

Wildlife Program

Week of April 11 – April 17, 2016

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Joint Cattlemen's Meeting: Supervisor McCanna has been asked to attend a joint Idaho/Washington Cattlemen's meeting in June. McCanna requested inquiries into the agenda to make sure appropriate time will be given to cover Washington's wolf status and wildlife conflict protocols.

USFS Spring Grazing Meetings: Biologist Shepherd attended U.S. Forest Service (USFS) grazing meetings in Republic, Kettle Falls, and Newport. The annual meetings include a wolf discussion and other topics.

District Wolf Meeting: Biologist Shepherd attended the District 1 weekly wolf meeting.

Wolf Issues: Biologist Shepherd discussed cost share agreements and livestock production with the Washington Cattlemen's Association. Biologist Shepherd discussed a dog injury with the Chewelah Veterinary Hospital. The injury was a vehicle strike and not an animal attack. Biologist Shepherd discussed wolf and other wildlife issues with a new Ferry County resident who has livestock and eight children.

Range Rider: Biologist Shepherd discussed the recent request for bids with a range rider.

Wolf: Bendixen and Sergeant Taylor followed up on a possible wolf complaint from last week. A review of game camera pictures taken at the site revealed no wolf activity at this point.

United States Forest Service (USFS) Wolf Track Report: Natural Resource Technician Wade took a report of a group of wolf tracks located by one of the USFS snow groomer operators. The USFS reporting party stated that there were tracks left by three individual wolves in the groomed trail between Clearwater Guard Tower and Teal's point. The reporting party said wolf tracks are regularly seen crossing in that area. Natural Resource Technician Wade is working on opening a line of communication between the USFS groomer operators and WDFW. Wade also logged the sighting of these tracks into WDFW's wolf reporting webpage.

Wolf Sightings Website: Biologist Earl entered several of the recent wolf activities that have been reported to him via calls or in person over the last couple of months onto the WDFW sightings website.

DPCA-L Agreements: Biologist Earl met with two cooperators in Asotin County to discuss their current agreements. While there, they both had questions about the upcoming changes to the program. Earl will be meeting with all of the cooperators in Asotin County to discuss the changes as soon as they are finalized.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Channeled Scablands Spring Waterfowl Project: Biologist Lowe ran the Tyler & Ewan area ground route. Overall waterfowl counts declined from previous surveys, as birds are likely moving out of the area or nesting and are less visible. Sprague Lake continues to receive a lot of use by waterfowl and is a great place to observe many species when the wind is calm. Aerial and ground surveys will continue for at least another week.



A group of American coots on Rock Lake

Habitat Developments: Biologist Baarstad planted shrubs and trees with private lands staff members from Regions 2 and 3 in the Cold Springs Basin area of Douglas County. Baarstad and Natural Resource Technician Bendixen planted shrubs on a Hunt by Written Permission project site in the Almira area of

Lincoln County to improve cover for upland game birds.

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

Natural Resource Worker Jim Bauer removing form from a concrete pad at Reardan Audubon Wildlife Area



Blinds: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Finch and Natural Resource Worker Jim Bauer modified both the north and south side waterfowl viewing blinds at the wildlife area on Thursday. They widened some of the openings in the wood walls so birders' scopes will have a wider radius in which to swing.

Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Mike Finch widening blind openings at Reardan Audubon Wildlife Area



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

District Bear Response Meeting: Biologist Shepherd discussed issues concerning the development of a grizzly bear response to rural residential, recreational, and agricultural bear issues. Biologists Shepherd and Prince met again to discuss response guidelines, including situation assessment, trapping, release sites, and the distribution of information and education.

Spokane South Hill Turkey Egg Hunt and Monitoring: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett continued to monitor turkey activity on the Spokane South Hill. Several rafters of turkey were seen throughout the week. Bennett and volunteers also performed the first of several wild turkey egg hunts at four local city parks and had success in locating individual hens in nesting habitat. Those locations were noted and will be extensively searched in the coming weeks.



Two male turkeys strutting near a busy road on the Spokane South Hill



A rafter of wild turkey seen on the Spokane South Hill

Calf Depredation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Rasley and Officer John responded to a report of a 400-pound calf carcass just south of Waitsburg. The owner said the calf was killed over the last seven or eight days. The investigation showed the calf was killed, then something dragged it into a makeshift tunnel dug into a large haystack. After crawling over 30 feet into the tunnel with a flashlight and fire power, department staff members were able to locate the remains of the calf. All that was left was hair and some bones.

Staff members were also happy to not come face to face with the predator since there was no room to crawl at any kind of fast pace out of the tunnel. A trail camera was deployed.



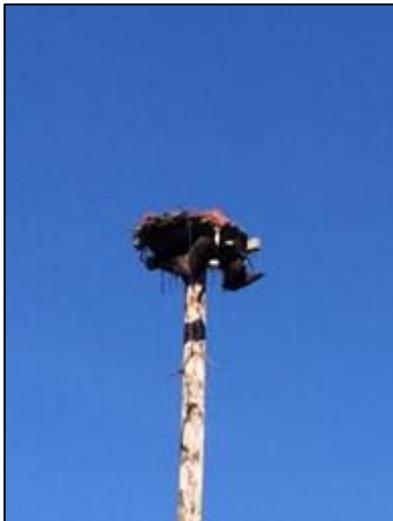
Looking for the dead calf



Remains of the dead calf

Bear complaint: Natural Resource Technician Scott Bendixen received the first District 1 black bear complaint of the spring near Kettle Falls. Bendixen and Officer Kirsch talked with the reporting party and a neighbor will be following up throughout the next few days if the bear stays in the area.

Osprey: Supervisor McCanna was contacted by Officer King on Sunday to locate an osprey which was reportedly caught in bailing twine atop the nest. McCanna was able to locate the osprey, which did not look like it was going to make it. Upon walking to the nest, the hawk was very much alive and a piece of bailing twine was wrapped just above the right talon. McCanna notified Officer King that the osprey was still alive, but had no way to reach the osprey to cut the bailing twine. Officer King responded with a ladder and a long pruning hand saw and was able to free the osprey. McCanna checked the nest on Monday and both the male and female were present, along with a fresh fish from Rock Lake.



Osprey caught in bailing twine

Asotin Creek Wildlife Area – Boozier Ridge project: Wynn Stallcop completed seeding at Boozier Ridge on Wednesday. Wynn did an excellent job seeding the field considering all the numerous setbacks we had with equipment issues and the weather. Wynn and other wildlife area staff members moved our equipment off the ridge and back to Asotin Creek where the next seeding projects are waiting. Wynn also serviced seeding equipment and performed some other maintenance activities.

Wynn Stallcop seeding a 171 acre field on Boozier Ridge on the Asotin Creek Wildlife Area



REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Deer Management: Biologists Fitkin and Heinlen wrapped up spring deer surveys, having classified over 2200 deer with a fawn:adult ratio of 23:100. Based on these results, we estimate approximately two thirds of the fawn crop succumbed to winter. This is significantly higher than the long term average of roughly 50% over-winter fawn mortality. As expected, fawn ratios were lower in the Methow watershed than in the Okanogan, which is a reflection of the significantly deeper and longer lasting snowpack in the Methow. This data suggests the overall population has declined slightly over the past year.



Multi-Carnivore Survey: Biologist Fitkin and Science Technician Erlenbach reviewed the latest photos retrieved from cameras deployed as part of the multi-carnivore survey pilot project. We got many additional photos of Stella, a young female wolverine, and documented a lynx visiting one of our Highway 20 camera sites.

