck in the Brewster area. The depredating animals have been seen two to three times a week. Specialist Heilhecker called the reporting party the following morning. She received a return message on June 8. During their phone conversation on June 9, Specialist Heilhecker learned a Chihuahua had also been lost and presumed killed by the same animals. The reporting party was available to meet on June 11. Specialist Heilhecker set a trail camera to assist in determining if it is wolves, hybrids, or dogs causing the depredations. The sightings of these animals have dropped to once per week.

## **WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION**

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

**Land and Water Conservation Fund:** Section Manager Cynthia Wilkerson worked with Special Assistant Jennifer Quan and staff from Governor Inslee's office to support a letter from the Governor to our senators describing the importance of the funding provided by the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund for recreation and conservation efforts in Washington.

**Striped Whipsnake Research:** Biologist Lisa Hallock prepared and sent 180 striped whipsnake shed skin samples to Dr. Susan Haig at USGS Forest and Rangeland Ecosystems Science Center

in Corvallis, Oregon for genetic analysis. Biologist Hallock collected these samples over the last nine years as part of her on-going study to determine the status, life history, and habitat use of Washington's striped whipsnake population. This species reaches the northern extreme of its range in Washington. Based on past observations, they were probably never common in the state. Concern about the species' status in Washington was triggered by lack of observations during large-scale herpetological inventories in the 1990s. Subsequent surveys have taken place at all documented historical sites with remaining habitat and where access was granted for survey. The snakes were found at only two sites located about 6 km apart in the central Columbia Basin. Surveys continue with the aim of finding additional extant occurrences. If genetic material can be successfully isolated from the shed skins, the genetic analysis will provide information such as the amount of genetic exchange between the two occurrences and effective population size. Biologist Hallock, along with Dr. Susan Haig and Dr. David Pilliod (USGS), are also initiating a striped whipsnake phylogeography study for the Northwest to assess whether the population in Washington is a distinct population segment and worthy of special protection.

***Shed skin of a striped whipsnake found in Grant County, Washington*** – Photo by Lisa Hallock



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

**Land Acquisition:** Section Manager Cynthia Wilkerson led meetings of Region 2 and 3 Regional Land Acquisition teams June 1 – 3. Meetings in Region 1 and 4 occurred on June 8 and 12, respectively. These teams are made up of Wilkerson, as well as managers and staff in Lands Division (Clay Sprague, Julie Sandberg, Lauri Vigue, and Lisa Coffman) and the Regions (Regional Directors, Regional Lands Agents, and Regional Management Teams). The teams discussed our statewide landscape conservation strategy, how land acquisition is used as a tool to accomplish landscape conservation, and regional needs and priorities for upcoming projects. The first two meetings included associated site visits to learn about on-going priority projects. We visited the Cowiche Canyon site with Wildlife Area Manager Ross Hoffman and Grand Coulee Ranch with Wildlife Area Manager Dan Peterson.

***View from Grand Coulee Ranch*** – Photo by Cynthia Wilkerson



## **REGION 1**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Mourning Dove Banding Project:** District Wildlife Biologist Dana Base distributed equipment & supplies needed for this effort to two of three volunteers who “signed up” for the project within District 1. Mourning dove banding in Washington occurs every summer from July 1 to August 15.



***An array of Kniffen funnel traps with a “confidence” mourning dove decoy***



***A newly banded adult male mourning dove just before release***

**Lincoln Cliffs Bighorn Sheep:** Biologist Lowe continued ground telemetry on bighorn sheep in the Lincoln and Whitestone areas to monitor lamb production and survival. Lamb counts have remained consistent over the last month. One ewe with a new lamb was observed in the Lincoln group this week. The group of 25 ewes and 15 lambs were observed enjoying a resident’s lawn and drinking from a sprinkler in Lincoln.



***A collared ewe nurses her lamb in the cliffs above Lincoln***

***Bighorn sheep  
traveling through  
yards in Lincoln***



**Canada Goose  
Capture:** Biologists  
Atamian and Lowe  
assisted Waterfowl  
Specialist Wilson  
and Wetlands

Biologist E. Duvuvuei in capturing and leg-banding Canada geese over two days at Sprague Lake, Clear Lake, and Gonzaga University pond. Several WDFW staff, Master Hunters, students, volunteers, and families also assisted in the effort. A total of 142 geese were captured, including 134 new and eight recaptures.



***Canada goose trapping and banding at Sprague Lake***

**Golden Eagle:** DB Wik checked a golden eagle nest south of Asotin to determine the age of the chicks. Research Biologist Watson wants to capture one chick pre-fledging to install a solar powered transmitter.



*Golden eagle chick*

**Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites**

**WBLS Fuel Reduction Treatment:** A contract crew began work this week on West Branch Little Spokane WLA to carry out hand thinning through overstocked forest to reduce fire fuels in areas along the boundaries of the northeast portion of the wildlife area. The crew is hand piling the slash material on decadent evergreen ceanothus plants that will subsequently be burned to reinvigorate the fire dependent species, which is readily utilized by ungulates for winter forage.



ADB Vekasy assisted Research Scientist Watson with tagging a golden eagle fledgling at the Tucannon GE nest.



*Checking Hartsock GE fledgling for parasites*

*This photo shows a thinned foreground and un-thinned background*

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

**Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites**

**Asotin Creek WA –Asotin County**

**Weed Tour:** Biologist Woodall, Technician Steveson, and University of Idaho interns attended a weed tour hosted by Asotin County this year. Biologist Woodall made a presentation entitled “Managing Weeds at a Popular Outdoor Recreation Site” with the setting being the North Fork Trailhead Parking Lot.



*David Woodall presenting*



*ATV Calibration*



*North Fork Field, which once upon a time used to be a forest of scotch thistle*

**Private Lands/Wildlife Conflict**

**Moose in Spokane:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett, Officer Beauchene, and Assistant District Biologist Lowe responded two different times to a park in Spokane due to a young bull moose. The moose was gently hazed into the shrubs due to the high temperatures. No further reports have been received for this moose.



