

Wildlife Program

Week of June 22 – June 28, 2015

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Range Rider Meeting: Biologist Shepherd and five contract range riders met and discussed contracts, logistics, planning, wolf activity, and the grazing season.

Region 2 Wolf Activities

Okanogan Wolves: Specialist Heilhecker met with a rancher to explain the potential furlough and how it impacts the range rider contract. She also dropped off the GPS instruction manual for the range rider and explained the wolf collar locations where not yet available. Specialist Heilhecker picked up a trail camera she placed on private property near Brewster two weeks ago. The reporting party lost a dog and several birds. The family believed wolves were responsible. Photos included coyotes, dogs, chickens, and a Guinea hen, people riding ATVs, and a man in his underwear. Coyotes, up to three documented, visited several nights. No wolves, or wolf-like dogs, were documented. The reporting party has not experienced any additional depredations since contacting the department. During a phone conversation with Specialist Heilhecker on Tuesday, the reporting party stated she had questioned her husband (as Specialist Heilhecker requested) as to whether or not he ever saw the tails of the animals causing the depredations. The reporting party stated her husband did see the tails and they curled. Specialist Heilhecker had explained earlier that wolves do not have curled tails.

Region 3 Wolf Activities

Wolf: Biologist Bernatowicz responded to three calls from the public regarding a “wolf” eating a deer along Highway 410 near the wilderness area. Fortunately one person stopped and photographed the animal, which was wearing a leather dog collar. The person taking the photo also believed there were dog tags. Similar “wolves” have been seen and photographed in previous years, but much closer to houses. A person is believed to be raising wolf/malamute hybrids in the area.

Highway 410 Wolf-hybrid



REGION 1

NO REPORT SUBMITTED

REGION 2

Wildfire: A wildfire started Sunday afternoon near Monitor, Wash. that quickly spread and involved a dozen homes.

The location of the fire coincides with portions of those areas burned in the 2012 Wenatchee Complex fire west of Wenatchee. Embers from the wildfire caused starts in several industrial buildings in North Wenatchee. At this time roughly 1800 acres have burned. Fires started during record high temperatures of 108 degrees in the Wenatchee area.



GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Chelan County Bighorn Sheep: Gallie conducted bighorn sheep surveys, focusing on lamb productivity for the year. The Swakane herd was cooperative with 99 identified, including 62 ewes, 31 lambs, and six yearling rams. Surveys over the past several years have returned higher lamb counts than what has been typical, with lamb:ewe ratios in the 40-50 range the last few years. Rams were not viewed during these surveys. However, we estimate this herd at 140-150 sheep. High temperatures, even in the early morning hours, caused poor counts on both the Manson and Chelan Butte herds, and surveys will be attempted again in the coming weeks. Biologist Volsen contacted a local resident concerning a report of a bighorn sheep seen in the Squilchuck drainage south of Wenatchee. The resident watched a bighorn sheep grazing near the home for two hours prior to sunset, and has not seen the animal since. This is an unusual sighting as we have not observed sheep between Hwy 97 and Jumpoff Ridge to the south in the last ten years. Biologist Volsen worked with WSU Contractor Henise to discuss domestic sheep and goat interactions with bighorns in Chelan County. Several new areas of concerns were identified for future work to evaluate the potential for contact between wild bighorns and domestic animals. Biologist Volsen, Section Manager Harris, and WDFW staff from the Okanogan and Yakima met with the USFS staff to discuss bighorn sheep, sheep habitat, and

domestic grazing allotments. Data is being compiled by WDFW biologists for additional analysis on risk of contact across ranges in east central Washington.

Ewes and spring lambs in the Swakane herd – Photo by J. Gallie



Golden Eagle Research: Biologist Fitkin assisted Research Biologist Watson with the capture and radio-marking of a near fledgling golden eagle in the Methow Watershed. The healthy young bird is now carrying a solar-powered satellite transmitter that could potentially provide data for several years. This project will provide valuable data on many aspects of golden eagle ecology including prey selection, territory use, juvenile survival, migration behavior, lead exposure, etc. We hope to radio a second Methow eagle from another territory in early July.



Biologist Fitkin and near-fledgling golden eagle – Photo by WDFW



Formidable eagle weaponry – Photo by WDFW

Wildlife Areas

Chiliwist Wildlife Area Biocontrol Releases for Diffuse Knapweed: Manager Haug performed 18 biocontrol releases on the Chiliwist Wildlife Area to aid in the control of diffuse knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*). Each release contained a mixture of 300 *Larinus minutus* and *Bangastermus fausti* to help the control of this very prevalent noxious weed which is thriving after the Carlton Complex Fire. The fire nearly wiped out all biocontrol agents for knapweed and dalmatian toadflax on the wildlife area. It will be crucial in the years to come to continue building up these populations to regain a handle on the problem (see picture below). Thank you very much to Jennifer Andreas with WSU Extension and the Integrated Weed Control Project for providing the insects. WDFW is very appreciative!



One of the larger patches of diffuse knapweed (approx. five acres) on the Chiliwist Wildlife Area where three biocontrol releases were performed (right picture) – Photos by Justin Haug

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

Wildlife Management

Goose Banding: Biologists Gallie and Volsen, Technicians Gibbs and Satterwhite, the Waterfowl Section, and six volunteers banded 88 Canada geese on private land south of Entiat on the upper Columbia River. While far fewer than the 225 geese that were observed only a few days prior, it was still a good sample of bands on this local population, that to date we believe is the first banding of this group in decades. The landowner is eagerly anticipating hearing on the future locations of geese from his property. Biologist Gallie met with Wells Wildlife Area staff to scout out possible sites on the Bridgeport Bar Unit for mourning dove banding. We selected two possible sites and set out bait to be checked in the coming weeks. Gallie plans to bait and evaluate two additional sites, one outside of East Wenatchee and the other in the Swakane Wildlife Area.

