

Wildlife Program

Week of August 8 – August 14, 2016

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Conference Calls: Supervisor McCanna participated on multiple conference calls this week regarding current wolf activity in Profanity Peak.

Wolf Coordination: Supervisor McCanna spent a considerable amount of time coordinating with the Department, U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Ferry County Sheriff, producers, and range riders.

Profanity Pack: Natural Resource Worker Weatherman and Biologist Shepherd contacted ranchers and range riders in several Profanity Peak allotments. Biologist Shepherd participated in two conference calls concerning the partial pack removal of the Profanity Peak pack. Biologist Shepherd completed and uploaded all depredation reports and completed the deterrence plan updates.

Smackout Pack: Biologist Shepherd talked with two allotment holders during the week. A range rider was deployed to the southern portion of the pack territory. Biologist Shepherd processed invoices for Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement for livestock contracts.

Dirty Shirt Pack: Biologist Shepherd discussed Dirty Shirt pack activity with U.S. Air Force/Department of Defense personnel. The pack has apparently started to spend more time in Stevens County despite the GPS collars indicating otherwise.

Stranger Pack: Natural Resource Worker Weatherman continued working in the Stranger pack home range, contacting select property owners. The property owners were given advice and fliers with suggestions on how to live with wolves. Small bands of cattle have been discovered grazing in the central portion of Stevens County and an effort to locate the producer/producers is ongoing.

Wolf Concerns in Huckleberry: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett checked a camera placed several weeks ago near Deer Creek. No photos were captured of wildlife. Two moose hunters were encountered scouting the area by foot.

Damage Prevention Contracts for Livestock (DPCA_L): Biologist Earl and Natural Resource Technician Wade each edited and reentered several more DPCA_Ls into Novatus for Asotin County producers this week.

Cattleman Meting: Biologist Earl and Natural Resource Technician Wade met with an Asotin County cattleman to look at a cow injured while at one of his grazing allotments in the Umatilla National Forest. The cattleman felt that the injuries could be bite wounds. The injuries are unknown.



Injuries to a hind leg of a cow in a known wolf activity area

Region 2 Wolf Activities

Wolf Management: Remote cameras deployed for lynx and wolverine have captured several wolf photos in the Upper Methow Watershed. This is the first confirmation of recent wolf activity in this area following several unverified public wolf observation reports. All photos thus far have been of single individuals, so pack status is still

unknown. Cameras also captured the dispersing female from the Teanaway Pack as she moved through District 6 in the Methow.



Upper Methow wolf photos – Photo by WSU/WDFW remote cameras



Dispersing Teanaway Pack wolf – Photo by WSU/WDFW remote camera

Region 3 Wolf Activities

Wolf Activity: Based on telemetry locations, the activity of the collared wolf was in the usual and expected areas this week.

Other Wolf Activities: Range Riders

McBride and Fonken spent time locating the collared wolves in the Teanaway. A new signal was detected that may be a young male from last year. The new frequency will be investigated more fully this next week. Locations have been all over the known territory this past week.



Several tough-looking range riders at work

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Moose on the Loose: Biologist Lowe assisted Enforcement in responding to two moose in Spokane neighborhoods this

week. The first, a cow, was harassed by onlookers for quite some time before WDFW's arrival and was reportedly becoming aggressive. The moose was not able to be captured. The second was a bull captured previously as a calf and moved to a location near the Spokane-Pend Oreille County line. The bull found his way back to Liberty Lake and into Spokane Valley, and was reported to be visiting neighborhoods for the past few weeks. The bull had a malformed antler which appeared to impede his vision. Biologist Lowe, Sergeant Sprecher, and Officer Beauchene, along with the assistance of Washington State Parks rangers and several neighbors, were able to capture the bull and take him north again.



Waiting for immobilization dart to take effect in a young bull in Spokane Valley



Sergeant Sprecher with immobilized bull moose in Spokane Valley



State Parks rangers and neighbors assist in moving the bull to the travel trailer for relocation

Farm Bill: Biologist Baarstad worked with two landowners and FSA on three new Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts for the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) program. If enrolled, these contracts will retain more than 1000 acres of existing native habitat for wildlife. One of these areas is periodically used by sage grouse. Baarstad will be conducting field evaluations of these contracts next week.