*A young bull moose looking for a shady location on a hot day in a Spokane city park*

**REGION 2**

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Pygmy Rabbit Capture/Release Activities:** The team continued capture and release activities this week with two events. On Tuesday we tested a new funnel trap method at the larger Sagebrush Flat breeding enclosure. This enclosure has become difficult to trap due to the large number of natural burrows. We were able to capture 18 rabbits with about four hours of effort. The 18 rabbits captured consisted of 11 new kits, one recap kit (escaped before release at a previous capture), two new adults (kits that eluded capture in previous years), and four recap adults. Although all 12 kits weighed enough for release they were retained in the nursery to await genetic results. The 7 kits with the highest percentage of Columbia Basin ancestry will be retained for breeding at Beezley Hills enclosure. We also captured three rabbits previously placed in the nursery. All three of these rabbits were retained for breeding in the Beezley Hills enclosure. On Thursday, efforts continued at the Beezley Hills facility. We captured 38 rabbits, including 27 new kits, eight new adults, and three recap adults. Twenty-five kits were released to the wild. Two were under the 125 g weight requirement for release and were retained in the nursery. All 11 adults were returned to the breeding enclosure.





*The nursery at SBF large enclosure*



*Assistant District Bio O. Duvuvuei returning a recap adult to the enclosure*

The project was visited this week by Rich Landers, environmental reporter for the Spokesman Review, and freelance writer Beth Geiger. Rich wasted no time and his article appeared in Outdoor Section of the June 11 Spokesman Review. You can view the article at <http://www.spokesman.com/outdoors/stories/2015/jun/11/private-and-public-sectors-join-forces-to/>

Beth Geiger will be writing an article for a future volume of the Nature Conservancy Magazine. We also had King 5 TV visit the project on Thursday. They also wasted no time and our project was on the very same night. <http://www.king5.com/story/tech/science/environment/2015/06/11/pygmy-rabbits-washington-endangered-release/71095514/>

**Okanogan County Western Gray Squirrels:** Biologist Heinlen spent a day training volunteer Fischer about the western gray squirrel statewide survey effort. We went through protocols and timing, and also deployed one hair snare transect. Biologist Fitkin also continued with western gray squirrel hair snag deployment. So far, WDFW staff and volunteer Fischer have deployed 11 hair snare transects within District 6. Pacific Biodiversity Institute is also assisting District 6 with this survey effort through their ALEA grant project.

**Chelan County Western Gray Squirrels:** Biologist Gallie, Volsen, and Bridges completed the deployment of western gray squirrel tube transects (Preston Creek-upper Entiat, East fork of Mission Creek, Lower Mad River, Lower Peshastin Creek) to determine distribution and abundance in Chelan County, as part of the statewide effort. A total of 11 routes, out of the 3-year target of 27, were deployed in 2015. With the early spring this year, we focused on routes that have higher potential for limited access. The remaining routes should be accessible even if we have lingering snows. Routes were all placed in Zone 4 HUCs, which are areas considered historic range, but continue to be unoccupied. Routes were split between pine savanna and mixed forest types, all on public lands. Finding forest stand that met the selection criteria was difficult in some of the HUCs. Fire and its resulting habitat mosaics limited patch sizes and many existing stands were too small to accommodate a fully deployed trap array.



*Western gray squirrels or no western gray squirrels, the Entiat is a great place to spend a day* – Photo by J. Gallie

**Common Loon Monitoring:**

Biologist Heinlen monitored common loon nesting success this period finding the following:

Lost Lake – One pair of loons on the lake foraging with no chicks observed. Observations of the nest

showed no egg or shells present.

Bonaparte Lake – One pair of loons out on the lake foraging with no chicks observed. Nest was unable to be observed.

Beaver Lake – Four common loons all foraging together with no chicks observed.

Beth Lake – No common loons were observed.

Crawfish Lake – Documented nesting earlier this year, but still needs to be monitored for nesting success.

**Mountain Goat:** Biologist Gallie collected data from volunteers who selected routes in Chelan County, as part of a 3-district coordinated effort to map mountain goat numbers and distribution in the greater Alpine Lakes Wilderness area, focusing on areas that we have little information on. Results include 23 goats observed on Ingalls Lake/Creek, ten goats observed on Chatter Creek (Upper Icicle), five goats observed on Mt. Stuart, and no goat observations in the Chiwaukum Mountains. While these may not sound like much, these observations provide additional distribution data for WDFW to better focus more standardized helicopter flight surveys that will produce a population estimate for this unit and its suitability for a permit hunt.

*An Alpine Lakes mountain goat with Mt. Stuart in the background* – Photo by S. Knutzen



## Wildlife Areas

**Driscoll Island Fire:** Manager Swedberg was alerted to a fire on Driscoll Island. The suspected cause of the fire was osprey nest building activities on a power pole. Swedberg notified the Driscoll Island sharecropper who was nearby. The sharecropper was able to get a couple of PUD employees across the river and got the power shut down and the fire partially out. When he went to get additional supplies the fire rekindled and burned down the pumphouse and continued to spread. Swedberg also notified Manager Haug, who responded to the fire, went back to the Sinlahekin, and returned with a kayak and equipment to work on the fire. Two DNR employees responded with Manager Haug the next day and completed fire suppression action.

**Red-Flag Warning Lives Up to its Promise:** Friday, at 5:21 PM, Kevin Vallance, Chelan Wildlife Area, called Dan, who was in Omak to pick up bio-controls from Land Operation Manager Swedberg, to report that a fire was on the Central Ferry Canyon Unit and that the local fire district, Okanogan/Douglas 15, was responding. Dan notified Fidel and together they arrived about 6:15 by which time Okanogan/Douglas Fire District 15 plus a DNR helicopter, dispatched from Chelan, were already on the scene. They had the fire pretty well contained between the county road, a private road, and fallow wheat fields. Chief Vallance requested that Fidel use our CAT, which, guided by a dozer boss, made short work of a firebreak on the north flank.

With that completed and coupled with continued air drops and the arrival of DNR, Forest Service, and other Fire District crews, the fire was well controlled and essentially out by 9 PM. Saturday morning, DNR crews were mopping up and a DNR fire investigator was on the scene. Dan gave the investigator, Ken McNamee, a written statement. While the cause is still under investigation, the point of origin was close to the road. Quick work by the reporting party, an employee of Selland Construction on his way home, and the fast response by the local district and DNR kept the fire limited in scope on a day with winds gusting to 25+ mph. At the same time as this fire, another fire in the Moses Coulee region south of Highway 2 burned 200+ acres. On Saturday morning, while conferring with the fire investigator, the chief of Okanogan/Douglas 15 was called out to a fire just 4.5 miles southwest of Central Ferry Canyon. This fire, called the Cold Springs Basin Fire, occurred on the Banrac ranch and burned approximately 1,000 acres.

And it's only June 15.