Technician Gibbs about to release a banded goose near Entiat – Photo by J. Gallie



Staff and volunteers begin process geese after a successful “round up” – Photo by J. Gallie

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



Wildlife Management

Methow Forest Rehabilitation Project: Okanogan Lands Forester Jamie Bass began the week working on putting together the archaeological services contract for the mechanical thinning scheduled for this winter. This included spending a day with Department Archaeologist Katherine Kelly researching known homestead sites, putting together the provisions for the contract, discussing possible cultural resource management plans, and determining the extent of the work to make sure the survey covers all possible disturbance areas.

Bass also met with Fuels Manager Tom Leuschen to do a field visit to discuss possible thinning by prescription fire possibilities. Some areas are difficult to access with commercial equipment, and being able to thin small acreages using slashing and prescription fire will meet the same restoration goals. Bass also provided Leuschen with data to help create burn units for the thinning units, and discussed the possibility of needing to manage landing slash.

Forester Bass also re-took photo monitoring point pictures of the Methow Post-fire Forest Management Project commercial thin areas. Despite browse earlier in the spring, much of the shrubs/hardwoods are resprouting from the base (Quaking aspen, elderberry, service berry, etc.) and understory vegetation of grasses, fireweed, yarrow, and other wildflowers cover the forest floor and even landings and roads. Most skid trails are harder to identify. Weed monitoring will continue to ensure weeds do not also take advantage of newly available resources and photo monitoring will continue to see if the forest floor regeneration is a trend. Bass GPSed and documented fire-scarred stumps in the sale area, as well as weeds found in other sites to relay to Assistant Manager Anna Sample.

Wildlife Areas

A visible fire scars in this stump; sampling will no doubt reveal more – Photo by Jamie Bass

Emergency Restriction Sign Placement:

With a late email notice from last Friday, Manager Furnari sent documents over to a local print shop Monday morning to make laminated copies of the Emergency Restriction signs. Direction was given to post “Emergency Restriction” signs on all WDFW Wildlife Areas after emergency rules have been put in place to protect WDFW lands from wildfire risk throughout eastern Washington. Assistant Manager Sample installed the signs on the Methow Wildlife Area at campgrounds, access site kiosks and roadways of the wildlife area. These rules restrict activities such as operating chainsaws, welding, or operating an acetylene or other torch with open flame; fires, campfires, and smoking; and operating a motor vehicle off developed roadways.



Methow Wildlife Area, Bear Creek Campground North – Photo taken 6/23 by Anna Sample

Private Lands/Access

Washington Cattlemen’s Association

Tour: Assistant District Biologist

Gallie, Biologist Comstock, and Rangeland Ecologist Burnham attended the Washington Cattlemen’s Association’s annual Public Lands Tour. WDFW was asked to attend to provide information on pygmy rabbit recovery in Washington, sage-grouse status and recovery, and updates on the draft CCAA. The tour was attended by approximately 60 cattle growers from throughout the region and other agency staff, including DNR, BLM, NRCS, and the new director of WSDA. Overall the tour went really well and updates from field staff on pygmy rabbits and sage-grouse were well-received. The CCAA was the topic of much discussion and is really being championed by WCA board members. WCA board members are eager to begin outreach to their community. WDFW staff displayed impeccable adherence to policy and ethics and refrained from partaking in the wine tasting scheduled at the end of the tour. It was torture.





NRCS Conservationist, Kevin Guinn, explains how to identify needle and thread grass



Black Bear in Douglas County – Photo by Eric Braaten



American Avocet in Douglas County – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW



Mule Deer Buck in Douglas County – Photo by Eric Braaten



Pied-billed Grebes with chick – Photo by J. Heinlen



Panoramic view at a recovering southeastern Texas Creek Unit – Photo by Sherry Furnari



9/10/14 Compare same general location with dozer line scar. 6/23/15 – Photo by Sherry Furnari



Herbaceous vegetation returns, whereas in most bitterbrush locations soils were scorched; lacking vegetation regrowth or recruitment at this time – Photo by Sherry Furnari



Mariposa lilies and arrowleaf balsamroot noted growing in some scorched areas – Photo by Sherry Furnari



A Northern Goshawk keeping a close eye on me in the Colville National Forest east of Tonasket – Photos by Justin Haug

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: NRW2 Nnanabu cleaned the pheasant rearing box, prepared it for a new set of pheasant chicks, and helped Assistant Manager Sak transfer the pheasant chicks into it.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman went out into the field with USFS Researcher Theresa Lorenz who is doing research on white-headed woodpeckers. Huffman assisted Lorenz with banding and attaching radio transmitters to chicks just before they fledged from the nest. The nest was located on a USFS section in the Oak Creek area that had been thinned and burned several years ago. The nest had four chicks in it, which is only the third time Lorenz has seen that many in her five years of research.



Male (left) and female white-headed woodpecker chicks from a nest in the Oak Creek area. The USFS has been conducting research in the area for about five years. Researcher Theresa Lorenz monitors the nest and captures the chicks just before fledging to attach leg bands and radio transmitters.

Harvesting Contract Compliance: Forester Mackey completed harvesting contract compliance. The harvester does not have a log loader on site yet due to mechanical issues. This has resulted in a delay of delivering product to the mills. It is unlikely that any logs will be delivered until next fiscal year. Harvesting and processing of logs is moving along well and Unit 3-1 is looking good. The harvester also had a new fire tank delivered that attaches to the skidder blade for deployment into the woods in case of a fire.



Completed thinning operations in Unit 3-1 of the Oak Creek Timber Sale

New fire tank that is being used by the harvesting crew in case of a fire. The tank attaches directly to the blade on the skidder for easy deployment in the woods to the fire location.