Z Lake Ponds: Finch and Anderson drove to the Welch parcel on Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Wednesday morning, parking at the old Welch place driveway terminus, east of the restored ponds south of Z Lake. They met up with Brian Heck, regional Ducks Unlimited engineer, and Bernie Kroiss, the contractor who built the dams and control structures for the project. The four inspected the restored wetland cells for damage to their spillways, due to heavy runoff in spring 2016. Wetland cells #2 and #3 had blown out spillway faces, where the rocks were pushed downstream past the face and the underlying fabric was exposed. Ducks Unlimited funds are available to repair the spillways, and Kroiss will be doing the repairs in fall 2016. On Friday, Wildlife Area Manager Anderson requested a WDFW Hydraulic Project Approval modification for the repairs. Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Finch will ensure the equipment access trails are mowed for fire safety, before repairs commence. Water levels are still high, but below the top of the dams and draining through culverts that drain below the dam.

Z Lake Ponds: Finch and Anderson drove to the Welch parcel on Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Wednesday



Blown out dam, south of Z Lake, August 10, 2016



Restored pond (aka “wetland cell”) south of Z Lake, August 10, 2016. Its blown out dam is to the right of the pictured area.

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

Summer Deer Surveys: District Biologists Dana Base and Annemarie Prince teamed with other agency partners this week in continuing summer deer counts on both traditional and standardized survey transects within District 1. As of this week's end, 13 of 20 survey routes to be covered this month have been surveyed. Both white-tailed and mule deer were observed, with classifications made for doe, fawn, and buck deer, including antler point category and age class on bucks.

Mule deer buck (left) and white-tail doe (right) observed on survey transects this week

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



Lamont Producer Damage Plan Deer Hazing Operation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett continued to work on a deer hazing operation near Lamont. Bennett made several trips to the location for hazing and dropping off supplies for the Master Hunter volunteers. More than 100 volunteer hours have been put into the project to date. No more than a dozen deer have been seen in the field due to the hazing activity.

Coyote Damage to Drip Lines: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Rasley met with the manager of the Boise Cascade Tree Farm in western Walla Walla County regarding their severe problem with coyotes biting through their drip lines. Last year they averaged over eight breaks per acre, and after some serious trapping and hunting efforts they were able to cut the damage to three or four breaks per acre over the 9,000 acres of trees. Boise traditionally maintains over 8,000 miles of drip lines each year on their tree farm.



Conservation Programs: Private Lands Biologist Lewis checked newly seeded CRP SAFE fields to monitor establishment and weed competition. Projects are establishing and sites are being mowed to reduce weed competition for resources and weed seed production.

First year native grasses at a CRP SAFE project site in the Ewan area

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

Youth Hunt: Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley contacted Hunter Education and Volunteer Coordinator Garcia about the upcoming pheasant youth hunt. WDFW partners with the local Blue Mountain Pheasants Forever Chapter on the coordination of attaining pheasants, locating property to hold the hunts, and holding an informative briefing of rules and regulations of hunting and transporting game. Thorne Hadley will coordinate youth hunts with Hunter Education Coordinator Whorton.

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Grand Coulee Ranch RCO_WWRP: Biologist Volsen worked on completing the RCO application for the 2016 round of WWRP Critical Habitat Grants. This application request is for funding to purchase the third phase of the Grand Coulee Ranch Project. If successful, the final grant will bring the total acres acquired to 20,500.

Multi-Carnivore Survey Project: Biologist Fitkin began checking a sample of remote cameras deployed for lynx and wolverine detection during the summer season. At roughly the mid-point of the season, the cameras are functioning excellently and are capturing a surprising number of animals. No lynx or wolverines have been detected yet in the first few cameras, but the best sites are yet to be checked. This is part of a broader partnership effort with Washington State University to develop a lynx occupancy model for the Okanogan Lynx Management Zone and improve our understanding of current lynx status and distribution.





Black bear, cougar, coyote, moose – Photos by WSU/WDFW remote cameras

Pygmy Rabbit Breeding Enclosure and Release Update: Breeding has wrapped up for the summer in our semi-wild breeding enclosures, and we have now completed all kit releases for the year. Our totals for the year are 134 kits captured, 40 confirmed breeding adults, and 120 kits released into the Sagebrush Flats Wildlife Area. At this point, our objective is to determine how many rabbits are within each enclosure and understand their demographic data (age, sex, and genetic makeup). We continue to observe kits born this year. They will now be retained as future breeders. We will undertake enclosure census methods in the coming weeks within each enclosure. Results from this effort will serve as a guide to what degree we re-distribute breeding

adults in the enclosures based on demographic data and enclosure habitat conditions.