***Central Ferry Canyon, June 12. Only the plastic 'bird flags' suffered damage. The galvanized steel posts were unscathed*** – Photo by Dan Peterson



*View from private property looking north. The entire area burned in 2012*

– Photo by Dan Peterson



### **Private Lands/Access**

#### **Safe Harbor for Pygmy Rabbits:**

Biologist Comstock updated the master Safe Harbor GIS layer to include all landowners currently enrolled in the Safe Harbor for pygmy rabbits. Over 100,000 acres of private lands in Grant and Douglas counties have been enrolled. Biologist Comstock received notice from USFWS that, after six months, the Safe Harbor incidental take permit applications she submitted for nine landowners will be published in the Federal Register this month. Landowners should receive their incidental take permits in July. Biologist Comstock prepared maps and a draft site plan for a new landholder who wishes to enroll in a Safe Harbor agreement. She also made follow up calls to other landholders to see if they are interested and/or schedule follow up meetings.

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

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Fire Effects Rangeland Workshop Tour:** Operations Manager Swedberg, with Assistant Managers Sample and Wehmeyer, and DFW Range Ecologist Jeff Burnham attended an all-day workshop in the Methow led by NRCS Range Conservationists Will Keller and Kevin Guinn. Others in attendance included producers Craig Boesel, Vic & Kent Stokes, and Del Prewitt; USFS Range Manager Dean McFetridge; Department of Natural Resources Okanogan and Ferry Counties Range Specialist Brian Derting and Statewide Range Specialist Bill Oakes; and Methow Conservancy Land Program Manager John Sunderland. The group toured various rangeland sites on DFW lands, observing and discussing rangeland vegetation responses to the Carlton Complex Fire. The discussions also included when the pastures would be ready for livestock turn out. It was an excellent tour with open and honest discussion. Everyone agreed that frequent communication was important as the year and season progressed. The general consensus was that few pastures would be ready before spring of 2016, and if they were, the infrastructure, i.e., fences and watering points, may not be replaced or repaired.

Extensive infestations of Dalmatian toadflax were noted. Manager Swedberg, with Assistant Manager Wehmeyer and Range Ecologist Burnham, attended a half day Rangeland Workshop touring the Chiliwist, WA pastures with NRCS Keller and Guinn, DNR Derting, and producer Dan Whitley. The consensus was pretty much the same as it was from the Methow tour.



***Black Bear with cubs and WT buck in GMU 239*** – Photo by WDFW Remote Camera



***Monarch butterfly feeding on milkweed –  
Bridgeport Unit*** – Photo by Dan Peterson

### **REGION 3**

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

##### **Wildlife Areas**

**LT Murray Wildlife Area:** Technician Hill scouted and released the biological control agent *Larinus minutus* at five sites across the Whiskey Dick and L.T. Murray Wildlife Areas. These biological controls will help reduce the population of diffuse and spotted knapweeds.

**Oak Creek Wildlife Area:** Manager Huffman responded at 4:30 AM to a report of a fire burning along SR 410 adjacent to the wildlife area. Huffman arrived and connected with Steve Smith, fire chief for Nile-Cliffdell Fire District. Reports had indicated the fire was over 100 acres, but it was probably at only 30-40 acres at that time. The fire was burning near several residences, and making a run up hill toward WDFW land. The area was very steep and rocky and early morning time was reducing fire activity. DNR crews arrived at around 8:00 and engaged the fire at around 9:00 with the help of two rotors. They were able to get the fire under control by early afternoon despite rising temps, dropping humidity, and winds. Forester Mackey was also on scene, on standby in case a dozer was needed on the fire. Mackey is qualified as a dozer boss and no other dozer bosses were available in the area. Fire size was estimated at 160 acres, with approximately 50 acres on WDFW. Crews continued to mop up and put out hotspots for a couple days. Initial reports indicated the cause of the fire from a transformer on a PP&L power pole.



*Sanford Pasture Fire on and adjacent to the Oak Creek Wildlife Area at about 4:45 am. The fire burned mostly private property. No houses were damaged.*



*Sanford Pasture fire burning in the early morning along SR 410 burning onto the Oak Creek Wildlife Area*

*Sanford Pasture Fire in the distance after being mostly contained. The view is from the Sanford Pasture Area on Clemans Mountain. The fire crews and rotors did a great job of getting the fire under control before temps, wind, and humidity got to red flag levels. In addition, vegetation was still green enough in the draws to slow down fire movement down wind.*



### Wildlife Management

**Bat Monitoring:** District Biologist Fidorra reviewed sampling locations and prepared supplies for the current WDFW Bat Monitoring project. Fidorra deployed two bat detectors in District 4 this week: one in the Snake River Canyon priority subarea, and the other on private land in Franklin County.

**Canada Goose:** District Biologist Fidorra conducted scouting trips for Canada goose locations in the Tri-Cities. A small group of 35 geese remains at the Fishing Pond in Colombia Park, and a larger group of 300-400 was regularly present in Wade Park. Fidorra continued to organize volunteers and staff to assist in the Tri-cities' Canada goose banding on Friday, June 26.

**Vegetation Clearing in Richmond's Parks:** District Biologist Fidorra met with a small group of concerned citizens that have been dissatisfied with vegetation clearing and tree cutting in Richland's parks during the spring and its potential impact to breeding birds. The group has been in contact with the Richland Parks Department over the years and more recently with WDFW staff regarding the issue. Fidorra toured the site and suggested that the citizens might contact

local NGOs such as Washington Audubon, which recently created a document for Seattle parklands regarding nesting dates and best management practices. The preparation of a similar document for eastern Washington could benefit many communities and land managers. Fidorra agreed to assist in review of materials should this idea be pursued. The group was also happy to hear that the Parks Department had recently contacted WDFW for guidance regarding breeding season dates and compliance with wildlife laws.

**American White Pelicans:** District Biologist Fidorra contacted OSU Field Coordinator, Loschl regarding their surveys of American White Pelicans at Badger Island. OSU has conducted their annual aerial surveys and will coordinate with Fidorra regarding population estimates.

**Snake River Canyon Bat Detectors:** District Biologist Fidorra met with US Army Corps Biologist Ober to discuss the placement of bat detectors on USACE land in Snake River Canyon. Also discussed were sites and coordination of Pheasant Releases this fall.

**Draft Mule Deer Management Plan:** District Biologist Fidorra reviewed and prepared comments on the Draft Mule Deer Management Plan.

**Trapped Mule Deer:** District Biologist Fidorra received a call from the Kennewick Irrigation District (KID) regarding a mule deer trapped in a canal. Fidorra and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand went to the site and found a young buck resting on the side of the canal tired but in relatively good condition. After seeing the deer almost reenter the canal, the group, with assistance from Officer McLerran and two KID staff, hazed the animal away from the canal and busy street to a grove of trees near an undeveloped shrub-steppe slope.