Road Maintenance Contract for Oak Creek Timber Sale: Forester Mackey completed compliance checks on the road maintenance contract for the Oak Creek Timber Sale. The contractor began grading the Oak Creek Road. Due to the dry conditions the contractor is using two water trucks continuously. Work is progressing nicely and they should reach the first harvest unit by early this coming week.



The road contractor beginning watering and grading of the Oak Creek Road for the Oak Creek Timber Sale

Wildlife Management

Tri-Cities Canada Goose Roundup: District Biologist Fidorra with Waterfowl Specialist Wilson coordinated the Tri-Cities Canada Goose Roundup on June 26. Several District 4 staff and over 40 volunteers from the Richland Rod and Gun Club, Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society, and Washington Waterfowl Association, including a large number of eager kids, assisted. The extra help and use of kayaks and a jet boat made the captures surprisingly easy, with over 330 geese captured between two



locations. A photo of the event made the front page of the Tri-City Herald Newspaper:
<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2015/06/26/3627040/wild-geese-banded-for-research.html>



Canada Geese captured and banded at two river parks in the Tri-Cities

Dove Banding: District Biologist Fidorra prepared supplies for upcoming dove banding and pre-baited trap sites at the Ringold Fish Hatchery. Hatchery Specialist Roberts is assisting with baiting efforts. Dove banding will commence in early July.

Ungulate Management: District Biologist Fidorra, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand, and RPM McCorquodale met with Deer and Elk Biologists Nelson, Hoenes, and Hanson to discuss current and future management of ungulates in the district. Topics included the possibility of revisiting the Phase 1 sightability survey for mule deer this fall, which is coordinated by biologists across several districts, Rattlesnake Hills elk herd management, the option to begin GMU 373 deer surveys, and muzzleloader hunting regulations in GMU 381.

WDFW Bat Monitoring Project: District Biologist Fidorra retrieved a bat detector for the WDFW Bat Monitoring project in District 5 and relocated it to a site near Ritzville. Fidorra coordinated with Biologist Duvuvuei regarding the relocation of the second detector near Ephrata. During June, detectors were placed at six locations. This completed the first of three rounds of monitoring that will occur monthly during the summer of 2015.

Dead Burrowing Owl: A dead burrowing owl was seen on the Wild Watch Burrowing Owl Camera during the week and several citizens sent emails with concern. District Biologist Fidorra investigated and removed the carcass of a juvenile that had died 1-2 weeks prior, presumably of starvation.

Canada Goose Roundup: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman assisted State Waterfowl Specialist Wilson and District 4 staff with the annual Canada goose roundup and banding effort in the Tri-Cities. Plenty of volunteers were on hand to assist with the effort and trapping success was high.

SAFE Possible Enrollment: Stutzman met with a landowner in Franklin County who is considering enrolling in SAFE. Payment limitations, site prep, seed mixes, and program incentives were discussed and the landowner plans to enroll 600-900 acres in October when his current tenant agreement expires.

SAFE Contract: Stutzman met with a landowner to discuss prep work for his SAFE contract that he is planning on seeding this fall. The landowner has completed some of the recommended prep work but concerns about cereal rye and a soft seed bed remain. Stutzman will touch base after harvest to ensure he follows through with the remaining prep.

Mule Deer and Elk Management: Biologist Bernatowicz participated in a meeting with Statewide Deer and Elk specialists/section manager to review district surveys and management.

Goose Banding: Biologist Bernatowicz participated in two days of goose banding with Waterfowl Specialist Wilson, Section Manager Kraege, Biologist Duvuvuei, and numerous volunteers. A total of 223 geese were captured (210 new bands, 13 recaptures). New sites, outside the urban environment, were added this year. USDA (soon to be WDFW) employee Leuek was a great help in locating and capturing geese along the Columbia River.

Dove Banding: Biologist Bernatowicz picked up bait from the Yakama Nation, toured potential sites, and pre-baited with Yakama Nation Biologist Blodgett. Doves were concentrating by the end of the week.

Western Gray Squirrel: Biologist Bernatowicz checked two transects set out last month. Various California ground and Douglas squirrels were seen/photographed, but no hair was collected and few walnuts were missing. Elk moved a number of tubes and were caught on camera.