Wolverine Stella enjoying a meal of beaver
– Photo by remote camera, WDFW

Common Loon Management: Biologist Heinlen documented Common Loons returning to the district and to breeding lakes.

Common loon – Photo by J. Heinlen



Rattlesnake Monitoring: Biologist Fitkin and USFS Biologist Rohrer verified the location of a previously undocumented rattlesnake den in the Methow Watershed following a lead received from the public. This is the thirty-first den we have documented in the valley to date.



Neonate northern pacific rattlesnake – Photo by Scott Fitkin

Wildlife Areas

Columbia Basin Russian Olive

Control: Technician Eddy spent a few days clearing a patch of Russian olive that was encroaching on the road access into the Desert Unit. The turbo saw was



very effective in cutting down large trees, and he was very impressed with the capabilities of the grapple in moving the trees and stacking them with ease.

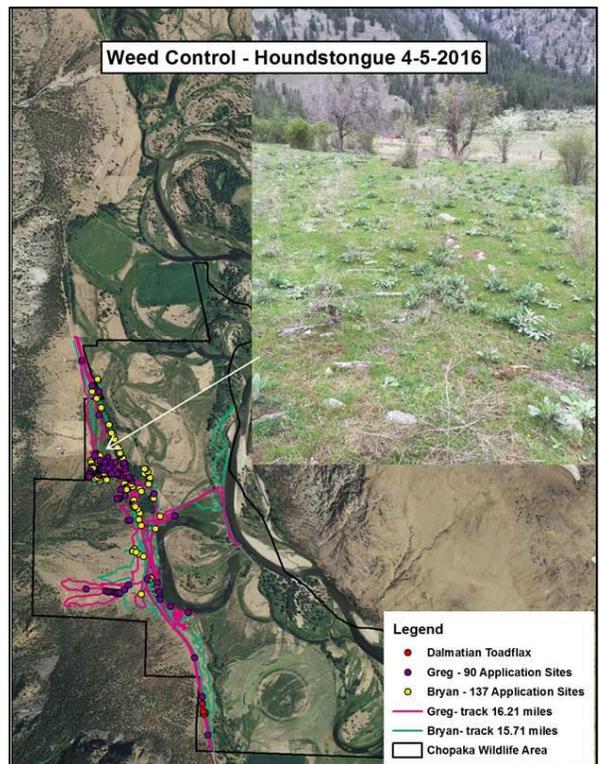
Wenner Lakes (Chalfa Dam repair): With Project Engineer Craig Matson, Operations Manager Swedberg toured Benson Creek and did site visits to culverts and areas of concern to landowners, then drove up Cougar Canyon to WDFW property after a brief visit with one of the owners of Wenner Lakes Private Reserve (Kris Betty). Matson and Swedberg inspected Chalfa Dam. The reservoir was nearly full, to the extent that water was beginning to encroach into the overflow channel. They checked the gate valve that regulates the outflow, but could not determine whether or not the gate was

obstructed or fully open. It seemed that there was a good flow of water flowing out through the structure. They decided to not try to open the gate valve any further, if it could be done without consulting downstream landowners, which would be done at the Stakeholder meeting the next day. Matson and Swedberg then hiked to the upper part of the impoundment and observed the water inflow. Based on cursory observations, the inflow was exceeding the outflow at the dam.

Weed control on the Chopaka Unit – Photo by Bryan Dupont

Private Lands/Access

Douglas County Grouse Counts: Private Lands Biologist Braaten spent most of the week conducting lek searches and counts in Douglas County. Private Lands Biologist Braaten located a lek that



has finally returned after a wildfire and SAFE CRP reestablishment episodes. It was great to see habitat back to functioning on the landscape.



Sharp tailed grouse lek in newly established SAFE CRP field in Douglas County – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW



Douglas County sharp tailed grouse on watch from a ponderosa pine – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW

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

Wildlife Management

Recreational Opportunities: Turkeys are on display throughout the district, providing quite a show. The spring turkey hunting season runs from April 15 – May 31, 2016.



Turkeys in the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area – Photo by J. Heinlen

Private Lands/Access

Wild Turkey Hunting Clinic: Private Lands Biologist Braaten, along with Hunter Education Field Coordinator Chuck Ray, put on a wild turkey hunting clinic in East Wenatchee. New hunters attended from as far away as

Seattle. All attendees went away learning something new and looking forward to turkey hunting. The four hour clinic had many highlights, from turkey calling to trophy care and fan mounting.

Private Lands Biologist Braaten speaking on proper use of turkey calls at the Wild Turkey Hunter Clinic in Wenatchee

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

Wildlife Areas



Okanogan Complex/Twisp River Wildfire: Manager Furnari spoke with CAMP’s Anthony Sanich several times during the week to discuss specifics of planned FEMA site visits, what was reviewed, their questions & requests, etc. Sanich sent documents to FEMA inspectors that he previously sent to other FEMA officials. She and Maintenance Mechanic Wottlin spent an entire day with two FEMA inspectors to review more damaged watering points, a kiosk location, signs, culverts, excluder fences, road washouts, and damages to both dams.



FEMA reviews damaged cattle excluder fence at Aspen Lake – Photo by Sherry Furnari

Neighbors & Frost Road: Manager Furnari met with neighbors and Okanogan County Public Works crew members to discuss their repair plan. Frost Road is still closed while the county realigns the water to the east side of the road and schedules additional repair

work. The county has requested we provide them with concrete base blocks for the cattle guard on Frost Road. They will be repairing the washouts, and new road standards require these blocks be placed down before the cattle guards can be reset.

Washout area on Frost Road, where cattle guards need to be reset – Photo by Sherry Furnari



Private Lands/Access

Wildfire Habitat Restoration Project – Douglas County: Private Lands Biologists Braaten, Comstock, Dougherty, Baarstad, Kaelber, and Stutzman spent one day planting 700 trees and shrubs in riparian areas burnt in Cold Springs Basin by last year’s Chelan

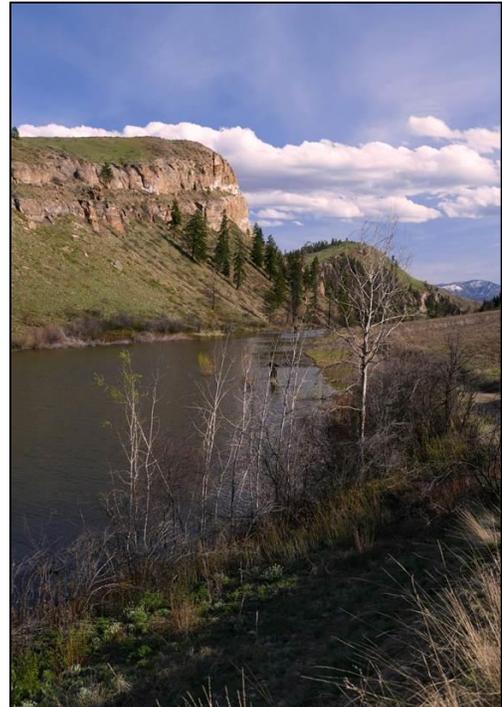
Wildfire. The project was funded by the Mule Deer Foundation. Excellent work effort by this dream team got the project completed within one day. The private landowner was very grateful for the efforts of WDFW and the Mule Deer Foundation.



Cold Springs Basin in Douglas County – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW



Dream Team – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW



***Pipestone Canyon, Methow
Wildlife Area*** – Photo by Scott Fitkin



Sunrise over Driscoll-Eyhott Island Wildlife Area and Oroville on a foggy morning – Photo by Justin Haug



A trio of wood ducks near the headquarters bridge on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area – Photo by Justin Haug

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technician 2 Kaelber conducted a sandhill crane survey on the wildlife area. Numbers have dropped off significantly over the last two weeks, as only 62 cranes were observed using the wildlife area.

