

Wildlife Program

Week of October 19 – October 25, 2015

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Producer Contacts: Biologist Shepherd and Natural Resource Worker Weatherman contacted producers in the Smackout area concerning recent wolf activity. Biologist Shepherd and Natural Resource Worker Weatherman contacted producers in other state and federal grazing allotments in Stevens and Pend Oreille counties, including the LeClerc Allotment. The discussions centered on the number of cattle removed and remaining on the grazing allotments. Natural Resource Worker Weatherman also reported all cattle observed to the respective livestock producer.

Wolf Territory Monitoring: Biologist Shepherd, Natural Resource Worker Weatherman, and Conflict Technician Bendixen conducted nightly patrols in U.S. Forest Service grazing allotments and on private property within the Smackout pack home range in Stevens County.

Range Rider Contacts: Range riders were present in the LeClerc and other US Forest Service (USFS) allotments. Biologist Shepherd and Natural Resource Worker Weatherman contacted range riders working in these allotments.

Cattle Depredation: Biologist Shepherd confirmed a wolf depredation injury on a calf in the Smackout pack territory and concluded the investigation report.

District 1 Wolf Management Meeting: Supervisor McCanna and Acting Carnivore Section Manager Becker facilitated the first District 1 wolf team meeting. This will be a weekly meeting to assure all staff involved with wolves are sharing information and sharing upcoming activities. This coordination will assist in responding to public inquiries or sharing information with WDFW.

Wolf Territory Monitoring: Natural Resource Worker Weatherman patrolled U.S. Forest Service grazing allotments in west Pend Oreille County for any cattle remaining in the Dirty Shirt pack home range.

Huckleberry Wolf Pack: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett updated the WDFW Huckleberry Chronology after contact was made with two producers in the area. Bennett also contacted Commissioner Dashiell to schedule an appointment to meet to discuss possible producers in Stevens County that may need to be contacted by WDFW.

Representative and Commissioner Wolf Conference Call: Supervisor McCanna and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Shepherd participated on the wolf conference call. Several items were discussed with a potential in person meeting being held to discuss operator changes due to wolves being on the landscape and how WDFW staff ramped up involvement to assist operators.

Wolf Collar Location Search in Whitman County: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett and Supervisor McCanna checked for several wolf collar frequencies around the Rock Lake area after a recent reported sighting of a possibly collared wolf was shared with Bennett. Contact was made with local cattle producers to see if they had any recent canid sightings. No frequencies were discovered and no sightings were reported. McCanna and Bennett also checked three hunting parties while out.

Huckleberry Collar Webpage Down: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett worked with IT to find out why several collars around the state were not downloading new locations. Concerns from producers were relayed to IT for investigation. The webpage was functioning appropriately within 24 hours of notification to IT.

Tucannon Pack: Biologist Earl travelled to Dayton to assist Conflict Specialist Rasley with locating and informing landowners in Columbia County who have cattle in the area where the pack was currently located. Earl and Rasley attempted to track the collar on the WDFW web site, but it was down as of 12:00 a.m. on October 13.

Tucannon Pack: Biologist Earl and Conflict Specialist Rasley received several calls this week about the sensitive sharing website not reporting new collar data. Earl and Rasley were notified via email from Olympia that they had experienced some difficulties and that it would be fixed.

OR14: While in Dayton, Biologist Earl met with Conflict Specialist Rasley and Sergeant Mosman and assisted them with the investigation in the shooting of OR-14. District Biologist Wik assisted Sergeant Mosman on a necropsy of OR-14.

Sighting Reported: Biologist Earl received a call from a USDA Biologist who was assisting with the removal of cattle in a CRP field off of Knotgrass Ridge. The RP stated that what he saw was “definitely too big to be a coyote.”

Sightings: Biologist Roussin was able to follow up on a reported sighting within the Tucannon pack’s range. It appeared the reporting party saw the collared male from this pack. District Biologist Wik received a trail camera picture of the breeding female from this pack from a hunter within the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness.

Status Updates: Below you will find the update from September 29 – October 26, 2015 of wolf sightings, camera work, and depredations in Lincoln, Spokane, and Whitman counties.

County	Sightings (webpage and contact)	Camera, WCS Bennett and District	Depredations
Lincoln	<u>One reported</u> 1. Sprague – 10/13/2015, unconfirmed One grey adults reported	No cameras out during this period.	<u>One reported</u> 1. Davenport – 10/23/2015 (?) horse, Determination: Structural.
Spokane	<u>Five reported</u> 1. Spokane – 10/03/2015, unconfirmed One adult reported 2. Spokane Valley – 10/15/2015, unconfirmed One animal reported howling 3. Medical Lake – 10/16/2015, unconfirmed One animal reported 4. Valleyford – 10/18/2015, unconfirmed Six animals reported 5. Medical Lake – 10/21/2015, unconfirmed Two animals reported	<u>One camera out</u> 1. Elk (1) – November check and retrieval	<u>Three reported</u> 1. Spokane – 10/04/2015 domestic dog, Determination: Non-wolf (possible cougar). 2. Mead – 10/12/2015 goose, Determination: Non-Wolf (possible cougar) 3. Newman Lake – 10/19/2015 domestic dog, Determination: Non-wolf (cougar)
Whitman	<u>One reported</u> 1. Benge – 10/2015, unconfirmed One adult reported	<u>One camera out</u> 1. Ewan - November check and retrieval	No depredations reported to WDFW for this period.