The crew testing out the effectiveness of flushing rabbits on a grid to estimate their numbers within the breeding enclosures. We will compare these results with intensive trapping of marked/unmarked individuals in coming weeks.

Invasive Weeds: We continue to battle weed infestations within the Sagebrush Flats enclosures. This was the first site where we removed cheat grass and tumble mustard early this spring. We did such a good job that additional growth occurred in the absence of their competitors and new weeds took their place, such as sowthistle and Canada thistle. The need remains to remove these materials, as they impact our operations, continue to spread seeds during our activities, and now represent additional fuel for a fire. This dreadful but necessary activity will finally be over for the summer. The mechanical removal will be followed up in the fall and spring with herbicide treatments.

A cozy thistle infestation-now removed



Wildlife Areas

Exotic Grass Control on Habitat

Plots: Biologist Dougherty spent time assessing herbicide application sites with Manager Cotton and Wildlife Area Manager Petersen. There were two sites assessed to determine the efficacy of *Psuedomonas* spp. bacteria for control of cheat grass and jointed goat grass. After the field visits, there were some really deflating results. The sites were treated two years ago and there wasn't much in the way of "control" seen within the treatment areas. However, there was one field treated with an Imazapic herbicide that was effective in controlling jointed goat grass. Managers Cotton and Petersen went with Biologist Dougherty to check out a habitat plot treated with Imazapic herbicide last fall (2015) to control cheatgrass. After the site

visit, expectations were met and maybe even exceeded. The cheatgrass remained unhappy and there were native, seeded grasses that were very healthy and even still appeared to be still growing.

Lower Crab Creek Fire: On August 6, Assistant Manager Cole responded to the Lower Crab Creek fire following information updates from Assistant Manager Eidson and Grant County Sheriff alerts and an upgrade to state mobilization. The fire was active immediately east of the town of Beverly, primarily burning south of Lower Crab Creek Road along the Saddle Mountains, and moving east toward the town of Smyrna. FPDs, BLM, USFWS, and DNR, including three air tankers and three helicopters, combined for a successful suppression effort that stopped the fire several miles short of Smyrna. The fire involved a yet to be determined number of wildlife area acres. On Monday, August 8, Assistant Manager Eidson headed to Lower Crab Creek to check on the LCC fire. The fire was still staffed with statewide mobilized crews, but was not active in the Lower Crab Creek area. Eidson was able to determine that at least 300-500 acres of the Lower Crab creek unit were burned in the fire. Other losses included several miles of old fence. Luckily the fire was kept out of areas heavily used by monarch butterflies. The fire burned extremely hot and completely consumed the shrub steppe habitat within the perimeter. Plans are being made for rehab work this fall.



LCC fire – Photos by Cole



A portion of the wildlife area burned by the Lower Crab Creek fire – Photo by Eidson

Methow Forest Rehabilitation Project:

Okanogan Lands Forester Jamie Bass continued to coordinate with Cardno Archaeological Services to do a pre-work meeting and site orientation when the crew arrives at the Methow next week. Bass drove out to the access units to inspect damage following the latest summer thunderstorm and found only minor road

damage, which will not hinder activities. Bass worked on completing a SEPA and FPA for the remaining acreage identified in the MFRP area. Due to the removal of USFWS lands, a lot of the initial environmental assessment that was completed needs to be revisited, and unfortunately the CAMP engineer working on the road plan is out until next week. After calling around, Bass got confirmation that the Bear Creek and Buck Island FPAs had been approved. She then finished re-flagging and checking marks for the units. They would be ready to put out to bid as soon as a bid package could be developed, depending on WDFW management decisions on logging conditions and timing.

Private Lands/Access

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE): Biologist Comstock received an email from a cooperator who reported that his newly enrolled SAFE fields had been burned in the Black Rock Fire. This operator, along with two others, had fields burn in the fire. The unofficial report is that two young adults were target shooting on an exceptionally windy day, which started the blaze. After containment, the total area burned was 16,000 acres. One operator lost 10 miles of pasture fence and some cattle. Biologist Comstock met with the affected operators and mapped the extent of the fields burned. One operator lost 189 acres of expiring CRP. The fire actually is a boon to the operator, as it reduces the amount of site prep needed. Weed management will be critical this fall and next spring. Another SAFE cooperator is having significant issues with excess dense rabbitbrush and sagebrush seedlings in his field. Biologist Comstock consulted everyone she could think of to try to come up with the best method for reducing the amount of brush in the field so the operator can plant his grass next year. We won't know until next summer whether it will work. This operator also lost 200 acres of his SAFE field in the Black Rock Fire. Biologist Comstock rewrote the SAFE plans for the three tracts that burned and resubmitted them to NRCS. She also updated CPA6 forms. Biologist Comstock drew forb polygons for a number of SAFE fields and continued working on her conservation plan for certification, collecting more data and completing a matrix of practice effects.