Colockum Wildlife Area: Manager Lopushinsky spent much of the week working on an RCO grant proposal to treat about 400 acres on the Colockum with a controlled burn. Lopushinsky also met with Prescribed Fire Specialist Tom Leuschen this week to evaluate the project sites. While there, they discovered an occupied bald eagle nest in Section 5.



Logging slash left from 2006 thinning, Section 5, Colockum Wildlife Area



Bald Eagle nest observed in section 5, Colockum Wildlife Area

Turkey Season: Turkey season opened on April 15 with fairly heavy participation on the Colockum. Region 2 Enforcement reported five birds checked on Friday, including birds taken in the Tekison Creek, Tarpiscan Creek, and Colockum Creek drainages.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart, Assistant Manager Hunt, and Forester Pfeifle met with other Tapash members to discuss new developments in the Taneum-Manastash project area. Winegeart recently received word that the Robinson thinning project, which was submitted to WWRP in 2014 but just missed the funding cut off, is now being funded. This grant money can now be used as a match to implement other Tapash project goals in the Taneum-Manastash drainages.

Golden Eagle Nest: Assistant Manager Hunt checked on the old golden eagle nest above Robinson Canyon and again found no sign of nest building activity, occupation, or any birds in the air or nearby. It's plenty late, so we'll keep an eye on it but assume there will be no need for the temporary road closure this year.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Forester Mackey assisted Forester Pfeifle, habitat biologists, and local managers with a western gray squirrel survey on units proposed for harvest on the Klickitat Wildlife Area. Many nests were documented and flagged for protection, which will help with developing harvest prescriptions and timber marking to be completed this year. One squirrel was observed high in the canopy of a large ponderosa pine at the edge of a plowed field.



Western gray squirrel nest in lower canopy of intermediate ponderosa pine on the Klickitat Wildlife Area



Western gray squirrel through binoculars approximately 90 feet up in dominant ponderosa pine on the Klickitat Wildlife Area

Wildlife Management

Sandhill Crane Working Group: District Biologist Fidorra traveled to Vancouver, WA to attend a Washington Sandhill Crane Working Group meeting. Most of the meeting focused on the recovery of breeding populations, but the importance of habitat in the Columbia Basin of eastern Washington for migrating cranes was also discussed. Thanks to ground counts initiated by Acting Sunnyside Wildlife Area Manager Buser and Natural Resource Technician 2 Kaelber this winter, Fidorra was able to report that approximately 1500 sandhill cranes were using the Windmill and Bailie units of the Sunnyside Wildlife Area.

Ferruginous Hawk: District Biologist Fidorra worked on organizing Ferruginous Hawk survey data from the first round of occupancy surveys and coordinating volunteers, partners, and staff members for the second occupancy survey, which should be completed by the May 15 deadline. Fidorra also covered a few final sites from the first round that volunteers had difficulty accessing in time.

Dead Bat: District Biologist Fidorra retrieved a dead bat reported by a homeowner in Pasco. The bat was frozen and was sent to the National Wildlife Health Center for White-Nose syndrome testing.

Rattlesnakes: District Biologist Fidorra received a request for a local TV news interview about rattlesnakes. Fidorra contacted the Washington Poison Control Center to prepare statistics and information. However, the reporter conducting the story did not return Fidorra's call. Rattlesnakes are currently active in eastern Washington and a few bites have already been reported this spring.

Douglas County Habitat Planting: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman and Natural Resource Technician 2 Kaelber assisted Region 2 private lands staff members with a habitat planting in Douglas County. The project, designed by Private Lands Biologist Braaten, consisted of 700 shrubs and trees planted in a riparian area that burned in 2015.



Two Benton County CP33 projects: Bunch grasses seeded in January 2016 at the three-four leaf stage and a healthy bunch grass stand seeded in December 2014

Ferruginous Hawk Surveys: Biologist Bernatowicz re-surveyed most of the Priority 1 sites in the district. For the year, only one site was occupied. That site is near the Benton/Yakima county line. None of the other sites have had any activity in over 15 years. The main reason appears to be lack of prey.



One of many raven nests at or near historic ferruginous hawk nests

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

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman checked vehicle counters in the North Fork Cowiche Creek Area, downloading data from two counters and installing a third counter in an area that had previously been inaccessible. Huffman also took several pictures to be used in the Motorized Trail NOVA grant application latter this summer. While in the area, Huffman met up with volunteers from Cowiche Canyon Conservancy and Range Ecologist Burnham who were reviewing grazing utilization plots prior to livestock turnout.



Picture of Weddle Ridge Road on the Oak Creek Wildlife Area, this is the open route for motorized vehicles in the North Fork Cowiche Area. Creek bottom roads were recently closed to vehicles.

Repairs: Assistant Manager Berry and Natural Resource Worker 2 Farias attempted to access the Jumpoff Joe area at the end of the 1302 road to install a kiosk without success. A snowdrift near the end of the road still blocked access. Instead, Berry and Farias installed Wildlife Area Boundary signs on roads in the checkerboard ownership with the Forest Service. In the afternoon, Berry and Farias drove down to the North Fork Cowiche Creek Area to cut a tree out of the road and found the newly installed sign posting the road as closed missing. They drove down the closed road and located a camp, along with a horse. Nobody was in the camp and vehicle information was passed on to Enforcement. Berry and Farias continued down to check the elk fence gate and found it completely destroyed. Additional information was passed on to Enforcement. The following day the gate was cleaned up and new signs were posted. It will take a while to construct a new gate and rebuild the elk fence. The camp was cleaned up after Enforcement contacted the group, but apparently the horse is still loose somewhere, as the owners have not been able to locate it.



Camp set up on a closed road in the North Fork Cowiche Creek Area



Horse grazing next to a camp set up on a closed road in the North Fork Cowiche Creek Area



Gate in the elk fence that was destroyed and gate posts cut off. The gate was recently locked to close the road to motorized vehicles. A road on the ridge to the north still provides vehicle access to the area.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris and Assistant Manager Taylor attended meetings on the Wenas Target

Shooting proposal. The group discussed operations and maintenance needs, range rules, volunteers and sponsorships, and format for the upcoming public meetings.

Target Shooting Proposal: Manager Confer Morris spoke with Al Lawson, DNR's SE Region District Manager for Recreation, regarding the target shooting proposal. He is supportive and indicated that DNR would be willing to issue a road use permit if necessary. He will also be attending the upcoming Wildlife Area Advisory Council (WAAC) field meeting.

Range Cleanup: Kittitas County Field and Stream and Wenas Muzzleloaders hosted range clean-ups on Saturday on the north and south ends of Durr Road, respectively. It was a beautiful day with good turn-out. Several folks commented on there not seeming to be as much garbage as in past years. Also, lots of users out on the south end enjoying the nice weather.



North end Durr Road cleanup



An Overflowing Sheep Company Parking Area



Access Program: Saturday was the annual Earth week event with Central Washington University (CWU) volunteers (22) at Mattoon and (23) at Fio Rito. The volunteers picked up trash, brushed the road, pulled weeds, replaced signs, and removed a blind.

Thanks to CWU for putting on very productive this event.



Central Washington University volunteers at Mattoon



Blind at Mattoon (before)

Blind at Mattoon (after)

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Acting Manager Buser finished the new user registration signs for the wildlife area. The signs will help visitors meet the registration requirements.