Elk picking up hair snare tube from under anchor log



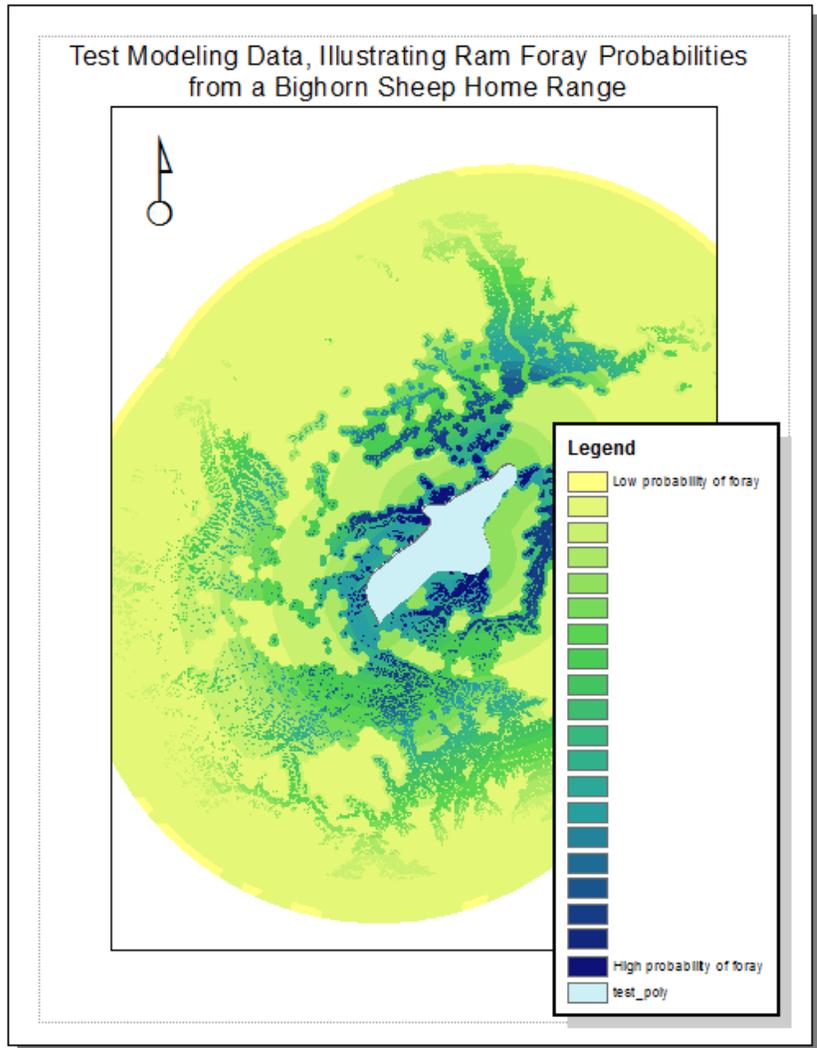
Elk rolling hair snare tube with nose

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Moore began looking into the details of the USFS Bighorn Sheep (BHS) Risk of Contact Analysis Tool. Moore read through all the documentation and ran a few test analyses to gain insight on how the model functions. The model determines contact probabilities using a BHS habitat use model and distance from the BHS home range.

Goose Trapping: Biologist Moore worked with Waterfowl Specialist Wilson, District Biologist Bernatowicz, other WDFW staff, and volunteers to capture and band approximately 100 geese in Kittitas County.

Deer & Elk Specialists

Meeting: Moore attended a meeting between District 8 staff and statewide deer and elk staff to review our surveys and management within the district.



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

Wildlife Management

Reactor Factor Event: District Biologist Fidorra was contacted with a request to participate in a community event and agreed to attend with materials for a table display on behalf of WDFW. The event is called Reactor Factor and takes place on Saturday, August 1, from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at The REACH museum in Kennewick. Reactor Factor is a family-focused event introducing and engaging youth and guests in a variety of activities focusing on scientific and cultural topics related to Hanford’s history and future, as well as science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics.

Elk Hazing: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued with coordinating and conducting hazing of elk in several winter wheat fields in the Rattlesnake Mountain area. With the current

hot and dry weather conditions, elk activity near the irrigated crops on the lower elevations near Prosser has increased.

Hanford Trail Camera: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand checked and replaced the camera card in the deployed trail camera along Hanford’s southern boundary. Although a handful of elk images were captured, overall elk activity has declined in the area.

Cold Creek Cost Share Fencing: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued to work on a cost share fencing project in the Cold Creek area. Most all the fence material was delivered to the site this week. A second delivery of wood posts will be delivered by June 30.

Nuisance Turkeys: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand assisted Wildlife Conflict Biologists Rasley and Earl with nuisance wild turkeys within the city limits of Walla Walla. A successful hazing operation was conducted.

Elk Conflict: Conflict Specialist Wetzel prepared damage contracts and permits for several landowners in two distinct areas this week. The first area has about 45 elk below the elk fence between Taneum Creek and Manastash Creek. These elk have been herded through reentry gates several times but prefer the alfalfa crop areas and make their way back to the east side of the elk fence. The second area is the Badger Pocket, where elk activity has increased lately, possibly due to drying conditions on the YTC. Both areas will have hunting pressure August 1 from Master Hunters and landowner permits will also be available starting on that date. Additionally, two large landowners will have permits this year at that location, which may help dislodge these semi-resident elk.



Elk use of alfalfa field near Weaver Road



Elk bedding area in protected housing association ownership adjacent to alfalfa field

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: Assistant Manager Berry completed utilization monitoring for grazing on the Emerick Grazing Lease on the Worrell Ranch. Cows were moved off the property over the weekend. The property had limited use this year under the modified grazing permit and that was further reduced by the permittee due to a lack of water on the property.

Rotton Hay: Assistant Manager Berry found a load of rotten hay dumped in Cowiche parking lot that will have to be cleaned up.

Load of rotten hay dumped in the Cowiche Unit parking lot



RMAP Progress: Forester Mackey checked in on progress of RMAP in the Rock Creek Unit being completed by the Yakima Construction Shop. The crew will shut down work on June 30 as there is no Capital Funding provided in the upcoming biennium to complete needed RMAP work.

Oak Creek Timber Sale: Forester Mackey met with the hop poles purchaser for the Oak Creek Timber Sale on site to look at poles already manufactured to discuss quality. The meeting went well and resulted in identifying many pulp logs that would make an acceptable pole. Mackey conveyed the modified specs to the harvester. This should result in less pulp log producing and more of the higher value hops poles.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Double- Crested Cormorant Breeding Colony Survey: Biologist DeBruyn and Yarborough conducted a double-crested cormorant survey on a jetty in Drayton harbor near Blaine. These surveys are being done to document changes in cormorant distribution in response to “management activities” on the Columbia River. The number of nests in this colony increased from 276 last year to 605 in 2015, the number of adults was up from 688 to 831, and the number of chicks was up from 385 to 726.

Biologist DeBruyn counting cormorant nests near Blaine

Black Oystercatcher Surveys:

Biologists Milner and Cyra conducted a section of this year's black oystercatcher breeding surveys done in cooperation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Boat transportation in the San Juan Islands and Deception Pass area was provided courtesy of Officer Ralph Downes. Officer Downes' assistance saved us several hours of time for conducting the survey.