**SAFE Seed Mixes and Establishment Recommendations:** Private Lands Biologist Stutzman provided the SAFE seed mixes and establishment recommendations to a seed vendor in Connell who is working with an interested landowner. Stutzman met with FSA in Franklin County to get information about the potential application. Stutzman will meet with the landowner this week to provide more information about SAFE.

**Plant Material Bids:** Stutzman provided plant material bids to the Benton Conservation District and discussed the funding and application status of the pollinator projects.

**SAFE Program:** Stutzman once again gave his best ‘sales pitch’ to Benton County FSA about the SAFE program and the viability of the recommended species. Despite the mix consisting of primarily Benton County natives, there remains heavy skepticism that the species will grow in Benton County.

**Mountain Goats:** Biologist Bernatowicz attended the Rocky Mountain Goat Alliance BBQ and collected data sheets and maps. The general theme was hot weather and few goats seen. A few volunteers cancelled last minute, so some routes were not surveyed.

**Mule Deer Plan:** Biologist Bernatowicz commented on most of the Mule Deer Plan. A few sections remain for review/comment.

**Deer Study:** Biologist Bernatowicz investigated two radio-collared deer mortalities on Clemans Mountain. Both were obvious cougar kills (probably the same cougar). The cat was seen near one of the carcasses. Four radio-collared deer have died due to predation in the vicinity in 15 days. A similar spike in doe mortality was also seen last year near fawn drop. The cougar(s) often only eat the fetuses and part of the deer.



*Remains of radioed deer with only fetuses removed by cougar*

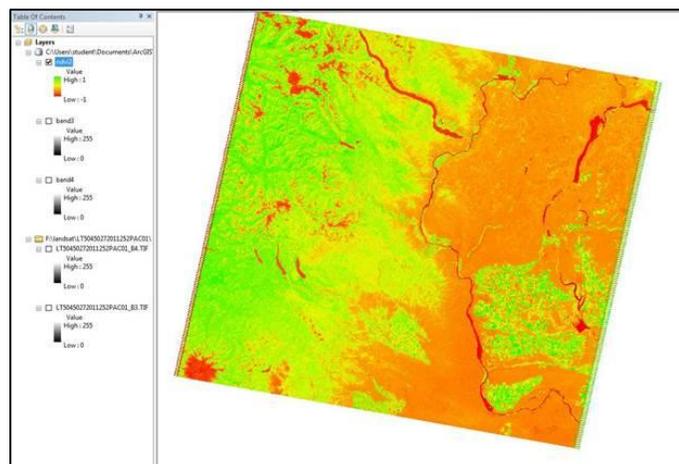
**Other:** Biologist Bernatowicz responded to five calls and walk-ins from the public, mostly regarding injured/orphaned wildlife. An orphaned (road-kill cow) elk calf was captured and taken to a local rehabilitator.

**Bighorn Sheep:** Biologist Moore continued work on updating the bighorn sheep habitat use model.

**Livestock Depredation:** Biologist Moore and Conflict Specialist Wetzel reviewed protocols and updated contact lists in preparation for any livestock depredations that may occur during the grazing season.

**Colockum Bull Elk Study:** Biologist Moore met with Central Washington University Graduate Student Lewis Meyers to discuss his progress. Meyers has the majority of GIS data needed for analysis, but a few more datasets are still needed. He was also successful at converting and calculating 30 meter Landsat TM datasets for NDVI. This is an improvement compared to the 250 meter data we've used in our previous analysis.

*Example of 30m Landsat TM data calculated for NDVI*



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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Wenas Wildlife Area:** Manager Confer Morris participated in a target shooting conference call to discuss development of a matrix to display pros, cons, and risk associated with different sites and levels of development at the Sheep Company area sites.

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Colockum Wildlife Area:** Manager Lopushinsky met with Central Washington University archaeology staff Dr. Pat Mcutcheon and Dr. Pat Lubinski to discuss activities for CWU students attending archaeology field school on the Colockum this summer. He also worked with Leah Hendrix to complete a temporary use permit for CWU.

**LT Murray Wildlife Area:** Manager Winegeart spent a day in Quilomene Creek after receiving a call from a federal biologist who had gotten his vehicle stuck. The biologist was trying to access a national natural resource inventory plot (a veg transect monitored once every few years) near Quilomene Bay. The biologist opted not to follow the driving directions provided, thinking another road might be closer to his plot. He drove six miles down a closed road and became stuck on a steep rocky slope. The biologist had to walk out that evening, and the cost for a wrecker to yank the vehicle out the next morning exceeded \$1000, but eventually the SUV was recovered without incident.



***Wrecker towing stranded vehicle out of Quilomene Creek drainage***

**Sunnyside Wildlife Area:** Manager Bjornstrom and Assistant Manager Sak met with Max Benitz of McWhorter Ranch to coordinate maintenance of fire lines between WDFW property and the McWhorter Ranch. Max coordinated with several local fire districts to use their property for training purposes. WDFW staff felt this was also a good opportunity to re-establish fire lines on the Rattlesnake Slope Unit. The fire districts worked a total of four days to complete fire lines around the adjacent properties.



*Birds-eye view from the McWhorter Ranch looking down onto the Rattlesnake Slope Unit*

*Dozer re-establishing old fire lines on Rattlesnake Slope Unit*

### Wildlife Management

**Rattlesnake Mountain Hazing:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand conducted two hazing operations on Rattlesnake Mountain with an emphasis on keeping elk along Hanford’s southern border out of winter wheat fields. Over 80 elk were observed and redirected back to Hanford during one late night/early morning session.

**Rattlesnake Hills Elk Activity:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continues to monitor elk activity in the Rattlesnake Hills area. A review of picture images recovered from a deployed trail camera showed a reduction in elk activity at this particular site. Of the 167 images recorded for the week, only three showed elk presence, a lone cow and newborn calf.

*A Hanford cow and calf elk leaving a field of winter wheat*



**Non-lethal Hazing:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand met with the farm manager of a large tree fruit operation near McNary Dam to discuss non-lethal hazing techniques to reduce deer damage that has occurred in newly planted cherry trees.

**Electric Fence Check:** Conflict Specialist Wetzel checked the electric fence across Taneum Creek for elk use. The fence was intact and functional.

**First Cutting:** First cutting has commenced in many of the deer and elk damage areas, temporarily alleviating the need for heavy hazing this week.