Region 5 Wolf Activities

Wolf: A hunter and son reported seeing a black wolf while hunting. The father and son said the wolf was spotted cresting a hill in open grazing land off of Horseshoe Bend Road in Klickitat County. The wolf then crossed the road and went out of sight to the south. Conflict Specialist Peterson met with the area rancher who is in contract with WDFW as part of the range rider program. Peterson was unable to locate any tracks or sign to confirm the sighting. A game camera was deployed and will be monitored for future sightings.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Western Pond Turtle: Biologist Lisa Hallock and Fish Health Specialist Katherine Haman reviewed an action plan for the western pond turtle produced through an initiative of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums known as “Saving animals from extinction” (SAFE). The initiative is working to convene scientists and stakeholders to identify threats, develop action plans, raise new resources and engage the public to save rare species. Western pond turtles, an endangered species in Washington, were selected as one of the ten species from around the world that will be emphasized in 2015.

Shrub-Steppe Protection: On October 21, Farm Bill Coordinator Mike Kuttel Jr. and Biologist Mark Teske participated in a meeting in Ellensburg about shrub-steppe protection. Meeting attendees included staff from the Governor’s office, Pheasants Forever, Washington Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Yakima Training Center, The Nature Conservancy, and the Trust for Public Lands. The idea of creating a mitigation bank for Washington State was popular and the group committed to working on this issue through the Governor’s Advisory Council for Inter-jurisdictional Regulatory Collaboration (ACIRC).

Coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regarding two Salamander Species: Biologists Lisa Hallock and Lori Salzer prepared information for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service after their 90-day finding on a petition to list Cascade torrent salamander and Columbia torrent salamander. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found that petitions presented for these species provided substantial scientific information to indicate that the petitioned actions may be warranted. Consequently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service initiated a review of the status of these species and requested scientific data and other information.

Candidate Conservation Assessments: Biologist Lisa Hallock prepared draft Candidate Status Assessments for the common sharp-tailed snake and sagebrush lizard. For the common sharp-tailed snake, available information is insufficient to make an informed status determination other than to recommend the species remain a Species of Greatest Conservation Need based on apparently rarity. The sagebrush lizard may warrant listing as a Sensitive Species based on the limited number of known populations and its close association with a declining habitat type. Enough concern exists to warrant a collection of additional data to include in a full species status review.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Vulcan Bighorn Sheep Survey: Wildlife Program staff, including Moose & Bighorn Sheep Biologist Jared Oyster, Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Annemarie Prince and District Wildlife Biologist Dana Base, teamed with biologists from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management in conducting a two day census of bighorn sheep at the Vulcan Mountain area. The composite total of bighorn sheep observed over the two day period was 45, including 12 rams, 20 ewes, and 13 lambs. This is the highest number of bighorn sheep observed at Vulcan since 2009, when 52 were observed.

An important portion of the bighorn sheep range at Vulcan in the hills beyond the Kettle River



Lincoln Cliffs Bighorns: Biologist Lowe located and observed sheep in the Lincoln Cliffs herd, primarily to check on health and condition after a recent cougar-killed ewe tested positive for the bluetongue virus. The sheep observed appeared healthy; there is a lot of activity in Lincoln, as rams have moved into town in pursuit of the ewes.



Ram on his way to join a group of ewes



Ewe, lamb, and young ram traveling the road in Lincoln

Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites

Upland habitat restoration on Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area: Staff members are gearing up for planting four fields on three projects, starting next week. The seed mixes for all the fields arrived at Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area headquarters on Thursday. Valmar seeder delivery has been delayed until early next week. Borrowing a tractor from another wildlife area didn't work out, so staff will be renting a tractor from a local farmer. This will allow Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Mike Finch and Natural Resource Worker Jim Bauer to seed simultaneously.

Finch on tractor, Bauer guiding, as they off-load grass seed mix from the vendor's trailer



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

Wildlife Management

Kettle Range Moose: Assistant District Biologist Annemarie Prince was contacted by moose hunter Joe Marks, who harvested this nice bull out of the Kettle Range on the second day of his hunt.



REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT FISH AND WILDLIFE

Yakama Nation Fisheries-Chewuch River Rights: Manager Furnari met with Yakama Nation Fisheries Biologist Butler onsite to review progress made on the four replacement campsites and the road leading to them. She then hiked through the nearly completed side channel creation project with scattered logs and installed plants surrounded by plastic deer fence.

Chewuch River Rights project nearing completion with deer fence & plants installed –
Photo by Sherry Furnari

Shrub Steppe Restoration: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Dupont has summer fallowed this project over the past two years on Silver Hill in the Scotch Creek Unit. This week, Manager Olson put the finishing touches on the fields by harrowing to smooth the surface and packing to firm the seedbed. We still need some help from Mother Nature to further firm the seedbed with a little precipitation. Right after that we will be ready to seed the native bunch grass and forb seed mix. This area is critical to sharp-tailed grouse, especially this year, as Silver Hill partially escaped the summer fires.



Restoration field ready for seeding – Photo by Jim Olson



From this...



...to this, hopefully

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

Deer Check Station: Biologists Fitkin and Heinlen staffed the check station for the second weekend of the general modern firearm season. Over the two weekends we contacted 245 hunters and examined 106 deer, the

greatest number of animals through the check station since the implementation of the 3-pt restriction for mule deer in 1997. The check station success rate of 43% is also the highest in many years. It's important to note that check station data is generally biased toward successful hunters, so the overall success rate is likely to be somewhat lower. Even so, every indication suggests this was a good year for hunters in the Okanogan District.