A typical Black Oystercatcher nest

Oregon Spotted Frog B.C. Recovery

Team Meeting: Biologist DeBruyn represented WDFW at a meeting with Canadian counterparts studying and managing Oregon spotted frogs in the lower mainland of British Columbia. The full day meeting covered a wide variety of topics relevant to activities in District 14.

Raptor and Eagle management:

Biologist DeBruyn and volunteers surveyed two golden eagle sites and a northern goshawk nest in the Mount Baker National Forest. No eagles were observed but the goshawk nest had two nearly fledged chicks. Feathers molted by adult goshawks were collected for analysis by others.

Common Loon Monitoring: Biologist Anderson visited a loon territory that was suspected to have hatched within a day or two prior to visit. Anderson observed both adults and a three day chick. A second pair continues on eggs which should hatch the second weekend in July if things progress well. Anderson made a visit to SMC, Nadeau, and Moolock lakes to reconnaissance for local loon use, as it had been seven years since the last examination. No birds were observed at those bodies of water.



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

Urban beaver management: Biologist Anderson spent time on the phone with representatives from city of Lake Forest Park, Humane Society of the United States, and other groups or citizens regarding trapping efforts, legalities and alternative management strategies to alleviate a flood situation at Brookside Elementary. <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/mom-fights-shoreline-school-district-about-beaver-and-wins/>

Northern Puget Sound Surveys: With the assistance of the Enforcement Program, District 13 Biologists Milner and Cyra completed a sizeable chunk of the remaining joint USFWS/WDFW nesting survey sites that were not covered earlier in the season due to weather. Weather again prevented a complete survey, but only four sites remain. Timing of events covered the span from incubation to mobile.



Incubating black oystercatcher in the northern Puget Sound



A well concealed, yet mobile young black oystercatcher



Partial osprey nest structure on a cell tower with an ineffective exclusion device with no alternative provided



New osprey platform and nest located adjacent to a cell tower with an effective exclusion and adjacent nesting provided

Wildlife Areas

Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project: The WDFW and Ducks Unlimited project team met to plan details of the second phase of the project, which involves advancing the preferred design alternative to permit level design, completing additional studies to inform the design, and working with stakeholders to advise public access and recreation features that will be incorporated. Immediate next steps include drafting a communications and outreach plan and engaging consultants to assist with design studies. Projects Coordinator Brokaw also talked with a reporter from the Everett Herald regarding the project.

Lake Terrell Draw Down: Manager Kessler and Natural Resource Technician Deyo monitored the lake water release valve to keep it clear and flowing for the lake drawdown. Once every five years we perform a lake water drawdown to help kill aquatic weeds and other vegetation in the shallow areas of Lake Terrell. The drawdown also allows us to shore up logs that help prevent island erosion and do other noxious weed control. Deyo cleaned out the release valve twice due to beavers that had plugged it up with mud and sticks.

Lake Terrell Barley Field Spraying: Natural Resource Technician Deyo sprayed herbicides on 54 acres of barley planted at the Lake Terrell Unit. These herbicides kill off weeds and vegetation that is in competition with the planted barley.

Nooksack Unit Marietta Slough Restoration Project Tour: Manager Kessler was contacted by a biologist with US Fish & Wildlife Service asking if he could tour the Marietta Slough Restoration Project with biologists from the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. The PNNL biologists are studying ways to control reed canary grass in restoration sites and the Marietta Slough project, which was completed in 2008, provided good information on a mature restoration site's conditions. Kessler used the John Deere Gator to take the biologists around to several points within the project area.

Private Lands/Access Management

Natural Resource Technician Otto and Deyo completed field preparation and barley planting on a five acre Migratory Bird Enhancement project in Skagit County



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

Wildlife Management

North Cascades Elk Management: Biologist Yarborough completed a map of Elk Area 4941. This was in response to a number of hunters unfamiliar with the area. The map will inform hunters on different land ownership in the area, access points, and places where hunting is prohibited.

11th Avenue NW Street End Park Dedication: Biologist Anderson, who consulted with the 2015 University of Washington Landscape Architecture Design/Build class regarding urban wildlife enhancement and local wildlife use around Ballard, was notified their project had been completed. Anderson was invited to attend the dedication of the new “11th Avenue Street End Park”. Anderson couldn’t make it but received some great pictures from King County staff he works with that did make it. The park should provide a nice watchable wildlife and general relaxation spot as opposed to the old concrete jungle it had been.

New Purple Martin gourds at the 11th Ave Street End Park in Ballard – Photo by Kim Stark



Wildlife Areas

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that seasonal mowing has begun at the unit. The parking lot and the dog training area received first priority. Three loads of gravel were also delivered to the unit for enhancement of the ADA duck blind entrance.

Samish River Unit Wetland Restoration Project: Skagit County issued the Fill and Grade Permit required for the project. All permits to construct the project are now issued except for the Stormwater Construction Permit from WA Dept. of Ecology, which will be issued this week. Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton received an estimate for hauling excavation spoils offsite to incorporate into the cost amendment that is under review by the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

Samish Unit Enhancement Project: Authorization to proceed with the project under Section 106 of Historic Preservation Act was issued by the WA Dept. of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. Upon review of the Fill and Grade Permit that was submitted last week, the county requested a Floodplain Development Permit application be submitted as well. Projects Coordinator Brokaw talked with a reporter from the Skagit Valley Herald regarding the project.

Stillwater Unit Wetland and Vegetation Maintenance: Projects Coordinator Brokaw presented a project idea to regional program managers that involved removing non-native vegetation in wetland areas and fallow fields on the Stillwater Unit of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area. Native plants will be installed in wetland areas. This presentation was necessary to follow a step in the Region 4 Restoration Pathway, which ensures all WDFW programs are engaged in restoration projects on WDFW lands. Brokaw and Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm are coordinating with Ducks Unlimited to include the project in an upcoming grant application.