Impressive dirt devil blowing off fields burned in the Black Rock Fire – Photo by Devon Comstock



Post-tillage regen of rabbitbrush and sagebrush in a SAFE field – Photo by Devon Comstock

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

Wildlife Management

Mourning Doves: Technician Quayle continued trapping efforts, bringing the total number of bands to roughly 280. Biologist Rowan baited and trapped for doves at northern Grant County sites and mailed extra bands to District 17.

Intern Leavitt showing off a dove she banded with a white wing – Photo by K. Quayle



Wildlife Areas

Methow Shooting Range: The WCC crew spent two complete days at the shooting range this week. The crew spent their first day weed eating, picking up debris, and performing general grounds maintenance to the property. Troyer took that time to round up painting supplies for the following day. On day two of maintenance at the shooting range, Troyer had the WCC crew apply a clear coat sealant to the wooden roof structure over the shooting benches. Troyer ran the crew through a quick painting lesson, and once he felt they had the hang of things, he let them fly. Overall, the shooting range looks great and the WCC crew's effort is greatly appreciated.

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

Wildlife Areas

Carlton Complex Fences: Assistant Manager Troyer had a variety of correspondences with FEMA fence contractors and CAMP personnel this week. Troyer had the opportunity to meet with the operator of Fiddler Fence to discuss their progress, their challenges, and their overall impressions of how progress is going. In all, they are doing excellent work and have a great attitude about the project even though they are encountering some very challenging terrain. Troyer also had an opportunity to talk with CAMP's Scott Allen. Scott provided Troyer a handful of updates, questions, and suggestions. One of the main topics discussed was about a fencing meeting to be held next Wednesday, August 17. Some of the attendees will be fence contractors, CAMP personnel, cattlemen, and MWA staff members. The ultimate goal is to work out a fencing schedule that jives with current grazing plans on the wildlife area and neighboring public lands. Assistant Manager Troyer and Maintenance Mechanic Wottlin will both be in attendance. Maintenance Mechanic Wottlin answered a wide array of FEMA fencing questions

and worked with several contractors to mitigate problems and concerns. Wottlin also spent a day in the field with CAMP's fence inspector, Joel Molander.

Sinlahekin Boundary Fence Inventory: Manager Haug and Assistant Manager Wehmeyer meet Scotch Creek Wildlife Area staff members and the NCW prescribed burn team to discuss inventorying fences damaged as a result of the Okanogan Complex fires. The inventorying will aid the WDFW Capital Asset Management Program (CAMP). Posts, wire, and brace structures are all being accounted for within various segments of fence, along with numerous photos of the fence. This information will be given to FEMA to help with reimbursement following construction. Action along various sections of fence is needed immediately due to neighboring landowners turning out cattle in the next couple weeks.



Manager Haug overlooking Sinlahekin Boundary line within a stand of burnt timber east of Fish Lake



Assistant Wehmeyer inventorying boundary fence northeast of Doheny Lake on Sinlahekin Wildlife Area



Yellow legs in Douglas County – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW



Dryland Sunflower Crop in Douglas County – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW



Monarch Butterflies: Technician Quayle continued surveys for monarch butterflies at previously located Grant County milkweed patches.

First instar monarch larva in milkweed patch along Highway 26 – Photo by K. Quayle



Freshly emerged female monarch drying her wings – Photo by K. Quayle



First evening duck trapping in the Gloyd – Photo by C. McPherson



Lynx country in the Okanogan District – Photo by Scott Fitkin

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Manager Lopushinsky coordinated with Region 2 and 3 Wildlife and Habitat staff members to arrange a site visit to Mission Ridge Ski Area to discuss forest health needs there.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman, Forester Mackey, and Prescribed Burn Leads Leuschen and

Eberlein met with Forest Service prescribed burn staff members to discuss options for coordination on the proposed Oak Creek prescribed burning. Despite completing NEPA review, the outcome was similar to the same meeting held last year. There is interest from the Forest Service in partnering, but at this time they cannot commit to the that project area. WDFW will

likely proceed with our prescribed burn as a stand-alone project. Leuschen and Eberlein installed a weather station and other monitoring equipment on one unit and spent the day with Mackey laying out another burn unit. Hopefully we will burn more than one unit this fall.