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

KOMW Weekly Interview: Operations Manager Swedberg completed the 89th & 90th “Ask Dale” weekly segments talking, respectively, about volunteer opportunities to help with post fire projects on WDFW lands and remaining vigilant regarding the potential of fires while out recreating despite the seemingly low fire danger conditions. Swedberg spoke with Becki Andrist at KOMW. All interview segments are now online at <https://komwaskdale.wordpress.com/>.

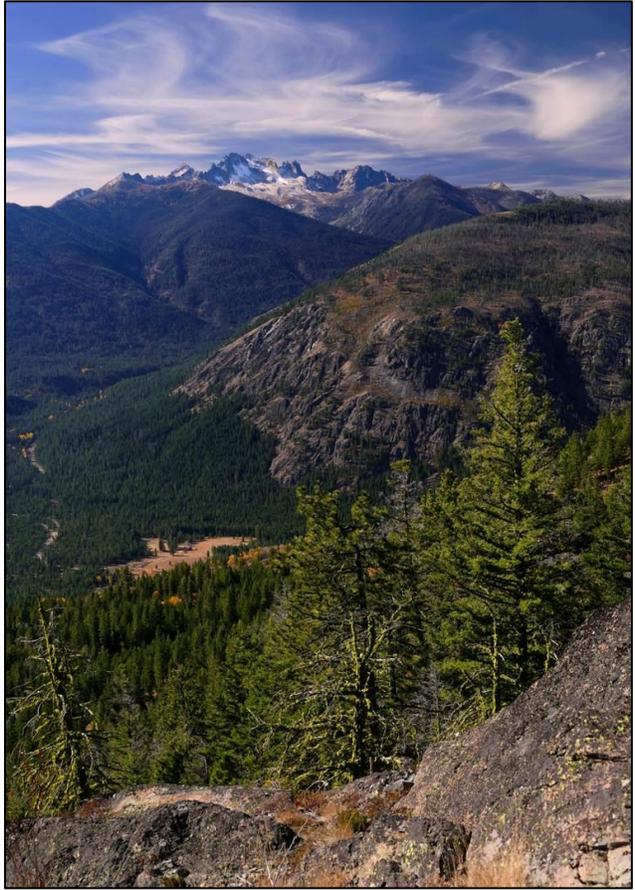
Omak Chronicle Reporter Tour of Prescribed Burn Areas on Sinlahekin: Manager Swedberg and Manager Haug took Omak Chronicle Sports Reporter Al Camp on a tour of the prescribed burned areas on Sinlahekin that changed wildfire behavior. Mr. Camp was very interested in learning about dry forests and fire and how prescribed fire and fuels treatment changes wildfire behavior. He will be doing a write-up on what he learned.

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

Big Valley Repairs: Manager Furnari stopped by to review CAMP's progress with Big Valley repairs. The electrician & OCEC had made their repairs/connections and water was back up and running again for the grazer's bulls. She will have to go back out next week to document the final results.



CAMP's repair efforts at Big Valley Unit – Photo by Sherry Furnari



Methow Wildlife Area, Silver Star Mountain, Upper Methow River – Photos by Scott Fitkin

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Manager Lopushinsky took CAMP engineer Erin Muldoon into Brushy Creek to survey the problem culvert there. The stream is bypassing the culvert and the culvert needs to be replaced.

CAMP engineer Erin Muldoon surveying problem culvert at Brushy Creek, Colockum Wildlife Area

Mule Deer Season: Mule deer modern firearm season started Oct. 17 and runs through Oct. 27 on the Colockum. Hunters are moving in camps, with some folks planning to stay for both deer and elk season on the Colockum.

Mule deer spotted this week in GMU 329 (Quilomene), Colockum Wildlife Area

Wildlife Management

Jackrabbit Status: District Biologist Fidorra completed the draft black-tailed jackrabbit status assessment.

Badger Genetic Sampling: District Biologist Fidorra set hair snares on burrows in Benton County to collect badger samples for genetic sampling.

Trapping Exam: District Biologist Fidorra coordinated with Region 3 staff to offer a trapper exam for a local trapper, but was stood up on the morning of test day.

Blue Tongue Deer: District Biologist Fidorra examined a white-tailed deer carcass that a hunter brought in from the Dayton area. The animal appeared to have blue-tongue and Fidorra provided the hunter with information regarding consuming and disposing of the carcass.



Public Calls: District Biologist Fidorra received and resolved many calls from the public related to hunting, wildlife, and regulatory inquiries. In addition to a high volume of hunting related questions, several calls received were related to flickers that are damaging homes.

Pronghorn Observations: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman and Natural Resource Technician 2 Kaelber observed 27 pronghorns near the Yakama Reservation boundary.

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Bernatowicz responded to another report of a dead bighorn ram in the Yakima River Canyon. The report was from very near the ram recovered last week. The person originally finding the animal was contacted and it was determined to be a different animal. The person hid the head for fear someone would take it and called Olympia. The directions to the carcass were not very good and there was other miscommunication. The skull and femur will be retrieved when the person returns from deer hunting.

Sample Collections: Bernatowicz continued to coordinate sample collections for late season permit holders in Selah Butte and Clemans Mountain. Nearly all have responded to the letters asking to collect samples. Samples from the ram collected last Friday were shipped to the diagnostics lab.