British Petroleum Safety Zone Realignment: Manager Kessler realigned the west safety zone boundary on the British Petroleum Unit. Due to a change in use of a neighboring property, Kessler pulled up and moved several signs to make more area available for safe pheasant hunting. Kessler also checked the other safety zone boundaries to make sure the signs were still up and easily visible.

Lake Terrell and Intalco Units Field and Trail Mowing: Natural Resource Technician Deyo continued mowing reed canary grass in fields and trails at the Lake Terrell and Intalco units. Repeated mowing of reed canary grass helps to keep it from going to seed, and makes it less productive. Mowing the fields now allows time for the grass to regrow, and be at the optimal height for pheasant hunting in the fall.

Samish Unit: Meis monitored contractor spraying of barley crops at the Samish and Leque units. Meis treated thistles along field edges at the Samish Unit. Meis sprayed ten acres of corn at the Samish Unit.

Leque Island Unit: Manager Rotton met with Ducks Unlimited Engineers on Leque Island to discuss some of the objectives of the project as well as issues and concerns of the neighboring landowners during the walking tour of the site. Steve Liske, the local project engineer, enlisted technical input from a Ducks Unlimited project engineer out of the San Francisco Office, who has been involved in a number of estuary and marsh restoration projects in the Bay Area. Manager Rotton attended the Leque Island Technical Advisory Committee in the Mill Creek Office to discuss the next phase of the project planning and to identify the next steps. Meis treated poison hemlock at various locations throughout the Leque Unit. Cosgrove sprayed noxious weeds at the Leque Island Unit. Weeds targeted include poison hemlock, Canada and bull thistle, and blackberry.

Skagit Headquarters: Cosgrove mowed grass in a native plant restoration area at the Headquarters Unit.

DeBay's Slough Unit: Meis spot sprayed blackberries in grass planted areas at the DeBay's Unit.

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

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman received a call from a landowner on Orcas Island that has up to 30 deer utilizing her property on a regular basis. The landowner indicated that a nearby neighbor is feeding deer which has increased the local population utilizing the area. Within the coming weeks, Specialist Witman will be meeting with several landowners in the area to discuss the effects of deer feeding.

Elk Fence Options: Specialist Witman met with a landowner in Day Creek to discuss elk exclusionary fence options. Currently, plans are being finalized with co-managers who are assisting with supplying fencing materials. Further plans are being worked on with the landowner to provide a passage corridor for elk movement along the Day Creek drainage.

Deer Conflict: Specialist Witman consulted with a property owner in Whatcom County who is experiencing deer damage on their property. Several low cost solutions were provided to the landowner who was very appreciative of the on-site visit and will be reporting back on the success of deterrents. Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell spoke with several landowners about deer related conflict matters. Supervisor Caldwell informed the landowners on what measures they could take to prevent damage by deer and methods they could employ to keep themselves safe from aggressive animals.

Specialist Witman continues to monitor elk activity near a crop of Jerusalem Artichokes in Skagit County. Cameras were installed to monitor the activity.



Urban Peregrine Falcon Management:

Biologist Anderson has been in touch with a number of local businesses concerned about the current fledging of our local peregrines. Seattle has at least six pairs that annually create some great peregrine watching, as well as antics for locals – young birds running around streets, getting stuck in areas like power substations, as well as perching on downtown skyscrapers while realtors show a penthouse to prospective buyers – and then prospective buyer gets struck in the head by an adult while taking in the penthouse deck view. That was a concerning call. Anderson had a long and productive discussion with the realtor and building management regarding the “Peregrine Kamikaze” incident. The prospective buyer was a bit bludgeoned but luckily ok.

Wildlife Areas

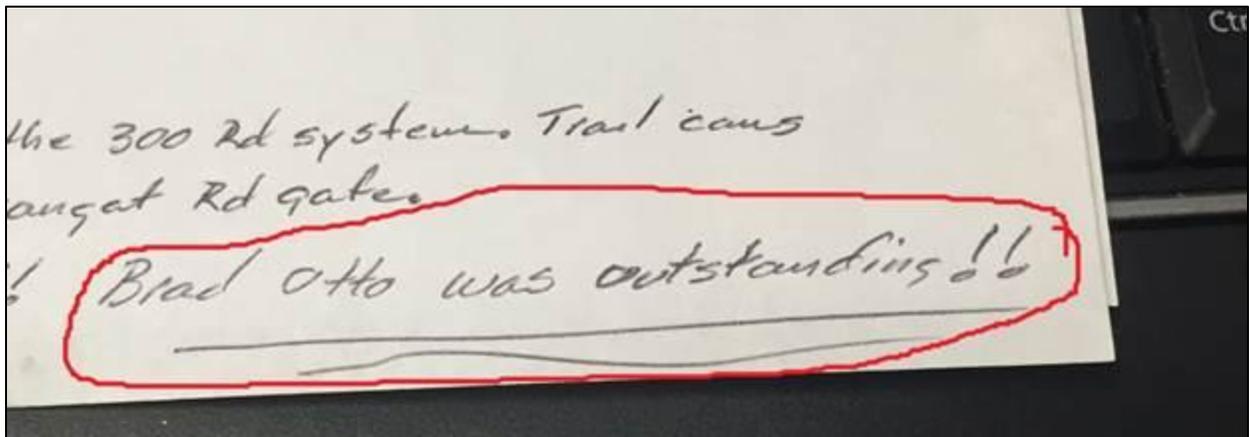
Volunteer Opportunities: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Bran Boehm continues to work with WDFW Volunteer Coordinator Steve Dazey to sign up community and Master Hunter volunteers for upcoming field work. Master Hunter volunteers are currently assisting with a parking lot monitoring project on the four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

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm approved the delivery of truckloads of free wood mulch to be used on the interior forest roads and trails. Volunteer Mark Ryder coordinated the delivery by working with Premiere Excavating, a local land clearing business.