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Wenas Wildlife Area:** Staff worked on elk fence in Kelley Hollow where cows are pushing through one of the break-aways. The owner of the cattle had pushed them back onto his land, but called within a couple of days to say they'd come back through. Assistant Manager Taylor is working with him to put a second fence on his side of the elk fence to keep them off WDFW land.

**LT Murray Wildlife Area:** Hunt spent most of Wednesday in T18N, R15E putting up signage at various gated areas. He discovered one of our recently placed barrier rocks in Section 13 had been moved aside to regain access to a denuded riparian camping area that we are attempting to protect, and a new quad trail around a nearby gate that was just reinstalled. It's a recurring problem spot, just as it was for Plum Creek when they owned it.



***Pioneered ATV trail by-passing a gate in the Gnat Flat Unit of the LT Murray***



***New signage on gated roads in the Gnat Flat Unit***

**Hay and Fence Material Storage:** Manager Winegeart, Assistant Manager Hunt, and Conflict Specialist Wetzel spent time at our Joe Watt compound rearranging and planning storage space for hay and fence material scheduled for delivery soon. Wetzel took delivery of a portion of his fence material on Wednesday.

## **REGION 4**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Forest Carnivores/Citizen Science:** Biologist DeBruyn continued coordinating with two volunteers to place trail cameras in an area near Mt. Baker that has a potential for interesting carnivore occurrence. DeBruyn hiked up onto a ridge with a volunteer and placed two department cameras in saddles on the ridges leading up to Mount Baker. He trained the volunteer in aspects of trail camera operation and explained protocols for use of such cameras. They also surveyed melting ponds for amphibian egg masses.



#### ***Biologist DeBryan deploying trail cameras in the high country***

**Double-Crested Cormorants:** While on other business in Blaine, Biologist DeBruyn paid a preliminary visit to the cormorant colony on the jetty at Drayton Harbor. The colony appears to have doubled in size since last year, with around eight hundred individuals present. A complete survey of the colony will be done in the last week of June.

**Common Loon Monitoring:** Biologist Anderson visited a loon territory to observe activity and status. A pair is in throes of trying out nest sites, again, and doing some courtship – eggs are likely over next few days. Biologist DeBruyn surveyed a local lake for breeding loons. There have been sightings at the lake in past summers, but no loons were observed this year. Assistant District Biologist Cyra completed a survey for common loons on Spada Lake Reservoir. Loons have been observed on the lake in the past, but none were present this visit. Breeding by common loons at Spada has never been documented.

*Male loon on territory* – Photo by C. Anderson, WDFW

**Peregrine Falcon Site assessment:** Assistant District Biologist Cyra surveyed the Index town wall for peregrine falcon presence and productivity. Though unable to locate a nesting scrape earlier in the season, this visit determined that a new ledge was likely used and that the pair produced at least two young.



*The Index town wall provides a large expanse of potential nest sites for peregrine falcons*

in these surveys at the same time as USFWS provides us a better overall picture of breeding bird activity in the islands. Heavy fog hampered surveys earlier, and it is hoped remaining sites can be visited soon.

**Lowland Pika Surveys:** Assistant District Biologist Cyra began compiling survey data from sites at a known lowland pika area to begin the report writing phase.

*Find the pika in the rock stack*





*Spada Lake Reservoir showing lower lake levels and very little snow in the surrounding hills*

### **Wildlife Areas**

#### **Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project:**

Projects Coordinator Brokaw answered questions from stakeholders about the preferred design alternative that is being

moved forward to the next design phase, and added several people to the Leque Island email update list. To be added to the Leque Island email list, contact [Loren.Brokaw@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Loren.Brokaw@dfw.wa.gov). Additionally, the WDFW and Ducks Unlimited project team set a date for the first team meeting of the next design phase, at which a budget and schedule will be set with the group.

**Fir Island Farm Estuary Restoration Project:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw uploaded water quality data from all of the data loggers on the site. Following the upload, he calibrated and compensated the data and sent it to the project engineers for their review. This was the first set of data collected using the new devices, and all of them worked as expected. The data may advise decisions regarding dewatering portions of the site for construction.



#### ***Construction has begun on the Fir Island Farm Estuary Restoration project***

#### **Port of Bellingham Wetland**

##### **Mitigation Project:**

Manager Kessler mowed the last 15 acres of reed canary grass in the Phase 2 area of the project. This wetland mitigation project on the Tennant Lake Unit improved and enhanced wetlands on the unit to mitigate impacts to wetlands during expansion at the Bellingham Airport. This mowing prevented the reed canary grass from going to seed.

**Ebey Island Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm followed up with WDFW Enforcement to clean up another homeless camp that was reported last week. Leftover trash and debris were cleaned up. Additionally, Manager Boehm met with staff from Ducks Unlimited to tour the unit in preparation for a NAWCA Grant proposal that includes funding for planning wetland enhancements.

**Stillwater Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm mowed parking lots and access roads. Mowing will continue throughout the season.

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

### **Wildlife Management**

**Elk Management:** Biologist Yarborough continued to work on the North Cascade Elk Herd Plan. This plan will help to guide management of the North Cascades elk herd for the future. Biologist Yarborough is working with the local tribes to analyze all current and historic population data.

#### **Port Susan Tourism Meeting:**

Biologist Milner attended a meeting sponsored by the City of Stanwood and Snohomish County Parks to discuss ideas for developing a way to encourage tourism that highlights the qualities of the Port Susan/Stanwood/Camano Island area.

***Spotted sandpiper nest*** – Photo by C.Anderson, WDFW



### **Wildlife Areas**

#### **Island Unit:** Natural Resource

Technician Cosgrove and Natural Resource Specialist Meis coordinated with volunteers to assist with ferrying spray equipment to and from the Island Unit. Cosgrove sprayed herbicide on 25 acres of corn on the Island Unit. Cosgrove and Meis monitored crops and water levels on the Island Unit.

**Leque Island Unit:** Meis and Cosgrove planted ten acres of fava beans on the Leque Island Unit.

**Skagit ESA Restoration and Waterfowl Management:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Program Manager Link, and Regional Director Everitt worked on editing some language in the “Replacement Lands Initiative” that the region is drafting. This Initiative will clarify WDFW’s expectations regarding the replacement of recreation access when impacted by estuary restoration projects on WDFW land.

**Samish Unit Enhancement Project:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw received notice from Skagit County that the Hearing Examiner approved the special use permit application. He also received a call from the Skagit Valley Herald and answered questions about the project.

**Samish River Unit Wetland Restoration Project:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw provided the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) with budget information regarding the final cost of all of the permits that were acquired for the project.