Bighorn Sheep Pneumonia: Bernatowicz finished a draft of possible management actions for bighorn sheep herds with pneumonia for section Manager Harris to review. Bernatowicz reviewed lab results from previous sampling in the Yakima River Canyon and corresponded with Dr. Cassier regarding some confusion in the results database.

BOR Property: Biologist Bernatowicz talked with Conflict Specialist Wetzel regarding hunting on BOR property west of Ellensburg. The issue of elk concentrating on BOR property has a long history. BOR in Region 3 has never been very open to hunting. The best solution would be Register to Hunt.

Pheasant Release: Biologist Bernatowicz coordinated the delivery of birds with the vendor and released them at Cottonwoods on Friday.

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

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technicians Leuck and Hill completed the framing and display of an interpretive sign and installed it at the entryway to the North Fork Manastash Cabin near the ruins of the old Milk Ranch. Now recreational users passing by the cabin will have some insight into the history of this wonderful old cabin that is being restored and maintained by local volunteer Darrel Eason and his hunting partner, Dave Whitney. The cabin is available for use by WDFW staff doing project work in the area.



Technician Hill installing the interpretive sign



Technician Leuck with the finished interpretive sign and the cabin in the background



Technician Leuck installing the interpretive sign

Bridge Repair: Technicians Leuck and Hill repaired the sheer railing on the bridge over the KRD irrigation canal at Joe Watt. It had been dislodged and posed a safety risk for large vehicles crossing. They also identified locations for new replacement Green Dot Road Management Reader Boards and informational signage on the Murray.

Tech Leuck replacing the bridge rail at Joe Watt

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

Wildlife Management

Elk Hazing: Conflict Specialist Wetzel continued working with a landowner in west Ellensburg, hazing 105 elk that have been in his alfalfa field and the surrounding area. Elk appear to have moved north into other areas below the elk fence.

Elk Presence: Two landowners in the Park Creek area called to report elk coming in at night into hay fields that have started to be irrigated again.

Fused Rope: A landowner in Park Creek called to request fused rope, which is still on order and has not arrived.

Deer Feeding: A homeowner in Ellensburg called to report a neighbor feeding about 15 deer. Conflict Specialist Wetzel called the homeowner back and discussed deer feeding and associated problems.

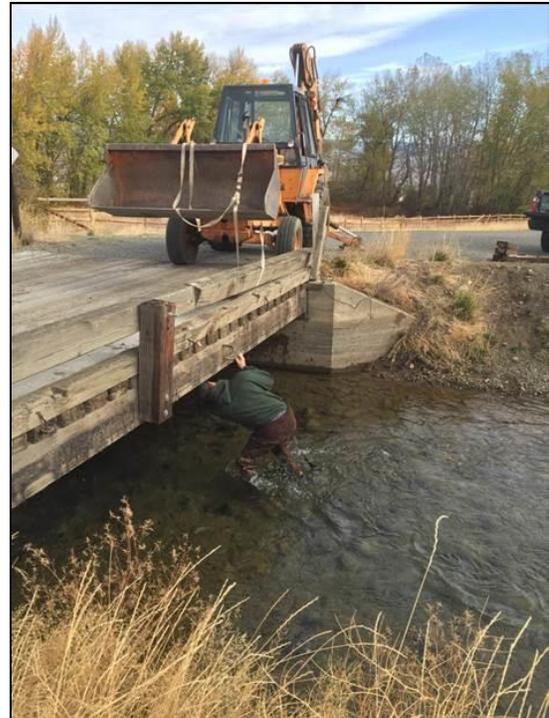
Elk Feeding: Conflict Specialist Wetzel talked to a landowner near Cowiche who had called to complain about a neighbor that was feeding 30 elk. Conflict Specialist Wetzel called the homeowner back and discussed elk feeding and associated problems.

Deer Activity: Conflict Specialist Wetzel returned a call from a landowner in the Wenas Valley who had deer in his alfalfa fields. He indicated that he would call back at a later time if deer activity increased.

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

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman and Forester Mackey reviewed the Burn Plan for a unit on the Oak Creek Forest Restoration Project and submitted edits and approval to Fire Management Specialist Leuschen. However, it looks like rains over the weekend have eliminated the chance of completing the burn this fall.



Snow Mountain Ranch Work: Manager Huffman and Assistant Manager Berry spent most of day hauling and spreading rock on a steep section of road/trail on Cowiche Canyon Conservancy's Snow Mountain Ranch. The road accesses a WDFW inholding and was experiencing significant erosion before being repaired by Berry this past spring. Spreading rock in the ditch to slow water should prevent future erosion. Berry used the dump truck to haul two loads of rock from Oak Creek to Snow Mountain Ranch, where the tractor hauled in earlier in the week was used to put smaller loads in the one ton dump bed truck for spreading on the road. Volunteers from Cowiche Canyon Conservancy helped spread the rock by hand and created water bars.