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



Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart, Assistant Manager Hunt, and Conflict Specialist Wetzel met with Taneum area landowner Frank Ragland. WDFW recently acquired the riparian portion of his property, and we met to discuss fencing, roads, and the potential for an agricultural lease or temporary grazing permit this fall.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman set up a volunteer project in CERVIS for the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. Volunteers will construct another fence around a decadent aspen stand to try and encourage regeneration and remove browsing by deer and elk. The project will occur on May 20-21. Forester Mackey worked with Archaeologist Kelly to prepare cultural resource documents to proceed with the project, which will require digging post holes.

Wildlife Management

Elk Activity: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand inspected winter wheat fields near Hanford's southern boundary for elk activity and damage issues. Minor trailing was noted in a few areas and landowner contacts were made in order to coordinate hazing to minimize damage impacts.

Deer and Elk Fence: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand assisted a landowner of a tree fruit operation in the Prosser area with deer and elk exclusionary fence design and offered assistance with construction using volunteers from the Master Hunter program.

Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand spent considerable time developing new Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements for landowners in the Corral Canyon Elk area. Over 90% of the contracts in this area have expired and new contracts need to be approved prior to the start of the 2016 damage season.

Elk Hazing: Conflict Specialist Wetzel hazed elk from Reecer Creek, Caribou Creek, Park Creek, Caitlin Canyon, and the Robinson Canyon area east of the elk fence. Elk are highly mobile, and although they move quickly, they also return to problem areas the following night after being moved.

Injured Elk: A landowner in Caribou Creek reported an injured elk that was immobile along a fence. Officer Scherzinger and Conflict Specialist Wetzel located the elk, which eventually got up and walked off.

Elk Hazing: Master Hunter volunteers continue to operate at night in in the Elk Heights area keeping elk away from an alfalfa field.

Coyote Sighting: A livestock owner in the Reecer Creek area called to state she saw seven wolves stalking her cattle, which are in the midst of spring calving. A visit to the site located coyote tracks and a coyote den in the immediate area. No livestock conflict or injuries were reported.



Coyote den in calving area

Elk Removal: Conflict Specialist Wetzel and USDA Biologist Jones removed two elk from the Weaver Road damage group this week. Elk behavior after the daily hazing and removals has been encouraging. Less than 10 cows and about 20 bulls have persisted in the damage area, which is down from the 88 elk observed prior to the start of removals. Though the other elk seem to make use of re-entry gates, these 30 elk have avoided the multiple gates available to them that they could use to avoid the constant harassment.

Bull group herded into re-entry gate area on the third pass

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, Assistant Manager Berry, Natural Resource Technician 2 Kass and Natural Resource Worker 2 Farias attended the annual awards dinner for the Wildlife Education Corp in Yakima. Huffman presented awards to several volunteers for 10 and 15 years of service volunteering with WDFW. Berry presented a summary of winter feeding numbers to the volunteers. A total of 1358 tons of hay were fed at the five feed sites, along with 4.25 tons of pellets to the big horn sheep. Donations to the winter feeding fund were up, with \$6,869 donated by visitors over the winter.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technician 2 Hill installed the new B-300 charger and a new grounding system in the Rehab enclosure. It is working great and should keep the fence hot enough to discourage trespass cattle from entering.

New solar charger installed at the Parke Creek Restoration site

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Peregrine Falcon Nesting/Recreation

Management: District 13 staff members continued monitoring at the Index Town Wall for falcon nesting activity. Repeated territorial activity was observed, as was a suspected food exchange. Unfortunately, the exchange took place in a location obscured from the observation point, so a follow-up to confirm will be needed. WDFW, in cooperation with Washington State Parks, which manages the site, and the Washington Climbers Coalition, attempt to determine nesting areas so a voluntary closure can be instituted to prevent disturbance to the falcons and protect the climbers from the very territorial pair.

District 13 staff members continued monitoring at the Index Town Wall for falcon nesting activity

Common Loon Management:

District 13 staff members continued monitoring for nesting loons at Snohomish county lakes meeting survey protocol. A pair of loons was observed at Spada Lake, but the remoteness of the area will require follow-up by boat. Single birds have been seen here in the past, but this is the first time that a pair has been seen, especially this late in the season. District 12 staff members launched platforms at two known area territories where birds have been seen this season. Continued monitoring will be required to determine if the platforms are used for nesting this season.





Monitoring for nesting loons at Snohomish County lakes to meet survey protocol

High Arctic Brant Captures: District 13 staff members assisted the Marine Waterfowl Specialist in continuing to attempt brant captures for a satellite telemetry project. Attempts were made using a net gun on the beach, but the brant remained just out of distance of the gun.

Bald Eagle Night Roost: District 13 staff members reviewed boundaries of a bald eagle night roost documented in the late 1980s at the request of DNR. No subsequent surveys have been made at the site, but with newer, better quality aerial photos, a more defined roost boundary was able to be determined. The new boundary delineation was submitted to Olympia.

Mukilteo Elementary School Outdoor Classroom: At the invitation of a member of Pilchuck Audubon, District 13 staff members toured a site at Mukilteo Elementary School where a local high school junior has worked tirelessly over the last three years to turn a blackberry choked retention pond and surrounding area into an outdoor learning lab for the young students. Working tirelessly as an Eagle Scout, this young man has earned four Hornaday awards and six scouts have earned their Eagle Scout merit badges. Two others are in the process of earning theirs, and a girl scout troupe is installing a rain garden. The scouts and their troupe leaders have donated 5800 hours to the project and have much to be proud of. District staff members provided small bits of advice, but the young men have done so much research that we had very little to add to their highly successful project.



Local boy scout Jack and his father/Scout Master at the outdoor learning lab

Protected Wildlife Management – White-Nose Syndrome: District 12 coordinated internal and volunteer acoustic surveys throughout the Snoqualmie Valley. Work will continue in this area to provide an index of species activity throughout that watershed. Qualitative monitoring will help drive management consideration and justification of any need for more quantitative and

intrusive survey efforts. Other passive methods are also being investigated. District 12 worked on a bridge and guano sampling protocol draft while in the field last week. Biologist Anderson will work on summarizing thoughts and a procedure to be submitted to the WDFW White Nose Syndrome working group for discussion and further development.

A Myotis species (likely evotis given ears observed in field were quite apparent to go past muzzle) found under a bridge during District 12 monitoring of bat activity in the Snoqualmie Valley – Photo by C. Anderson



District 12 provided outreach regarding White Nose Syndrome in Washington and what information resources are available in outreach efforts at the monthly Bats Northwest meeting in Seattle. WDFW and collaborators are asking the public to report dead or dying/sick bats via our hotline found at the link below.

Decontamination, outlined in below links, is essential to assist in the management of this pathogen, particularly in the research, management, and recreationist communities, including caving, climbing, and canyoneering. Please visit the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/wns/>

More information can be found at <https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/>

Protected Wildlife Management – Take Authorization: District 12 worked with WSDOT regarding authorization of take of an area red-tailed hawk nest and deposition of any eggs or birds with appropriate permitted entities. District 12 discussed similar consideration needs with WSDOT regarding planned work and nearby peregrine falcons. District 12 discussed osprey nest take with inquiring entities. District 12 discussed take needs and management planning to avoid such regarding an industrial site that is being shut down, but has barn owls nesting in it.

Wildlife Areas

Stillwater Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with staff members from Sound Salmon Solutions to discuss continued planting and maintenance activities for the Harris Creek Restoration Project.

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reported to WDFW Enforcement that someone dumped a stripped vehicle, furniture, and pile of tree debris on the

unit parking areas. Manager Boehm contacted Snohomish County's Environmental Protection Unit to haul away the vehicle.