**Nooksack River Bridge Repainting Project:** Manager Kessler monitored the recreational use at the south of the Slater Road parking area. This parking area is also the staging area for the Nooksack River Bridge repainting project. Manager Kessler talked to users about the new detour trail from the parking area to the top of the river dike. No problems have been noted from either recreational users or the construction crews setting up for the repainting of the bridge.

**Lake Terrell Unit Reed Canary Grass Mowing:** Manager Kessler mowed reed canary grass on roadsides and field areas at the Lake Terrell Unit.

### **Private Lands/Access Management**

**Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program:** Biologist Hans and Natural Resource Technician Otto met with a landowner in Whatcom to discuss the possibility of adding two pieces of their property to our program. The team explained how the Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program works and answered questions from the landowner. Due to previous issues with a hunt club lease the landowner is very eager to work with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Biologist Hans will communicate with their point of contact over the next couple of weeks and create a new contract. Biologist Hans and Natural Resource Technician Otto also met with a landowner in Whatcom County, who is enrolled in our waterfowl enhancement program, to discuss and confirm field preparation and the planting schedule for the month of June. Biologist Hans continued to work with the contract department to edit contracts she has submitted and answer questions she had about future contract submissions.

**Spring Bear Hunt:** Natural Resource Technician Otto completed gate checks on the Monroe and North Skagit hunt units. Natural Resource Technician Otto found three gates in the Monroe Unit without combo locks and one open gate in the North Skagit Unit. Natural Resource Technician Otto coordinated with security personnel for the timber companies to assist in the removal of an abandoned vehicle. Natural Resource Technician Otto also returned calls from multiple bear hunters.

*Natural Resource Technician Otto completed trail maintenance on the wildlife viewing trail on south Whidbey Island. He installed a sign to help users to remember rules pertaining to fires and fireworks, per the request of an adjacent landowner.*



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

**Wildlife Management**

**Peregrine Falcon Nestling Take:** Biologist DeBruyn banded a peregrine chick for a local falconer. The adult female at the site had succumbed to a wing injury and the falconer utilized his permit to lessen the stress on the adult male who was presumably caring for the two chicks by himself. The rescue was orchestrated by The Falcon Research Group in consultation with Falconry Coordinator Thompson.

**Private Lands/Access Management**

**Wildlife Conflict Management:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman met with several landowners in the Birdsvew area of Skagit County and surveyed elk damage to grass hay crops. Hazing options were discussed, along with some fertilizer options potentially being provided by co-managers to offset crop loss. Specialist Witman also met with a landowner who has agreed to fence a small orchard to prevent future elk damage. Consulting was done with the landowner and a final plan was agreed to. Separately, Specialist Witman met with a landowner in Skagit County that is receiving deer damage to an apple orchard. Specialist Witman spoke with a landowner about hazing assistance for deer and is currently working to get a fencing bid. The landowner has agreed to pay for and install the fence after all logistics are completed. Specialist Witman finalized a fencing contract with a landowner in Whatcom County who has experienced elk browsing to a small kiwi orchard. The landowner has been provided materials from co-managers and plans are in place to begin construction.

**Depredation Management:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and law enforcement continue to receive calls from concerned landowners in Skagit County that have experienced cougar depredation and have visually observed a cougar on residential property. The landowners have been notified on what action they can take to prevent livestock depredation and personal safety issues.

**Region 4 (District 12) Ungulate Damage:** Biologist Smith removed an electrified fladry fence excluding elk from one agricultural property and delivered it to another landowner for installation by their staff. The landowner at the original location is considering a permanent fence installation and experimenting with electronic devices in the interim.

**Spring Bear Hunt:** Biologist Hans collected bear harvest information for the week and entered the data into the 2015 summary report. Biologist Hans responded to emails and phone calls from hunters inquiring about harvest information and where to send end of the season surveys. Biologist Hans spoke with Department of Natural Resource Silviculturist Hurd regarding the 2015 hunt and possible changes for next year's hunt. Biologist Hans coordinated with the City of Everett and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife regarding trespassing issues at one of the hunt sites. Biologist Hans began compiling data from the hunters into a report in preparation for the Region 4 carnivore meeting.

**Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program:** Biologist Hans spoke with a landowner in Skagit County to answer questions about the upcoming barley planting and contract details. Natural Resource Technician Otto checked the field preparations of a Skagit County field that Private Land staff will plant with barley this upcoming week. Natural Resource Technician Otto coordinated barley delivery and tractor scheduling, and also contacted staff to find someone who is available to assist in the upcoming week. Natural Resource Technician Otto conducted field mowing operations on a waterfowl hunting site in Skagit County in preparation for planting barley.

### Wildlife Areas

**Skagit Headquarters:** Meis mowed grass areas around the shop, interpretive center, and boat launch parking lot at the Headquarter Unit. Meis sprayed weeds around the shop area and dike top trail at the Headquarters Unit. Cosgrove finished rust control and maintenance on the grain drill used for planting barley and fava beans on the Island Unit.

**DeBay's Slough:** Meis and Cosgrove monitored crop plantings on the DeBay's Slough Unit and planned for upcoming projects.

**Fir Island Farms Unit:** Manager Rotton coordinated with Project Manager Jenna Friebel regarding farm field access during construction on the Fir Island Farm Unit.

### **Volunteer Opportunities:**

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continues to work with WDFW Volunteer Coordinator Steve Dazey to sign up community and Master Hunter volunteers for upcoming field work. Master Hunter volunteers are currently assisting with a parking lot monitoring project on the four pheasant release sites. Four other volunteers are working on net pen maintenance and various tasks around the barn and on equipment.

*Wildlife Area Manager Richard Kessler on a newly constructed overlook at Tennant Lake*

### Hunter Education Coordinator



Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey forwarded invites to all Region 4 instructors to attend the instructor appreciation BBQ being hosted by Washington Hunter Education Instructors Association. Coordinator Dazey is working with Instructor Wise to secure a venue at the Boy Scout Camp in Federal Way for Field Skills Evaluation classes this fall. Dazey assisted Instructor Olson to close out a class where he was having challenges. Dazey answered instructor

Moseleys' questions about reciprocity with New York's Hunter Education Program. Dazey assisted new Instructor Bosman with questions on supply issues. Dazey assisted Instructor Gross to conduct a field skills evaluation at the Nile Shrine Center.

Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey conducted the first session of a Pre-Service Training class for hunter education instructor applicants in Skagit County. The first session, which is a class room session teaching applicants how to conduct a class, what we do to support them, and what the expectations and policies of the department are, was held at the La Connor office June 2 with the follow up class taking place several weeks later.