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart, Assistant Manager Hunt, Conflict Specialist Wetzel, and Habitat Biologists Renfrow and Nelson met with Jeff Graham (USBOR), Pat Monk (USFWS), and Erin Eaton (CWLRS) to discuss elk issues and possible solutions related to the USBOR ownership at the Heart K in Taneum. Topics included the use of enclosures to aid in the recovery of some damaged riparian habitat, possible controlled hunting pressure on the resident elk, and solar electrified creek crossing fence structures to prevent elk travel and escapement up and down Taneum Creek. It was a productive meeting, and we'll follow up with a field visit in November.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Judson Lake Restoration and Lead Abatement Project: Biologists DeBruyn and Smith and staff from Skagit and Montesano tested the idea that a tracked vehicle (the Marshmaster) could effectively agitate aquatic pond lily rhizomes in Judson Lake. The desired result would be a release of suspended lead shot making it unavailable to swans. A test plot was delineated and treated. Methodology was developed for further work if tests show the trial was effective.

Judson Lake Treatment Area, top shows area surrounded by straw wattles, bottom is a GPS track of marshmaster



Species of Greatest Conservation Need: District 13 staff continued to perform habitat surveys for pika. Areas surrounding the known lowland pika locations are being surveyed to determine if surrounding areas might contain potential habitat that connects to more traditional pika habitat. Survey work will continue in the coming weeks. Biologist Smith assisted Biologist Anderson in winterizing loon nesting platforms on several lakes in District 12. Platforms were removed from the lakes and secured to prevent winter damage.

US Fish and Wildlife Urban Bird Treaty City - Seattle: Biologist Anderson represented WDFW in a meeting with the US Fish and Wildlife Service Migratory Birds and Habitat Program Chief and related program staff. Seattle Parks and Recreation staff, US Forest Service International Migratory Bird Program staff, Audubon Washington, Seattle Audubon and Heron Habitat Helpers were also present. The meeting regarded a desire to collaborate and examine the possibility of Seattle becoming an “Urban Bird Treaty City”. The next steps were outlined to move forward in hopefully proposing Seattle as one of the next Urban Bird Treaty cities. More information can be found here:

<http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/Partnerships/UrbanTreaty/urbantreaty.html>

Current Urban Bird Treaty cities. With Biologist Anderson’s assistance, Seattle may soon come onboard.

Protected Wildlife Management:

Biologist Anderson continues to provide state consultation for Endangered, Threatened, Sensitive and Protected species, including various Priority or Species of Concern needs – most often nest take authorization and/or habitat consideration

recommendations. Anderson continues to work with Habitat, local governments, and landowners to provide for documentation and management where appropriate. Current items from this past week include eagle consultation and nest documentation requests, nest removal requests (osprey), project review, and consultation for wildlife impacts (Seattle Housing Authority).

One can assist WDFW with documenting wildlife via reporting at our Wildlife Observation Website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/viewing/observations/>. One can find department management recommendations for Priority Habitats and Species here:

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/phs/>

Pelt Sealing: Biologist Smith met with hunters to seal the pelts of several bobcats, a cougar, and a bear. Samples were collected for DNA analysis and age identification.



Wildlife Areas

Terrell Creek Salmon Enhancement: Manager Kessler coordinated with managers from the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association on upcoming work on Terrell Creek upstream of the Lake Terrell dam. Additional gravel is to be placed in Terrell Creek at this location to further enhance it for salmon. The materials will be stored onsite until they can be placed in the creek bed.

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

Wildlife Management

High Path Avian Influenza Testing: Biologists DeBruyn and Yarborough prepared and shipped samples taken on opening weekend from hunter harvested waterfowl .

Marine Waterfowl Surveys: District 13 staff met with the WSDM Game Data biologist to proof and edit prior years' survey data track lines. A more accurate and standard delineation of nearshore versus offshore track line will allow for a more accurate estimation of population trends of wintering sea ducks.

2015 Hunting Seasons: District Biologists continue to provide guidance and information to hunters and land managers calling to inquire about specific hunt information, guidance, and how to hunt the district. Calls are concerning how to take animals, cougar and bear hunt methods given other seasons, where to bring bear specimens, GMU boundaries, landowner reference information, and other general questions. There have been many calls this season for some reason or another. The current pamphlet can be found on the WDFW website at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/>

Wildlife Areas

Skagit Wildlife Area Air Photos: Biologist DeBruyn took photos of three restoration projects that were under construction this past summer while on a waterfowl survey flight.

The Samish River Unit Wetland Project involved creating swales, basins, and planting mounds as well as removing drain tile and installing log habitat structures in a fallow farm field to benefit wetland species





The Fir Island Farm Estuary Restoration Project involves building new flood infrastructure and removing old infrastructure to allow tidal processes to create new estuary habitat to benefit salmon and other estuary species



The Samish Unit Enhancement Project involved installation of water control structures, cleaning of drainage ditches, and connecting ponds to drainage infrastructure to improve WDFW's ability to control water on the site to benefit waterfowl, recreation, and agriculture

Milltown Island Restoration Kick-Off Meeting: Project Coordinator Brokaw and Skagit Wildlife Area staff participated in a meeting with Habitat Planner Friebel project partners at the Skagit River Systems Cooperative to coordinate and launch a future phase of restoration work at Milltown Island in the Skagit River.

Corson Wildlife Preserve: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with Lake Stevens Boy Scout Troop 360 on a work party for the Corson Unit. The troop is celebrating "Conservation Month" and worked on a number of stewardship projects including trail maintenance, foot bridge repair, and making duck boxes.

Pheasant Release: Manager Kessler received 420 pheasants from the game farm and released them into the pheasant pens at Lake Terrell. He worked with volunteers to release pheasants on all three sites, including Lake Terrell, Intalco, and British Petroleum. Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continues to release over 500 pheasants a week at the four pheasant release units. Volunteers are conducting most of the work and Manager Boehm fills in where necessary. Feedback from hunters in the field reflects a high percentage of support and appreciation for all of the improvements that have occurred over the past few years. Cosgrove monitored pheasant pens, feeders, and waterers throughout the week and assisted with pheasant delivery on Friday.