Snoqualmie Signage: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm posted additional "Leash Required" signage at the Stillwater and Crescent Lake units. Manager Boehm also



replaced four signs relating to dog use that were vandalized at the Stillwater Unit. Manager Boehm reported the incident to WDFW Enforcement.

Manager Boehm replaced four dog use signs that were vandalized at the Stillwater Unit

Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw updated information on the project in the Habitat Work Schedule database, to meet a requirement associated with applying for Salmon Recovery Funding Board funds. The updated record is

available at <http://waconnect.paladinpanoramic.com/project/270/60326>.

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP): Projects Coordinator Brokaw and PSNERP staff members had a check-in conference call to discuss recent project-related activities. Brokaw also provided records for a public disclosure request related to PSNERP.

North Fork Skagit Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw met with Habitat Program staff members and Region Director Everitt to discuss WDFW's involvement in a project that will examine the feasibility of reconnecting the floodplain of the North Fork of the Skagit River through a dike setback project near the Fir Island Road Bridge.

Waterfowl Trapping and Banding: Natural Resource Technician Deyo continued to trap and band waterfowl at the Lake Terrell Unit. He has trapped many new wood ducks, as well as many first banded last year.

Lake Terrell Unit Agricultural Field Prep: Natural Resource Technician Deyo worked prepping the agricultural fields at Lake Terrell for this year's barley and fava bean plantings for winter waterfowl feeding. He completed the first groundbreaking prep work on the fields east of Lake Terrell Road. The fields west of Lake Terrell Road will be started this week.

Hovander House Maternity Bat Colony: Manager Kessler, Natural Resource Technician Deyo and Private Lands Biologist Otto installed the new bat maternity box and two bat rocket boxes at Hovander Park. Last year the roof on the historic Hovander House was replaced, and it was not known if the bat colony would be able to get back into the house. Manager Kessler worked with Whatcom County Park Manager Ben VanBuskirk and the president of Bats Northwest, Kathleen Bander, to come up with an alternative plan for the bats when they return in the spring. Two bat

rocket boxes were built by the Ferndale High School wood shop, and Natural Resource Technician Deyo built a new large maternity box. Kessler, Deyo, and Otto installed all three boxes in a field close to the Hovander House. An existing bat maternity box will be refurbished with a new coat of black paint and stabilized where it stands. It is hoped that the new and existing boxes will be a close, attractive alternative for the bats.



Wildlife Area staff members at Lake Terrell installing a bat house at Hovander County park in Ferndale



Rocket Bat box installation



The first baby geese of the season at Lake Terrell were seen on Friday, April 15. Manager Kessler installed the “Slow Down, Baby Geese On Road” warning signs to slow drivers down on Lake Terrell Road.

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

Wildlife Management

Sound Water Stewards Presentation: District 13 staff members presented a talk on water birds associated with Camano Island to the Sound Water Stewards. Modelled on the Beachwatchers

concept, the program provides environmental education to participants who then donate 400 hours of service to various projects on the island.

Hunting – Final Draft of the 2016 Big Game Pamphlet: District 12 provided input regarding needs in the pamphlet for a district hunt, as well as suggestions for notes to clarify cougar hunting units throughout the state. District 12 also answered public hunting questions.

Hunting/Trapping – Last day of CITES Bobcat and River Otter sealing: District 12 provided seals for hunters and trappers coming to the scheduled time at the Regional office in order to meet international harvest needs under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wildlife Fauna and Flora. See more at

<http://www.cites.org/> http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/smallgame_trapping/index.html

Wildlife Areas

User Outreach: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm visited the Snoqualmie Unit to educate, inform, and monitor users about the requirement for leashing pets while on the wildlife areas.

Volunteer Opportunities: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with another Eagle Scout candidate to develop an Eagle Scout planting and trail maintenance project for the Spencer Island Unit.

Waterfowl Replacement Lands: Projects Coordinator Brokaw worked with staff members from the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to organize a meeting between WDFW, RCO, and the Puget Sound Partnership. The meeting is scheduled for May 3, and the purpose is to discuss WDFW's need to secure upland waterfowl forage to meet contractual obligations associated with properties purchased for waterfowl forage that are scheduled for conversion to estuary habitat.

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Planning Meeting: Several staff members from all programs attended a public meeting to get feedback on the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area planning process. The meeting was well attended, with almost 100 people. Most of the attendees were interested in dog training activities in the wildlife area.



How many people here at the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area planning meeting represent dog training activities?



WDFW Planner Melinda Posner with interested public at the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area planning meeting in Mill Creek

Samish River Unit Parking Area: Projects Coordinator Brokaw drafted materials to apply for a grant to construct a parking area at the Samish River Unit. The Samish River Unit is popular among bird watchers, waterfowl hunters, and fishermen, and the site is attracting increasing numbers of waterbirds since a wetland restoration project was installed last summer. There is currently no parking lot on the site, and if funded, the new parking area would accommodate 15 cars, two ADA spots, and a portable toilet.

Lake Terrell Open Bass Fishing Tournament: The Washington State Pond Jumperz Bass Club held an open bass fishing tournament at Lake Terrell. The event was very well attended, with 36 anglers participating. A total of 83 largemouth bass were weighed in at the scales, for a total of 272.39 pounds of fish. Matt Johnson won first place with three fish totaling 15.93 pounds.



The Washington State Pond Jumperz Bass Club held an open bass fishing tournament at Lake Terrell



Private Lands/Access Management

Spring Bear Hunts: Natural Resource Technician Otto and Private Lands Biologist Wingard installed combo locks on access gates in the Monroe area in preparation for opening day on April 15. While in the hunt unit, they were able to clear multiple downed trees blocking roads, allowing for access to traditional damage areas. Otto toured the Skagit bear hunt unit on opening day and found one gate missing a lock and the gate opened. Otto was able to secure the gate with a new lock and make repairs to the vandalized gate. While in the unit, Otto observed multiple newly peeled trees.



Fresh bear peeling damage to a tree in the Monroe Spring Bear hunt unit

Wildlife Viewing: Natural Resource Technician Otto was able to open the viewing area and beach access trail near the town of Langley. Otto cleared multiple blocking trees and cut back vegetation using the hand and power tools. The sign-in log was replenished with pencils and fresh sheets of paper. Private Lands Biologist Wingard coordinated with Olympia staff

members to complete contracts for private lands wildlife viewing and diversity. The contracts are now complete and Biologist Wingard will make contact with the landowners shortly for contract signatures.

Trailhead for the Wildlife Viewing/Diversity site on Whidbey Island. The access is off Zimmerman Road.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunting Clinics: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey, along with members of the National Wild Turkey Federation, held a turkey hunting clinic at the Black Diamond Gun Club. The clinics are part of a new initiative by the Hunter Education Division to partner with NGOs in putting on specific hunting clinics for the public. This initiative will give the students information that will assist them to feel more confident in their hunting pursuits. This increased confidence and knowledge will help in hunter retention, which is one of the three R Hunter Education programs. Dazey has also been in contact with the local NWTF about a turkey clinic at the four day women's event at Cabellas.





From young hunters to more mature, the clinic was well received by all



The NWTF brought many examples of turkey hunting accessories, from calls to decoys, for the students to see



One young hunter, after listening attentively to the presentations, was lucky enough to have his name drawn for a door prize

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 Monitoring & Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal worked at an elk exclusionary fence project at two properties within Skagit County. Witman received a report of elk grazing on a property between Acme and Deming in Whatcom County. The landowner was looking to consult on appropriate fencing to pasture horses on the property during the summer months. Witman is attempting to coordinate a meeting with the landowner to provide suggestions for elk exclusionary fencing. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman met with a landowner in Whatcom County to further discuss elk exclusionary fencing on approximately 80 acres of land that is being utilized by an elk herd of approximately 80 animals.