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

**Conflict Tech Hiring:** Biologists Yarborough and DeBruyn assisted Conflict Specialist Witman with interviews for a temporary tech position.

**Training:** Biologist Yarborough attended the Motorboat Operator Certification Course in Wenatchee and was certified. Biologist Smith completed WA State Purchasing and Procurement Ethics and WA State Small Purchases training on-line. Natural Resource Tech Deyo attended, completed, and passed the WDFW Motorboat Operator Certification Course in Wenatchee. Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell completed the Department of the Interior Motorboat Operators Certificate Course.

**Performance and Development Plan:** Manager Kessler met at the Tennant Lake Unit with Regional Wildlife Program Manager Link to work on Kessler's performance and development plan.

**REGION 5**

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Western Gray Squirrel Project:** Biologist Anderson completed placement of western gray squirrel hair tubes in Rock Creek (Klickitat County) as part of the state-wide monitoring effort. In addition, Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis placed hair snag tubes on the Klickitat Wildlife Area as part of the effort to determine the extent of range occupied by western gray squirrels. The objective of this study is to generate better information on the occurrence and distribution of western gray squirrels within suitable habitats across the state. Western gray squirrel habitat is assumed to be declining but there is a need for a current monitoring effort to evaluate these assumptions. The western gray squirrel is a State Threatened Species in Washington and there is a need to understand the population levels associated with known habitat across the state. This information will be of importance in conducting a status review for the species.



*Western gray squirrel survey site  
(Klickitat County)*



*Placing a western gray squirrel hair tube*

**Columbia River Streaked-horned Lark Surveys:** Biologists Stephens and Holman assisted biologists from the Center for Natural Lands in conducting streaked-horned lark abundance surveys on several islands in the lower Columbia River. Many larks were observed during the two day survey effort. Streaked-horned larks require open or very-lightly vegetated habitats for nesting. The prairies of south Puget Sound, Long Beach Peninsula, and dredge-spoil islands and nearby uplands in the lower Columbia provide suitable habitat. The streaked-horned lark is listed as Threatened by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Endangered by Washington State due to their low population numbers and loss and degradation of habitat.

**Black-tailed Deer Research Project:** Regional Wildlife Biologists continued with fawn searches for this year's work on the black-tailed deer research project. Currently in the Coweeman cluster, three adult does that were captured in 2014 remain alive with functional satellite and VHF collars, and in the Washougal cluster, two adult does are alive and have functional equipment. During the May-June birth period all adult females associated with each study cluster will be monitored frequently and multiple attempts will be made to capture their fawns. Six fawns have been captured in a combination of the Coweeman and Washougal study clusters. The reproductive status of one of the Coweeman does remains unknown. Additional attempts will be made to capture the fawns from this animal.



*Black-tailed deer fawns*

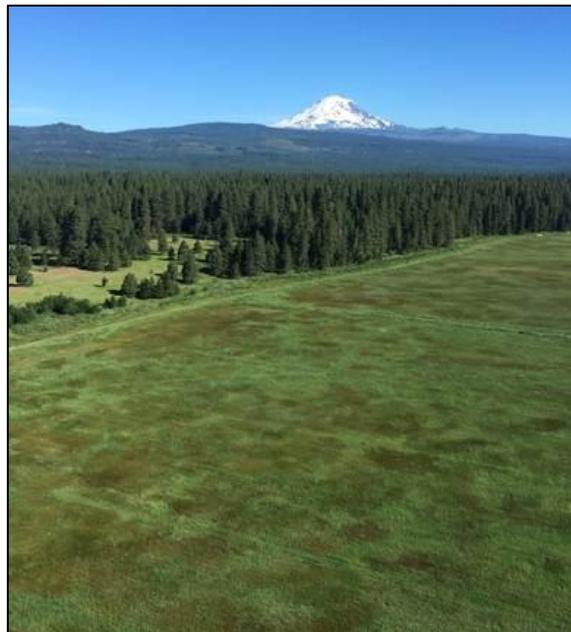
Biologists Bergh and Doorly captured one fawn from one of the study does in the Washougal study cluster this week. The doe had recently crossed a large creek onto private land (from DNR land), so extra work to get permission to access the land was necessary. Morphological measurements were taken and the fawn was outfitted with a small, expandable radio-collar that emits a VHF signal as well as communicates with the doe's radio-collar when in range of her. Two additional visits were made to the area to determine if this fawn had a twin, but no twin was found. This fawn will be monitored for survival for the next year as part of a larger study on black-tailed deer survival, reproduction, and habitat use.

***Black-tailed deer fawn just after release***



**Sandhill Crane Survey:** Biologist Bergh assisted biologists with the Conboy National Wildlife Refuge on an aerial survey of sandhill cranes in and around the refuge. The purpose of the flight was to gain information on the reproductive success of cranes in their respective territories. Some territories had information on nest location and success from ground surveys, but some are difficult to access and/or difficult to find. Adult cranes, crane colts, elk, and even a large black bear were observed during the flight.

***Sandhill Crane Survey Flight***



**Shillapoo Wildlife Area**

**Vancouver Lowlands Mourning Dove**

**Survey:** Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Assistant Manager Hand conducted a point count mourning dove survey along the Vancouver Lowlands recording visual and auditory observations of doves. The survey is conducted along a 20 mile route with an observation point every mile, to listen and look for mourning doves for three minutes. A total of 25 mourning doves were detected, which is average over the past three years and well above average for the total survey period which goes back to 1992. The information from the survey is used to determine population trends and allowable harvest during hunting seasons. As a side note, several Eurasian collared doves were observed in the survey this year. They were first detected in the 2013 survey.

## **Klickitat Wildlife Area**

**Grazing Permits (Soda Springs Unit):** A water trough on the grazing area west of the Glenwood Highway went dry last weekend due to a failure in the water line feeding the trough. Technician Davis discovered the problem and attempted to repair the line while a few dozen cows impatiently waited. A worker from the Diamond D Ranch assisted, but ultimately the air leak in the water line was not fixed using the supplies available. A garden hose borrowed from the Klickitat Wildlife Area Headquarters was run from the pond to the trough and a temporary siphon was established. The trough filled sufficiently to serve the cattle gathered there for the day. Those animals were moved to the WDFW Grayback pasture the next morning. The day after that, all the cattle were moved off the WDFW grazing unit.

**Grazing Permits (Fisher Hill Unit):** Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven hiked around a 40 acre parcel that is being incorporated into an older grazing permit and noted the condition of the range and oak woodlands there. An environmental assessment form was completed and all the draft documents for the permit began circulating for review and approval. Technician Davis checked on another grazing permit nearby. He found light to moderate utilization by cattle in areas where the animals spend the most time.