A senior pheasant hunter and his faithful dog

Lake Terrell Waterfowl Hunting Blind Repairs: Manager Kessler and members of the Washington Waterfowl Association worked to repair one of the waterfowl hunting blinds at the Lake Terrell Unit. The island supporting the blind had eroded away, leaving it leaning at an angle which made using the blind almost impossible. The blind was jacked up, and all new support posts were planted at the corners. This popular blind can now be used again and should last for several more years.



Members of the Washington Waterfowl Association repaired a popular waterfowl hunting blind at the Lake Terrell Unit

British Petroleum Environmental Monitoring & Weed Control:

Environmental workers with British Petroleum will continue performing monitoring and weed control on wetland mitigation plots on the British Petroleum Unit. Manager Kessler made up and posted the warning signs to inform hunters of the work and will manage a partial closure of the unit while the work is being performed.

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that the Crescent Lake foot bridge is completed. Volunteers from the Monroe Sportsman's Club and Master Hunters had the final work party this past weekend. A large portion of supplies were donated by area businesses, including Matheus Lumber in Woodinville and the Duvall Fitness Center in Duvall. WDFW Access Program Manager Derek Hacker donated additional building supplies and Manager Boehm provided the hardware.



Volunteers completed rebuilding a footbridge on the Crescent Lake Unit of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area

Waterfowl Season: Meis and Cosgrove attended the Northwest Chapter Washington Waterfowl Association monthly meeting to discuss agricultural enhancements on units, moist soil management and construction projects updates. Cosgrove and Meis explained the current crop plantings and other vegetation/manipulations on the Island, Leque Island, and Samish Units. Cosgrove posted a map on the hunt area sign at the Johnson/DeBay's Slough Unit to help explain the Game Reserve and Safety Zone, and outline hunt areas at the unit. Meis and Cosgrove rechecked the boundary signs around the Skagit Bay Game Reserve to ensure the reserve was clearly marked before season.

Manager Rotton toured the main hunting sites for the waterfowl opener on Saturday morning to get a car count and observe waterfowl and pheasant hunter interactions on the Leque Island Unit. There was a good hunter turnout and reports of good bird numbers in the area. Overall, the general feeling is that the season is off to a good start. Cosgrove monitored water levels and fields and worked with a local volunteer who brushed a duck blind on the Island Unit.

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Units: Supervisory Biologist Caldwell and Private Lands Biologist Wingard surveyed a new Waterfowl Quality Hunt location in Skagit County for boundary concerns and safety zone needs, and to locate ample cover/positions for blind locations. Staff identified a need for boundary, no trespassing, and safety zone signs at the property. Overall, the quality of the habitat was excellent and provides several unique angles for hunters to hunt waterfowl. Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo continued set-up of duck blinds on harvested hunt units in Whatcom and Skagit counties. Deyo and Otto checked multiple sites for harvest and consulted with growers about pending harvests. Deyo and Otto prepped supplies for dispersal to hunting units. Otto and Deyo were able to have an additional 21 waterfowl quality hunt units open for the second weekend of the waterfowl season.



Natural Resource Technicians Deyo and Otto prepped camouflage on layout blinds at one of Skagit Counties Waterfowl Quality Hunt locations. These layout blinds are provided to the public by WDFW and hopefully increase a hunter's concealment.



Can you spot the newly constructed Waterfowl Quality Hunt blinds? If not, the Private Land Access Program has done its job. Now that waterfowl hunting season is upon us, tools such blinds will provide much needed concealment for hunters attempting to hunt upland fields and wetland areas.

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

Wildlife Management

Community outreach: Biologist Yarborough conducted a site visit with members of the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe and the Skagit Conservation District to look at a potential research project study site. The research project would use new methods to try and remove Scotch Broom (an invasive plant) and enhance wildlife habitat near Marblemount.

University Mentoring Project: Biologist Milner worked with Seattle Pacific University Center for Applied Learning's Program Coordinator to set up a job shadow and experiential learning opportunity for a student. Milner contacted the Puget Sound Bird Observatory to explore options for additional projects close to Seattle that can accommodate a student's class schedules.

Wildlife Conflict Management

Wildlife Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman met with a landowner that has been experiencing elk damage in the Skagit Valley. The landowner has been experiencing grass crop and hay bale damage from 40+ elk that have been utilizing his leased pasture. The landowner also had concerns about his fence being compromised by elk, allowing his cattle to escape. Witman is working with the landowner to haze the elk onto an adjacent property that is

elk tolerant. Biologist Smith responded to calls regarding elk and deer damage. Damage occurred to a variety of crops, Christmas trees, gardens, and infrastructure (fences). Non-lethal measures to deter elk from entering properties were discussed. Smith checked one electrified fladry fence excluding elk from pumpkins and picked up another that had been used to exclude elk from lettuce crops. Smith also installed a trail camera to monitor elk activity in one area.

Volunteer Coordination: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman met with a Master Hunter volunteer that is currently completing his volunteer service hours by working on an Elk exclusion fence being constructed in the Acme area of Whatcom County. The Master Hunter was provided additional material to assist in completing the project.