Elk Fence: Biologist Smith coordinated with volunteers involved in ongoing elk exclusion fence maintenance and improvement work. Smith also spent time meeting with landowners to gather equipment that had been on loan over the winter.

Biologist Smith provided information on deterring and lethal control of birds damaging structures. More information can be found at the WDFW Living with Wildlife website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/woodpeckers.html>

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal were assisted by a student from Skagit Valley College completing her Environmental Conservation internship and a Master Hunter completing service hours. The volunteers helped on the installation of an elk exclusionary fence in Skagit County. Approximately one third of the 80 acre project was completed in four days last week with volunteer assistance and landowner participation.



Osprey on Cell Towers: District 13 processed three inquiries regarding working on towers that contain osprey nests. Permission to complete the work was given in each case.

Urban Wildlife – Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary: District 12 conferenced with the National Wildlife Federation regarding cessation of the joint NWF-WDFW certification program. Overall this transition will benefit the efficiency and customer service needs of both partners and open up

other opportunities to focus on in collaboration. District 12 also conferenced with Fiscal regarding ongoing spending plan needs and transitions in the Backyard program – how this will all tie together and affect the end “new product”.

Wildlife Areas

Fir Island Farm: Rotton attended a pre-construction planning meeting for the Fir Island Farm Restoration project. The construction company IMCO started mobilizing to the site on April 15. Rotton was coordinating communication to the lessee farmer, Ecostudies’ bird monitoring crew, and the WDFW waterfowl program attempting to capture snow geese for installation of radio telemetry devices.

Skagit Headquarters: Rotton continued to monitor pump station operations and tide gate water level gauges on the Wiley Slough Restoration site. Rotton attended the Dike District #22 meeting to update the district on the status of the as built drawing for the Wiley Slough tide gate and pump station.

Leque Island: Manager Rotton examined agriculture fields and drainage issues following the breach in early March. Wildlife Area staff members will develop a plan for weed management and potential plantings since the sharecrop farmer has cancelled his lease.

Samish Unit: Manager Rotton completed contract planting agreement with local farmer for this year’s agricultural planting on Samish. Meis mowed several areas of the Samish Unit for noxious weed control and prepped for a new area for agriculture management. The main focus of this mowing is to reduce the amount of seed production of noxious weed on this unit.

Island Unit: Technician Cosgrove continued field preparations on the Island Unit, disking and chisel plowing areas in 10 fields. Cosgrove coordinated with volunteers to assist with field work, including plowing portions of four fields.

Technician Cosgrove and Specialist Meis removed numerous trees that had fallen into fields on the Island Unit. Cosgrove also used the pole saw to cut limbs from alder trees growing next to a field. Cosgrove coordinated with volunteers to assist with fallen tree removal. Cosgrove scheduled volunteers for ferry operation. Cosgrove and Meis assisted with ferry operation of a backhoe and tractor with a plow and flail mower to the Island Unit.

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program Site Breakdown: Otto continued removing blinds from Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program sites as conditions allow. Only a few sites still need to be broken down.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education instructor support: Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey continues to encourage instructors to return their Policy Agreement Forms, and for those who have been

certified five years, to return their five year background authorization forms. Coordinator Dazey answered instructor questions in regard to several issues that included questions on hunter education instructor incentive permits, assisting a new instructor to find a teaching team to join, and securing supplies for a new team from the Region 4 warehouse.

Chinese Language Hunter Education Class: Coordinator Dazey assisted an instructor to plan for a hunter education class for students whose first language is Chinese. The two instructors are bilingual and have received requests from the local Chinese community for this class. The class filled in less than two days and has a waiting list. Planning is moving forward and the class will be scheduled at the Region 4 office conference room April 23 and 24.

Teaching Team Evaluations: Coordinator Dazey conducted one teaching team evaluation at Cabellas in Tulalip. The team teaching there conducts traditional classes and is doing a good job of delivering the hunter education curriculum.

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

Wildlife Management

Training: Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell attended a three day Intermediate GIS training in Seattle, WA. Supervisor Caldwell passed and completed the course. Biologist Wingard was in Olympia for a two day leadership training.

Rabies Titer: District 13 staff members had blood drawn to check the level of rabies antibodies in anticipation of upcoming work on bats relative to white nose syndrome.

Private Lands Access Program Staff Meeting: Private lands access program staff members state-wide participated in a conference call to discuss how the spring has progressed, future changes, and other concerns. The meeting was very positive and many good ideas were discussed.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Sandhill Cranes: Biologists Anderson and Bergh attended the Sandhill Crane Working Group meeting in Vancouver organized by Derek Stinson from WDFW's Olympia office. The purpose of the meeting was to share information on current survey and management activities associated with the sandhill crane in Washington. Although the focus of the meeting was on the sandhill crane breeding population, additional information was presented on the migratory and over-wintering population in Washington. This information will be used to assist WDFW with its

current status review of the species. In attendance were representatives from WDFW, USFWS, DNR, and the Yakama Nation.

Dusky Canada Goose Survey: Biologist Butler conducted the last dusky Canada goose survey for the season. The survey took place within Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum counties. Areas surveyed included Shillapoo Wildlife Area, Woodland Bottoms, Kalama, Willow Grove, Puget Island, and areas near Grays Bay. Large flocks of cacklers were seen throughout the Shillapoo Wildlife Area along with a small group of dusky Canada geese. No collared dusky geese were observed. A large group of cacklers were also observed on Puget Island. A smaller group of cacklers and western Canada geese were spotted in Woodland Bottoms. These surveys will resume next fall.

Cowlitz Wildlife Area

Peterman Hill Unit 1000 Mainline New Construction: Staff members from both Tacoma Power and the Cowlitz Wildlife Area, as part of the RMAP effort on the Peterman Unit, located and laid out a route to realign the 1000 main line to replace approximately 2,700 feet of stream adjacent to the road. The new route uses about 1,200 feet of upgraded spur and nearly 2,200 feet of new construction. Tacoma Power accepted responsibility for the “pioneering” of the new construction, which has been completed, and the CWA will finish the construction in conjunction with the larger 1000 mail line maintenance and repair project. Though not part of



the original RMAP plan, this project will remove a very large source point for sediment delivery to nearby streams and will go a long way to improving the habitat conditions along the entire riparian corridor.

Peterman 1000 Mainline

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Forest Health Project: WDFW biologists, Wildlife Area staff members, and WDFW foresters conducted a survey of three project areas on the Soda Springs Unit to identify trees with nests constructed by western gray squirrels. Western gray squirrels are listed as threatened in Washington State and are a priority species for management on the Klickitat Wildlife Area. Therefore, any proposed forest management projects are tailored to conserve important elements of habitat, especially nest trees. With a survey crew of five to eight people, all three proposed project areas were covered in two and a half days. The squirrels kept a low profile, but one was observed in a tree. Nest location data were sent to WDFW Habitat Biologist Bell for mapping, and the project details will be further developed based partially on the findings of this week’s survey.

Old Fence Removal: Technician Davis collected more old mesh fencing for disposal this week. Removal of unneeded fence wire is an ongoing activity on the Wildlife Area.



Old Mesh Fencing

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

Wildlife Management

Turkey Season: Biologist Anderson and Bergh have received numerous calls from the hunting public over the past couple weeks regarding

prospects and access for the upcoming turkey season. The current turkey population is considered robust and birds are found throughout most forested areas in Klickitat County,

especially west of Highway 97. The Klickitat Wildlife Area is a popular hunting location for turkeys, but hunters will generally find more competition from other hunters in this area.