L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technician Hill continued his battle with Russian thistle at the corrals along the Vantage Highway and at Kohler Spring. Hill had sprayed the thistle at the corrals five weeks ago, but it did not seem to kill all the weeds. He came back this time with a more potent herbicide mixture and will monitor the area in the coming weeks.

Russian thistle along the road at Kohler Spring in the Whiskey Dick Wildlife Area

Wildlife Management

Bat Survey: District Biologist Fidorra continued the WDFW bat survey. He placed acoustic bat detectors at sites in District 4 and 5, and coordinated with District 5 Assistant Biologist Rowan to relocate detectors near the Ephrata office. Fidorra is placing detectors at eight sites and will repeat recording

protocols at each site monthly through August.

Duck Banding: District Biologist Fidorra set and baited duck traps and worked with Private Lands Biologist Stutzman and a volunteer to band mallards on the Baillie Youth Ranch. Forty-two mallards were captured, including mostly hatch-year birds, which reflect good production this season. Two more duck traps were installed and baited on the Mesa Unit.

Private Lands Biologist Stutzman rounding up ducks on the Baillie Youth Ranch

Pheasant Release: District Biologist Fidorra coordinated with staff members in Yakima and Walla Walla counties to coordinate schedules for pheasant releases in 2016. The plan is to release birds prior to shooting hours to avoid safety issues.



Status and Trends: District Biologist Fidorra worked with other biologists from the Columbia Basin to complete the draft status and trends report for mule deer and the Yakima elk herd.

Duck Traps: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman baited the four duck traps on Friday. The previous day's bait was gone at all four sites, boding well for trapping this week.

Two pronghorns in Benton County near a Feel Free to Hunt property

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



Wildlife Areas

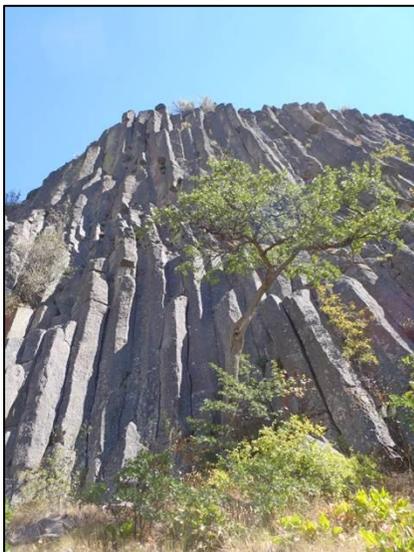
Wenas Wildlife Area Access: Access Manager Garcia received a complaint that some boat trailers were getting caught up on the rocks at the Snively Access boat launch when launching and/or pulling out. Staff members were able to remove or break the rocks that seemed to be causing the problems.

The guard rail at the Old Highway 10 Access Site was damaged over the weekend and will need to be replaced.



Damaged guard rail at Old Highway 10 Access Site

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman met with Andy Fitz, who is the coordinator of a rock climbing group that



secured a grant from REI to do trail maintenance at rock climbing areas around the state next summer. Some of the work is scheduled for climbing areas along the Tieton River. Huffman and Fitz assessed the access trails for repairs and some realignment, and also stabilized trails and sites at the base of the climbing routes. Repairs are proposed for the Royal Columns, The Bend, Moon Rocks, and another site that Huffman did not know existed, called Chunk. Huffman will work on completing needed SEPA and cultural review and Fitz will coordinate the grant, which included trail crew and volunteer labor.

The Bend rock climbing area on the Tieton River



Uneven disturbed ground at the base of a climbing route at The Bend. Trail crews will improve this site by building up a small wall of rock to create a level spot to stand.

Trash Pickup: Natural Resource Worker Farias picked up trash at river access sites and swimming holes on the wildlife area. With the hot weather the sites are getting a lot of use. Berry contacted one camper and left him a trash bag to pick up the liter at his camp site. A full bag was left at the Oak Creek HQ that afternoon.

Trashed dumped at a camp site along the Tieton River

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



Wildlife Areas

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Manager

Babik attended the monthly Kittitas County Field and Stream meeting to introduce herself to the club members.