North Cascades Elk Working Group Meeting: Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman, Natural Resource Technician Cogdal, and District Biologist Yarborough attended the North Cascade Elk Working Group meeting with Point Elliot Treaty Tribe representatives. The following agenda items were discussed: elk fencing agreements, private land damage updates, staffing needs, elk herd plan updates, cooperative elk survey efforts, and co-management updates.

Wildlife Areas

Sustainable Lands Strategy (SLS) Meeting: Projects Coordinator Brokaw participated in an SLS meeting, which is a group consisting of restoration, agriculture, and flood reduction representatives within Snohomish County. The participants discussed upcoming restoration, agriculture, and flood projects, and brainstormed ways to package and fund the projects together so that they produce a net-gain for all interests.

Volunteer Opportunities: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that a number of volunteer projects were completed this past week. At Spencer Island, 50-60 native trees and shrubs were installed as an Eagle Scout Project. This was the final component of a three-Eagle Scout project plan that included bench construction, weed and trash removal, and now native vegetation. The Stillwater parking areas were hit by a Master Hunter volunteer who completed brush cutter work at the unit. At Ebey Island, a Master Hunter finished hanging two access gates at the south entrance. All of these activities provided hundreds of hours of volunteer and Master Hunter stewardship. A big thank you is due for Hunter Education and Volunteer Coordinator Steve Dazey, who provided contact information and support for all of these projects.

Fir Island Farms: Manager Rotton participated in a joint presentation with Habitat Project Manager Jenna Friebel and Skagit River Systems Cooperative Restoration Project Manager Steve Hinton to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and Council on the South Skagit River projects completed to date towards the Chinook Recovery Plan goals. The group was meeting in La Conner and then touring project sites in Skagit and Snohomish counties. The Fir Island Farms site was the first on the tour. Manager Rotton attended the Fir Island Farms year two construction planning meeting in La Conner. The group discussed the items that will be completed during year two and began discussing the timeline and scheduling of tasks.

Island Unit: Meis met with an Island Unit stakeholder about a barge lease agreement, cooperative agreement regarding other equipment, volunteering, and other issues related to the Island Unit.

Samish Unit: Waterfowl Program Manager, Don Kraege came up to the Skagit Wildlife Area for a site visit with Manager Rotton to the Samish Unit Wetland Enhancement project, which is a state duck stamp funded project. In addition Kraege was able to visit the Fir Island Farms site to look at the changes to the Snow Goose Game Reserve and also took the time to go out with Meis and Manager Rotton to the Island Unit to observe the cattail control site. Cosgrove chisel plowed a 12.5 acre area that had been weeds and grasses for years and was recently disked by a leaseholder on the unit. The leaseholder will plant the area to pasture grasses for hay next spring.

Samish River Unit: A private contractor completed the hauling of spoils from the swale construction work on the Samish River Unit. This allowed the CAMP construction crew to remove the haul road materials off the site, completing the earthwork portion of the project. The shrub and tree planting work remains on the project schedule for completion this winter.

Skagit Headquarters: The Headquarters Unit is closed to public access during the week and open for public access on the weekends due to the Wiley Slough tide gate repair project. Cosgrove maintained site opening and closure signage at the Headquarters Unit for the Wiley tide gate repair project, this includes put up and take down signs and cones to allow entry during the weekend and restrict access during the week. IMCO began installation of the sheet piling that isolates the work site to begin new structure installation.

A happy visitor to the Skagit Wildlife Area



Private Lands/Access Management

Hunting Season Preparation: Biologists Wingard met with landowners to discuss hunting opportunities on their properties. These interactions included contract negotiations for several landowners in the Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program. Biologist Wingard fielded multiple inquiries from the public about the Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program in Region 4. Biologist Wingard continued editing information for the GoHunt website. Nearly all the sites will be open and online in the coming weeks.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Surveys: Biologist Wingard reviewed and prepared materials for the Waterfowl Quality Hunt Site use surveys. These surveys are a tool for managers to determine levels of use at each site and to ensure site rules are being followed. These surveys are an

excellent volunteer opportunity. Please contact the WDFW Regional 4 office in Mill Creek if you are interested in participating.

418 Elk Hunt: Biologist Wingard conducted a tour through the 418 elk hunting unit. Biologist Wingard made contact with several groups of hunters who had varying degrees of success locating elk. Overall, permit holders and their companions were enjoying the hunting opportunity.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordination

Women's Only Hunter Education Classes Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey set up a new women's only class at the Black Diamond gun club. Unfortunately, many males either failed to read the instructions that this class was a women's only class or viewed it as a dating opportunity, and Dazey spent time removing the males from the roster and assisting them to find another class. The women's class appeared to be very popular as it filled with eligible female students in three days. Further classes are being planned. A questionnaire was developed to gauge the reason the female students were drawn to this class and also if they would have suggestions for upcoming classes.

Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey assisted Instructor Ira Gross to secure his teaching venue for seven classes through 2016. Dazey is continuing to focus on new venues and recruiting instructors to serve the Skagit and Whatcom county area as this is still an underserved part of Region 4. Dazey worked with a group of three applicants in the Index area to get the necessary paperwork to start them on the PST process.

Customer Service: Coordinator Dazey answered questions from first time hunters who needed to take a hunter education class in order to purchase a license. Questions ranged from class availability, deferral, duplicate cards, and military exemption. Dazey also answered questions from a concerned citizen about winter feeding of deer in areas damaged by fire. Dazey advised him to contact the area biologist and also gave him information on volunteering with WDFW and NGOs to assist on habitat restoration.