Merriam's Turkeys in Klickitat County

Watchable Wildlife: Biologist Anderson and Bergh followed up on a report of a potential nesting pair of burrowing owls located in the area of the Steigerwald National Wildlife Refuge.

There was concern that the public was getting too close to a potential nest site and WDFW was contacted to determine if something could be done to prevent disturbance. Upon further contact with Wilson Cady of the local Vancouver Audubon Society, it was determined that just one burrowing owl was seen in the area and it had been around for about a month. Although uncommon on the west side, burrowing owls occasionally

show up in suitable habitat in open grassland areas. Nesting burrowing owls would be a rare occurrence in Clark County. At this time, there is no evidence that a pair of owls are nesting in this area. Either way this was a great sighting for local birders and we appreciate Steven Young for providing us this great picture.



Burrowing owl near Steigerwald National Wildlife Refuge

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Three Road Gates: Gates on the South Breaks Road, Anderson Road, and Old Headquarters Road were opened the evening of April 14 to coincide with the spring turkey hunting season opener. These road closures end each spring after deer and other wildlife

have benefitted from the new season's flush of new growth and the road surfaces have firmed up to handle vehicle traffic. One road gate on Sheep Canyon Road remains closed until the soils at that elevation become firm. This gate is usually opened in early May.

Spring Turkey Season: The Wildlife Area received numerous inquiries regarding the distribution of turkeys and suitable habitat, as well as camping and road access. Hunter turnout on opening day was relatively light, with about ten camps set up on the Soda Springs Unit. Turkeys were observed by Wildlife Area staff members on a major road within the Soda Springs Unit. However, hunter harvest success for that day is unknown.

Access

Flood Damage: Access Manager Spangler met with FEMA representatives to evaluate the damage and repair work from the December 2015 storm flood and damage at multiple Kalama River access sites, including Beginner's Hole, Hand, Kress Lake, Pritchards, and Sportsman Loop.

Oneida and Martin Access Sites: Six thousand gallons of septic were pumped from the Oneida, Mineral lake upper, and mineral lake lower access areas. In addition, Access staff members Spangler and Rhodes picked up and hauled over 1,000 pounds of trash dumped at the Martin access boat ramp on the Lewis River.



Septic removal



Trash dumps

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

Wildlife Conflict

Deer: Conflict Specialist Peterson met with a White Salmon area landowner to help install an electric fence. The landowner has been dealing with deer damage to a small vineyard over the last few years. The landowner has replanted a number of plants and is hoping the fence will allow the plants to become established.



GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE BY SUPPORTING OUR WORKFORCE, IMPROVING BUSINESS PROCESSES, AND INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY

Cowlitz Wildlife Area

Hunter Education Class: Cowlitz Wildlife Area staff members Morris and Vanderlip, along with local Fish and Wildlife Officer Sympson, conducted a four and a half hour hunter education online evaluation class at the Wildlife Area office. This class was offered to 11 students who have completed the online class, but have not yet passed the skills evaluation process conducted by a hunter education instructor. This step is required before they can purchase a hunting license in the state of Washington. The material from the student manual was reviewed and each student completed a 20 question test and had to demonstrate they could safely handle and operate a firearm in a variety of situations. All students passed the course.

Wildlife Conflict

Workshop: Conflict Specialists Conklin and Peterson attended the cattleman boot camp in Kennewick this week. A lot of good information was shared and learned regarding the cattle ranching industry that will benefit Conklin and Peterson's work.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Harbor Seal Tagging: As part of a study on harbor seal diets in south Puget Sound, Biologist Murphie assisted the WDFW Marine Mammal Investigations Unit staff members in the capture and tagging of one adult female harbor seal last week. This seal was caught by hand and landing net using a beach rush capture technique at Port Orchard Rocks. Additional capture attempts

were made at the mouth of the Nisqually River, Colvos Rocks near Port Ludlow, and Port Orchard Rocks, but all were unsuccessful. Seals were absent at other haul out sites visited. To date, four instruments have been deployed on harbor seals (two adult males and two adult females) related to this project. Additional efforts will continue next week.

Snowy Plover: Technician Raby conducted nest searching, nest checks, and egg floatation this week at Leadbetter.

# of active nests and location	3 (1 in the north swale, 1 in the south HRA, 1 in the north HRA)
# of new nests discovered this week	3
# of failed nests	0
# of hatched nests	0
# of nests with undetermined fate	0

Biologist Sundstrom continues to search and monitor existing snowy plover nests at Midway Beach. Only one nest there has been discovered, but weather conditions have been less than optimal for tracking the birds. Calmer weather is expected for part of the upcoming week.

Biologist Michaelis helped Sundstrom install the final trek of signs and rope on private lands at Midway.

Biologist Novack conducted a final review of the Snowy Plover Annual report. He also drafted a letter regarding the Pacific County easement through State Park’s protected nesting area.

Goose Survey Data: Biologist Sundstrom completed the final goose survey for the season in Grays Harbor and Pacific counties. The April survey typically results in few dusky geese, and this survey was no exception. Surprisingly, there were still many cackling geese found in Pacific County.

Biologist Michaelis completed the last survey for the 2015-2016 dusky Canada goose surveys. No dusky geese were observed in either of the two counties (Pacific and Lewis) he surveyed. The total number of unique collar codes observed on dusky Canada geese this past season was 123. This is by far the most collars observed in one season since 1997, when collars were first surveyed in this district.

White Nose Syndrome in Bats: District 17 staff members collected three dead and injured bats. Two bats were collected and frozen. One of the dead bats appeared to have suffered from a head collision. One bat was taken alive on Long Beach and delivered to a rehabber in Olympia with help from Technician Raby and Leite. Biologist Novack investigated potential retrofitting of bridges to benefit bats for possible inclusion into an upcoming tideland restoration project. He discovered that WSDOT will not specifically design bridges that are attractants to protected wildlife.

Biologist Novack had blood drawn and submitted for a rabies titers test per request from Fish and Wildlife Veterinarian Haman.

Taylor’s Checkerspot Reintroduction: The first adult Taylor’s checkerspots in the Puget lowlands were observed at Glacial Heritage on April 7 by CNLM Biologist Sanders Freed in an area east of the main reintroduction area. A survey the same day at Range 76 (source site) by Biologists Randolph and Radford, working together with two JBLM biologists, resulted in a “zero” survey. Protocol surveys at TA7S and Scatter Creek reintroduction sites in the days that followed also revealed no adults. Persistent clouds inhibited protocol surveys for the next several days, although one adult was observed at Glacial Heritage, and five adults were observed at the Range 50 reintroduction site during non-protocol surveys on April 10 and 11, respectively, indicating the flight season was in fact underway. Surveys were also attempted at Range 76 on April 13 and 15, but cloud cover prevented protocol surveys. No adults were found.

Weather finally permitted a protocol survey at Range 50 on April 16, where 350 adults were counted. That count pushes Range 50 past the final hurdle in our definition for an “established population” (five consecutive years with a peak single day population estimate at or above 250 adults based solely on natural reproduction). A survey was also conducted at Range 76 on April 16, where 30 adults were counted. Site conditions appear very degraded at Range 76, although no one source of impact can be pinpointed. Collectively, the impacts include drought, fire, deluge, exotic moths, and training. Training on the roads in winter 2016 heavily impacted or eliminated nearly all *Plantago* in the road centerlines and verges, which in many areas is most of what is available.

Protocol surveys at Scatter Creek and Glacial on April 17 returned counts of eight and nine adults, respectively.

Biologist Linders has been training four new surveyors this year, a process which requires about a week of concerted effort by each person. Two surveyors have completed training and are ready to contribute to the effort, and two additional surveyors are expected to complete training shortly.