**Weed Control:** Technician Davis participated in a milfoil control planning meeting this week, hosted by the East Klickitat Conservation District (EKCD). EKCD has received a grant to develop a course of action to deal with the Eurasian water milfoil infestation in lower Rock Creek, and is working with representatives of multiple agencies on this plan. Davis also treated sulphur cinquefoil plants in a campground with herbicide and visited a site on the Hatchery Unit to evaluate the effectiveness of Canada thistle and canarygrass treatments done last fall. He found that good control was achieved, although some plants persist.

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

### **Access**

#### **Vancouver Lake, Langsdorf landing, Turkey Hole, and Washougal River Access Sites:**

Access staff Spangler and Rhodes worked with the Clark County inmate crew weed eating and picking up litter at the Vancouver Lake and Washougal River access sites as well as painting speed bumps at Vancouver Lake. In addition, vault toilets were pumped at the Vancouver Lake, Langsdorf Landing, and Turkey Hole sites.

***Clark County inmate crew weed eating and picking up litter***





*Painting speed bumps*



*Vault toilet pumping*

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

**D-10 Wildlife Conflict**

**Bear:** Conflict Specialists Conklin and Blankenship hiked in to a snare site in North Lewis County. The land owner is requesting additional permits to address damage. Specialists identified several feeding locations and two fresh snare sites where bears were harvested. No significant damage to trees was identified.

*Old bear damage at snare site*



**Deer:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin visited an organic vegetable farm in Morton. The newly established farm was requesting a site visit to discuss methods of deterring deer from getting into crops. The farm has started a small Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), where they sell shares of fresh vegetables delivered weekly. The farm has done an excellent job at keeping the deer away using staggered electric fence all around the two acre plot.

*Organic vegetable farm in Morton*



***Electric fencing protecting the organic garden***

**Elk:** Conflict Specialist Conklin met with a farmer in Randle who has been experiencing heavy elk grazing on his hay fields. The farmer transports his cows from his ranch in eastern Washington to his property in Randle for summer grazing. He states that each year the grass is thinner and depleted due to elk grazing the pastures all winter and spring. This farm pastures 1000 pairs of cows and leases 16 farms for pasture, of which 14 are located in Lewis County. He specifically is requesting a long term plan to manage the elk in the South Rainier GMU.



**REGION 6**

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

**Western Pond Turtle:** District 11 continues to monitor pond turtles at the Pierce County recovery location. Below is the current status for the season:

Number of females with transmitters who are being monitored for nesting: 28

Number of nests found to date: 17

Number of missed nests (females nested but nest not located): 8

Number of predated nests: 7

We are also beginning second clutches, so many of the 17 females who have already nested are likely to lay a second clutch of eggs. Monitoring continues thru mid-July.

**Olympic Mountain Goats:** Recent hiker reports suggesting negative encounters with mountain goats along the Mount Ellinor trail in the southern Olympic range prompted some concern. Previous trips by USFS and WDFW personnel suggested one large adult male and five other goats were likely responsible for most reports. In part to reduce the potential for negative human-mountain goat interactions on Mount Ellinor, Biologist Murphie, along with volunteers Dan S., Bill B., and Shannon M., hiked to the summit of Mount Ellinor with the objective to conduct hazing activities and paintball mark any potential offending goats. They counted a minimum of 14 mountain goats, including kids, used clear paint balls to haze two yearling goats, and potentially marked with paint balls three adult goats believed to be a part of the group causing the most concern. Unfortunately, many of the paintballs did not break on contact, no doubt due to the thick hair on the adult goats.



*The team pauses briefly in an area along the Mount Ellinor trail close to the summit where many mountain goat encounters occur*



*A curious young goat watches the team having lunch*



*Biologist Murphie attempts to paint-mark an adult goat. Unfortunately, none of the paintballs that hit this goat appeared to break.*

**Peregrine Falcon Rescue:** Peregrine falcons have successfully nested this season on the 17th floor of the Wells Fargo Building in downtown Tacoma in an older nest box initially placed by the Falcon Research Group many years ago. While its good news that peregrines have had such a successful recovery, the young (eyasses) of those that

nest in the city and over bridges often find themselves in precarious situations. For example, peregrines have nested in downtown Tacoma for several years and often have one or more eyasses injured due to landing in traffic or on sidewalks while attempting their first flights during fledging. For this reason, Biologist Tirhi, along with local volunteers and members of the Falcon Research Group, has worked as a rescue and response team for such situations. This past week, outstanding volunteer Fergus Hyke, who works on the fifth floor of the same building, took charge in two separate rescue events involving this year's eyasses. Hyke had a "rescue box" ready to go. Hyke was notified on Friday morning by Wells Fargo security that one of the four eyasses had found its way into the parking garage and was becoming agitated as staff began arriving. A security guard managed to contain the eyass and he and Hyke were able to get it boxed, taken to the fifth floor rooftop, and released. After three hours of recovery time, the eyass took flight and all appeared resolved. However, by afternoon, Hyke observed two eyasses, one of which was found hopping on a busy street and another from a neighboring rooftop. Hyke took the eyasses to South South Critter Care in Covington, where they were evaluated by vet staff and found healthy (one male, one female). Hyke then drove the falcons back to Tacoma and, at the advice of Biologist Tirhi, released both at their nest location on the seventeenth floor of the

Wells Fargo Building. Upon Hyke's arrival, another eyass on the rooftop called to an adult female (mom), who immediately came to the attention and dive bombed Hyke and an assistant (who wisely had hard hats in the rescue box) until they were able to safely release the two siblings in their care. As of Monday morning, no reports of falcons down and two eyasses were seen chasing pigeons. Due to the outstanding response of Tacoma falcon volunteers like Hyke, Roger Orness, and Martin Muller, this year's peregrines will hopefully add to the growing and recovering population of falcons in Washington!

*First peregrine falcon eyass rescued from parking garage of Wells Fargo Building, Tacoma and released to fifth floor rooftop* – Photo by Fergus Hyke



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

**Point Whitney Access Areas:** The access team recently spent several hours at the Point Whitney access site on the Hood Canal. The activities included grounds maintenance such as trimming fence lines around bollards and back pack blowing of the entire parking area, boat ramp, and restrooms. The team also replaced door handles and deadbolts in the two restroom facilities, and also removed old, faded, and outdated signs around the property. The team inventoried additional site needs and will begin addressing these needs next week. The site conditions continue to improve each week.