REGION 5

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

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Modern Firearm Deer Season: Hunter success surveys were conducted three days during the past week. On Monday, October 19, of 21 hunters contacted, three deer and one bear were harvested. On Saturday, October 24, of 35 hunters contacted, one deer was taken. On October 25, of 32 hunters contacted, three deer total were harvested. During these three survey days, two of the deer were 4 X 4 bucks and one deer was a doe. The rest were 3-point bucks. Showery weather commencing on Sunday afternoon may improve hunters' ability to move about

quietly. Most camps that had not brought in an animal did report seeing deer, and one hunter remarked that the custom meat cutter closest to the Wildlife Area had no more room in his locker for deer carcasses. At 60 carcasses, he was at full capacity.

Pheasant Release: District Biologist Anderson coordinated the delivery of pheasants for the opening of general pheasant hunting season. Volunteers Wheelhouse and Morrison helped Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis transport birds to the three release sites in Klickitat County. Birds were distributed as follows: Goldendale Hatchery Unit: 49; Gun Club property: 35; and Finn Ridge Road property: 26. Cattle are grazing on the Finn Ridge Road property due to special allowances for utilization of Conservation Reserve Program lands as a result of this year's drought and poor forage production. Hunters should be aware that cattle are on the property.



Pheasant Release: Airborne



Looking Around

Customer Service: Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis fielded numerous inquiries from hunters and others on a variety of topics, including use of roads, what lands are available for hunting, how other hunters were faring, circumstances surrounding a known hunting violation, and point resources that deer might be using. Other input included feedback regarding recent fuels reduction work, the current agricultural lease on the Soda Springs Unit, the structure of the hunting season, predator presence, and issues with suspected poaching and trespassing by neighbors in a semi-residential area. This activity absorbed quite a bit of time this week.

Access

Mineral Lake: A grouping of alder trees in the upper lot near the restroom was cut down and removed for firewood. Enforcement was notified to follow up.



Mineral Lake Access Site

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

D-10 Wildlife Conflict

Coyote on Sheep Carcass: A sheep was left behind after a depredation by what is believed to be a cougar. The cougar did not return but plenty of coyotes cleaned the scene up.

Elk: Conflict Specialist Conklin responded to a Christmas tree farmer who is reporting elk damage to his trees.



REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Dusky Goose Management and Compliance: Biologist Sundstrom worked the Grays Harbor County area with Brian Calkins (Region 6 Wildlife Program Manager) on Wednesday and worked solo in Pacific County on Saturday checking waterfowl hunters for Canada geese harvest. Hunter participation was again low and only one goose hunter’s bag was checked in Pacific County (two cacklers, one taverner). No goose hunters were found in Grays Harbor. Many cards were placed on vehicles in Pacific County with only two hunters responding via cell phone. Sundstrom was too far out of the area by the time the hunters contacted her that she could not meet them in a reasonable amount of time. Anecdotal data was collected from each hunter (location of hunt, number of geese, subspecies as determined by hunter).

Biologist Michaelis conducted two dusky goose harvest checks and other goose observations in Pacific County. Goose numbers were down considerably Wednesday and by the following

Sunday during the last day of the early portion of the general goose hunting in Management Area 2B, the numbers of Canada geese in southern Willapa Bay increased. Within these observations there were very few dusky geese observed.

Participation from goose hunters appeared to be low, but several duck hunters were contacted by Biologist Michaelis.

Access areas, including WDFW property, USFWS property, and municipal boat launches, were posted to further advise hunters on the new harvest checking strategy.

Biologist Novack checked the Hoxit and Scatter Creek units along the Chehalis River for goose and goose hunter activity. Neither geese nor hunters were found.

Elk Crossing Signs: Prior to leaving on her vacation, Biologist Ament noticed that the Sequim Avenue Elk Crossing sign had been constantly flashing. She knew that there may have been some problem with the sign. She discussed the issue with Point No Point Biologist Tim Cullinan and requested that volunteer Dave Rubin check on the sign. Tim reports that sometime while she was gone, Dave was able to repair the sign. Biologist Ament will be contacting Dave this week to learn more about what the problem was and to express her appreciation for his efforts.

Snowy Plover: Biologist Sundstrom met with Willapa Refuge Biologist Ritchie to finalize the nest cards for Leadbetter. Preliminary data from all three nesting locations in Pacific County appears to show that at least 68 chicks reached fledging age.

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

Wildlife Areas

Master Hunter Volunteer Projects: Manager Belson met with two Master Hunters on separate occasions to identify work projects at several units of the South Puget Sound Wildlife Area in Region 6. The first field visit was held with Master Hunter Brown at the South Puget Sound Unit in Pierce County. Several potentially large projects were discussed for which Master Hunter Brown would serve as project coordinator, including the removal of dilapidated fencing and the construction of new fencing at the western pond turtle introduction site. A second meeting was with Master Hunter Schultz at the Morgan Marsh Unit in Kitsap County and the Union River Unit in Mason County. Potential projects at these sites include the removal of a beaver dam and construction of a beaver deceiver at a culverted road, removal of an abandoned car, and removal of dying hazard trees along a popular walking trail.



Master Hunter Schultz at the Morgan Marsh Unit beaver dam

Wildlife Conflict

Orphan Bear Cub: Conflict Specialist Blankenship assisted Enforcement with trapping an orphaned black bear cub in Shelton.