Taylor’s checkerspots have thrived at Range 50 since their reintroduction in 2009-2011. This is the most pristine prairie in the Puget lowlands, and likely from Oregon to BC.

Bald Eagle Electrocution: On April 14, 2016, Biologist Ament received a report that a bald eagle was hanging from a power line east of Sequim. The Clallam County PUD was contacted and responded to the scene. The bird was dead when they arrived and they collected the eagle. The PUD followed the protocols of the recently signed Avian Protection Plan. They attempted to take the eagle to the USFWS Office at the Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge, but were not successful. Biologist Ament met with PUD employee Ken Hamon to obtain the dead eagle. An entry and exit wound from an electrocution were quite evident on the eagle. PUD will be



conducting a further investigation and will be making some modifications to the lines at the site where the bird was killed.

Ken Hamon from Clallam County PUD with bald eagle that died from electrocution

Dead Turkey Vulture: On April 13, 2016, Biologist Ament was contacted by Hurd Creek Hatchery staff members who had taken a phone call from a woman who reported finding what she thought

was a dead bald eagle in a tree in her back yard. Biologist Ament spoke with the woman and then responded to the woman's property south of Sequim. When she arrived she found a dead turkey vulture located in the limbs of a large cedar tree located on the property. The bird had been dead for a long time and it was impossible to determine the cause of death. The woman had not really been around the stand of trees since last October, so it is unknown when the bird actually died. The vulture carcass was dried out and stiff. The vulture was removed from the tree and the reporting party expressed her appreciation for the quick response.

Dead turkey vulture removed from cedar tree (unknown cause of death)



Field Days with Program Manager and Olympia Staff Members: District Biologist McMillan and Biologist Ament hosted a portion of a field trip

conducted on the north Olympic Peninsula for Regional Program Manager Calkins, Deputy Assistant Director Gardner, Lands Division Manager Sprague, Section Manager Dahmer, and Archaeologist Kelly. They met with the group at the Taylor's checkerspot butterfly sites west of Port Angeles on April 14, 2016. Survey monitoring efforts, management of the species, and habitat enhancement work were discussed on site. Unfortunately, the weather was unsuitable so

the group was not able to actually observe any of the endangered species. However, they were shown various host and nectar plants used by the butterflies. The biologists were also able to discuss other local wildlife management topics with the group. Biologist Ament was also able to join the group on April 15, 2016, when they met with Wildlife Area Manager Belson. This field meeting included a visit to the Three Crabs property and WDFW property located along Towne Road. Habitat restoration and the WDFW Restoration pathways process were discussed during this field session. Biologist Ament also had the opportunity to briefly discuss the purple martin colony at Three Crabs and the diverters placed on power lines along Towne Road to protect trumpeter swans. The local biologists were very pleased to have the opportunity to spend time with Regional Program Manager Calkins and the Olympia staff members.



District Biologist McMillan reviews butterfly distribution maps with group



Wildlife Area Manager Belson discusses habitat restoration at WDFW owned sites

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

Private Lands /Conflict

Bears in Seabeck: Conflict Specialist Blankenship assisted Enforcement Officer Balazs and Sergeant Jackson with deploying two culvert traps in Seabeck to trap and relocate bears that are habitually getting into garbage cans in a residential area.

Bear Timber Damage: Only two active permits in Region 6 so far. Both are on Small Forest Landowners using Master Hunters. Master Hunters report that only one large bear has been seen on camera. No other bear activity has been observed. Copalis Spring permit holders are reporting fresh peeling on Hunt Washington.com.

Willapa Elk: Natural Resource Technician Leite observed about 20 elk in a hay field on the west end of Elk Area 6010. This is not bad considering they usually number 70+. While in the area, he walked a dairy farmer's property and discovered that the elk are still making midnight raids.

Bottle Beach Elk: After some very aggressive behavioral modification efforts, the Bottle Beach Elk have mostly avoided the pastures for almost two years. Last week they made themselves comfortable tearing down fences and enjoying the spring growth. A landowner called Biologist Harris requesting Master Hunter help. He was out of town dealing with a family emergency. Biologist Harris use CERVIS to send an email out to all the volunteers who had registered for the North River Wildlife Conflict service project. Within an hour, a Master Hunter familiar with the property volunteered to help. The landowner is happy to have the help!

Long Beach Cranberries: No new reports. Biologist Harris spoke with one grower who stated the he felt the extra pressure resulting from increased permits and other changes to elk seasons in the Long Beach GMU is starting to make a difference.

Grayland Cranberries: After several weeks of relative quiet, things got a little interesting. A producer noticed a group of elk in a clear cut adjacent to the bogs. Being proactive, they got on them and hazed away. Three nights in a row they returned. One producer put on his running boots and ran the elk a couple of miles into the timber. The elk have not returned. This group of elk is thought to be a different group than the group we were dealing with earlier.

Access Areas

Snow Creek Resort Site Visit: Program Manager Calkins, Deputy Assistant Director Gardner, Lands Division Manager Sprague, Section Manager Dahmer, and WDFW Archaeologist Kelly visited WDFW's "Snow Creek Resort" property to get an overview of the site and a better understanding of the conditions at the facility. The remote property, located near Neah Bay, is unique among other WDFW properties in that it is operated through a contract with a private vendor. The site provides access to high quality fisheries in the Strait of Juan de Fuca that otherwise could potentially be very difficult to access.

Over the past several years, a number of concerns have arisen related to the facility and the visit was helpful for all to put these in perspective. The resort operator gave the group a tour of the facility and talked about the history both before and since he has operated the site. One of the complicating factors is that the boat launch is a rail system that requires an operator be present. The docks have been accessed by a steel pier which will soon be removed due to structural failure. This recent development will limit moorage and impact the usability of the site by boaters. The grounds also support a large campground (with some sites offering full or partial RV hookups) and restrooms and showers. As a result of recent issues, WDFW is taking over operation of the water treatment plant through contracts with licensed operators. Water is provided via a surface withdrawal slow sand filtration system that is fairly complex to run properly and requires daily site visits.

While the site has tremendous potential, age has taken its toll and there are obviously many issues that need to be addressed. While conversion to a more standard type of water access facility has been considered, it would be a complex endeavor and likely take a number of years to fund and implement. Despite the current issues and challenges, the resort is popular with the public and operates at full capacity through much of the summer.

One special item of note while the group was at the resort is that a whale was spotted by the group just offshore during the visit. The back is partially visible in the photo below, which also gives one an idea of the scenery in the vicinity.



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

Wildlife Management

Willapa Refuge Hunter Stakeholder Group Meeting: Biologist Novack attended a meeting of Hunter Stakeholders at the Willapa Refuge. A review of harvest, survey data, and season changes was provided that focused on GMUs 681, 684, and 699.

Private Lands /Conflict

Elk Hazing in Littlerock: Master Hunter volunteers and Conflict Specialist Blankenship have been using nonlethal techniques to haze a group of 12 bulls that have been causing damage to a

hay field in Littlerock. Two weeks of constant hazing pressure has been successful in keeping these bulls out of the field. The elk have not been seen for four days and the hay is bouncing back and growing rapidly. This landowner will be freshly seeding a part of the field in the upcoming week. Volunteers and Blankenship will keep a close eye on the field over the next several weeks.

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

Wildlife Management

New Hire: Please welcome Quinn Radford, a new Biologist 1 working on Taylor's checkerspot reintroduction and habitat management. Quinn is based in the NRB, working under Biologists Linders and Hays. He recently returned to western Washington after spending many years working on similar projects in northern California. Quinn brings a great deal of knowledge and experience to the position and we are happy to have him!