Fir Island Farms Unit: Manager Rotton attended the weekly construction meeting for the Fir Island Farms restoration project. Items discussed included the dewatering plan, construction and permitting submittals, the schedule of construction events, and the upcoming ground breaking event. Cosgrove mowed the top of the Bayfront dike and weed-eated areas around the parking lot at the Fir Island Farms Unit.

Private Lands/Access Management

Spring Bear Hunt: The spring bear hunt concluded on 6/15/2015 and Biologist Hans is beginning to receive hunter surveys. Biologist Hans will prepare a summary report once all survey data has been compiled.



Praise given by a hunting participant toward Natural Resource Technician Otto for his excellent customer service throughout the spring bear hunt season

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Biologist Hans contacted two landowners about enrolling land in the Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program. Biologist Hans and Natural Resource Technician Otto toured multiple sites in Skagit and Snohomish counties to check on site conditions, crop rotations, barley planting progress, and upcoming mowing/spraying needs.

Elk Hunt Enrollment and Planning: Biologist Hans spoke with a landowner who is interested in enrolling property into the Private Land Access Program for elk hunting this fall. Biologist Hans and Natural Resource Technician Otto met to discuss the upcoming 418 Elk Hunt, which included going over files from previous years and preparing a task list for the 2015 elk hunt.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Steve Dazey conducted two teaching team evaluations. The evaluations covered the team that teaches at Darrington High School and the team that teaches at the Granite Falls Sportsman Club. Both teams are doing a good job delivering the hunter education curriculum to their students. While at the Granite Falls site, Coordinator Dazey also met with Instructor Knepper to complete his Location Inventory Report by verifying serial numbers on department issued firearms in his possession. Dazey met with Instructor Bosman and delivered supplies to him for his upcoming classes, assisted Instructor Boling with registering his classes, and arranged for two chief instructors to order firearms from the Olympia warehouse to meet the live fire firearm policy going into effect Jan 1, 2017. Coordinator Dazey activated six classes in the Kalkomey system. Dazey also answered an instructor's question concerning reciprocity with the Texas Hunter Education Program.

Pre-Service Training: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey conducted the final session of a pre-service training for seven new instructors. A big thank you to the Skagit Shooting Range for allowing us to use the range for classes and the PST session. Following the PST, all seven new instructors were put into the Kalkomey system and their contact information was forwarded to the teams teaching in their area. Skagit and Whatcom counties being under served, the chief instructors in those areas were very pleased to learn of new instructors in their area looking to join their teams. With a high volume of applicants in the Snohomish and King county area, Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey arranged a venue and scheduled a pre-service training at the Boy Scout camp near Lake Roesiger in late August.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator: Volunteer Coordinator Dazey referred a Master Hunter volunteer to assist DFW's Scott Wittman in elk fencing maintenance in the Day Creek area. Dazey followed up with a MH volunteer who is working on scanning slides for the Region 4 archives. Dazey initiated a search for volunteers to assist with building and grounds maintenance at the Mill Creek office. Dazey arranged to have student manuals sent to the Camp Director of the Girls Washington State Youth Conservation Camp on Orcas Island. The camp is an amazing and empowering experience for young women ages 12-16 to learn hunter education, water safety, archery, fly tying, hiking, survival, and leadership, along with a variety of other classes.

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

Leadership Training: Biologist Yarborough completed Leadership Module 2, "Hiring Right", in Olympia.

WAFWP Job Rep Training: Milner participated in annual training for the Washington Association of Fish and Wildlife Professionals.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Black-tailed Deer Research: Biologist Bergh followed up on a mortality signal from one of the fawns in the Washougal study cluster this week. The fawn's collar was found just off of a trail and no other remains were found. No scat or tracks of any predators were found nearby either. It's likely that the predator that killed the fawn carried the collar along the trail before leaving it. There is now one remaining radio-collared fawn in the Washougal study cluster (three fawns were captured from two does earlier this spring).

Western Gray Squirrel Survey: Biologist Bergh started the first checks of the western gray squirrel survey transects. All of the hair tubes she checked this week were undisturbed, so no hair identification or hair tube replacement was needed.

Columbia River Streaked-horned Lark Surveys: In cooperation with Wildlife Diversity Division and the Center for Natural Lands Management, Biologists Stephens, Doorly, and Holman conducted a third lark survey on an island in the lower Columbia River. Streaked-horned larks require open or very-lightly vegetated habitats for nesting. The prairies of south Puget Sound, Long Beach Peninsula, dredge-spoil islands, and nearby uplands in the lower Columbia provide suitable habitat. The streaked-horned lark is listed as Threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Endangered by Washington State due to their low population numbers and loss and degradation of habitat.

Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area

Bear Creek Riparian Restoration and Enhancement: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald met with a contractor this past week who was hired to spray scotch broom along a two and half mile section of Bear Creek in the Mudflow Unit. The contractor had a crew of four who worked two days to treat all of the scotch broom within 100 feet of the creek as part of an RCO grant project to restore and enhance the riparian habitat along the stream for anadromous fish and wintering elk. This was the first phase of the project to remove undesirable vegetation from along the creek, with a follow up treatment if needed happening later this year. Planting of trees and shrubs along the creek should happen in February and March of 2016.

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Fuels Reduction Project Phase 3: The contractor completed this 16.3 acre project in five days. Given the project progressed rapidly, the Wildlife Area Manager and DNR Project Compliance Officer Lennon visited the worksite and were both pleased with the work being

done. The company owner worked with eight employees to accomplish the job efficiently and a post-treatment inspection found no issues to address.



Phase 3 before treatment



Phase 3 after treatment



Phase 3 thinning and pruning



Phase 3 slash disposal

Fuels Reduction Project Phase 4: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis continued work on Phase 4 of the project, starting early to avoid high temperatures and shutting down power equipment at 1:00pm due to high fire danger. The area is at Industrial Fire Precaution Level 2, which calls for certain restrictions to avoid inadvertently starting a fire while working in the woods.

Soda Springs Agricultural Lease: The lessee cut hay on Anderson Field this week as haying is in full swing around Goldendale.



Soda Springs Agricultural Lease

Klickitat Wildlife Area Management Planning: Region 5 Wildlife, Habitat, and Fish program staff met with the planning team from Olympia to further define and refine the new management plan for the Klickitat Wildlife Area. Topics discussed included ecological integrity, species and habitats, forest management, and recreation and road management.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER

WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES.

Access

Oneida: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes hauled the mowers, mowed the Oneida fields and parking area, and posted information on invasive aquatic species.



Oneida access site

Shillapoo South: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes picked up and hauled several hundred pounds of trash including a refrigerator, reclining chairs, etc.

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

D-10 Wildlife Conflict

Bear: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin placed a camera at a residence in Napavine after receiving reports about a bear coming onto the property and rubbing on an RV where the tenant lives. Conklin checked the camera twice in a one week period and did not detect any wildlife coming into the property. Conklin gave the tenant basic wildlife safety information and gave her a business card.

In addition, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin verified additional bear damage permit areas on industrial timberlands in Cowlitz County.

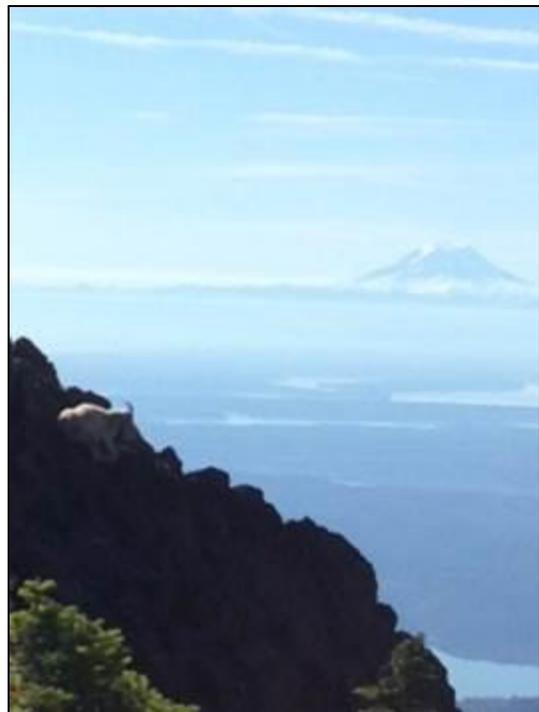
Elk: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin is working with a land owner in the Grays River elk damage hunt area. The land owner wishes to continue with providing a hunt by reservation option for hunters participating in the damage hunt. Conklin also talked with several hunters seeking information on the Grays River damage hunt scheduled to begin in August.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Olympic Goats: Recent hiker reports suggesting negative or potentially 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 four 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, Sgt. Alexander, and Officer Jewett, along with volunteers Dan S. and Bill B., 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 seven mountain goats, including kids, hazed with clear paint balls one yearling goat, and marked with orange or yellow paint balls two adult male goats.



A mountain goat rests near the summit of Mt. Ellinor with Mount Rainier in the background –
Photo by Officer Jewett

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

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

Number of nests laid as first clutch: 13

Number of nests laid as second clutch: 4

Number of missed nests (females nested but nest not located so not confirmed): 9

Number of predated nests: 8

We are also beginning second clutches. Twenty-four females may still lay a second clutch of eggs. Monitoring will continue thru July 18 or until female behavior suggests that females have completed the nesting season.

Biologist Murphie, along with volunteers Dan S. and Bill B., continued efforts to clear encroaching vegetation from the northern meadow at the other western pond turtle release site in the Puget Sound area. This meadow provides important nesting habitat for turtles at this location.

Sea Otter Survey: District Biologist McMillan and Biologist Ament participated in the annual sea otter count along the WA coast June 23 – June 25. The survey was conducted a few weeks earlier than usual this year to help avoid problems with low fog that often grounded the airplane in past years. District Biologist McMillan was stationed at the Duc Point observation location. Biologist Ament was stationed at the Norwegian Point observation location for June 23 and at Bluff Point for June 24 and 25. The survey team at these sites consisted of Ed Bowlby (retired from Marine Sanctuary), Liam Antrim (Marine Sanctuary), Jessica Hale (UW Graduate student), and volunteer Mary Sue Brancato. Biologist Ament would partner up with another observer each day. The highest count of otters at Norwegian Point on June 23 was 31 otters. The highest count for the two-day effort at Bluff Point was 79 otters. The main rafting group at both sites included females with pups but a few lone male otters were also observed in the vicinity. A few otters with flipper tags were observed. A high number of 130 otters were reported at Sand Point. Otter counts for Duc Pont and other observation sites are unknown. The weather for flying was quite good compared to recent years. There was very minimal ground fog and low flight ceiling as present in past years. The plane was able to conduct a full pre-survey flight on June 22. The plane was successfully able to conduct two flights per day on June 23 and June 24. The plane did conduct two more flights on June 25, but some low fog obscured the views in some locations along the survey route. Ground counters were present at the usual observation locations along the coast for the three days. They had good visibility and were able to conduct suitable counts. A combination of the ground counts and aerial survey counts (for the three-day effort) will hopefully allow for producing a good estimate of the sea otter population along the WA coast. The total sea otter count for the 2014 survey was 1,573 otters. Survey results for 2014 indicate growth of the Washington sea otter population continues to remain positive. Overall, the finite rate of increase for the Washington population since 1989 is 7.6% ($R_2 = 0.96$).

UW Graduate student Jessica Hale conducting a sea otter count at Bluff Point