Manastash Cabin: Manager Babik and Assistant Manager Hunt met with Darrel Eason, our volunteer in charge of the Manastash Cabin. Darrel dropped in to meet Manager Babik and give us a brief update on the cabin, which is in good shape.

Wildlife Management

Wheat Harvest: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand conducted elk damage assessments in wheat crops with landowners and crop adjustors. Wheat harvest is in full swing, with elk damage being documented in several fields.

Rattlesnake Mountain: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand assisted with the construction and design of an elk exclusionary fence at an orchard and row crop farm near Rattlesnake Mountain.

Damage Permits: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand prepared damage prevention permits for a landowner on Rattlesnake Mountain.

Damage Permit Harvest: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand monitored harvest on damage permits and recorded harvest in the damage permit issuance and harvest reporting database.

Elk Hazing: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand hazed large numbers of elk from wheat fields on Rattlesnake Mountain.

Elk Conflict: Conflict Specialist Wetzel worked with landowners and crop producers reporting elk in crops (mostly hay). Elk numbers are increasing as non-irrigated areas continue to get drier.

Dead Sheep: A dead sheep was located in the Swauk permit range, but only coyote tracks were observed at the scene.

Elk Herding Fence: Conflict Specialist Wetzel worked with two volunteers to provide materials for a 3D elk herding fence. The fence is badly needed at the location, as over 40 elk have gone around the fence and are using adjacent crop fields.

Fencing: Conflict Specialist Wetzel delivered more fencing materials to start a cost-share fencing project in Cle Elum this week.

Cost share fencing for Cle Elum cider orchard

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



Wildlife Areas

Oak Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Berry and Natural Resource Worker Farias cleared fallen trees and thick vegetation on elk fence in Cowiche Creek bottom and made repairs as needed. Berry received reports of elk below the fence in the area.

Tree on the elk fence in the Cowiche Creek Riparian Area





Elk fence hidden in the thick vegetation of the Cowiche Creek Riparian Area



Repaired fence in the Cowiche Creek area. Trees had fallen in several areas on the fence

Colockum Wildlife Area: Manager Lopushinsky received and reviewed the tree felling safety plan submitted by the contractor selected to rebuild the southern boundary fence.

Pole Flats Road Camp: Manager Lopushinsky contacted Region 2 Enforcement regarding a long-term camp set up on the Pole Flats Road in the Stemilt Basin. Lopushinsky sent photos and documentation to Sgt. Klump and Officer Boyd.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Area Bat Population Surveys: Wildlife Biologists Fenner Yarborough, Ruth Milner and Manager Kessler performed bat surveys at the Lake Terrell Unit barn and the Hovander House at Whatcom County’s Hovander Park. More than 40 were seen at Lake Terrell, and over 250 were seen at Hovander House. Fenner and Ruth used echo recorders to record bat vocalizations, and will work to identify the species. With white-nose syndrome now having been found in Washington, these population surveys are more important.

Wildlife Biologists Yarborough and Milner and Manager Kessler perform bat surveys at the Hovander House in Whatcom County’s Hovander Park



Wildlife Areas

Leque Island Funding: Projects Coordinator Brokaw submitted a grant application to the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) Large Capital Project Program. The application requests \$6 million to construct the 250-acre estuary restoration project and includes a request to fund acquisition of waterfowl forage and hunting land in the nearby vicinity. Additionally, he submitted forms to the WDFW Access Program to begin development of a grant application for planning a motorized boat launch facility in the area, which was recommended by the Leque Island Recreation and Access Committee in July.

Stillwater Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that mowing began at the Stillwater Unit in preparation for hunting season.

Project Reporting: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm completed the quarterly reporting for ALEA projects. Manager Boehm sponsors a Mountains to Sound restoration project, clearing invasive weeds and planting native trees at a fishing access site near Fall City.

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

Wildlife Management

Wolverine: District 14 staff members hiked into a site on the headwaters of the Nooksack River to assess its suitability as a camera bait station for a wolverine study set to commence this winter.

Waterfowl Trapping: District 14 staff members continued to prepare for duck trapping season. Staff completed trap building, set up, baiting, and other miscellaneous tasks to prepare for the upcoming trapping season.

Biologist DeBruyn crossing the Nooksack near its source. The pink flagging is a concession to the open season on bears.



Wildlife Areas

Pheasants: Manager Kessler continued repairs to the pheasant pens. In order to free up space at the game farm, the first load of pheasants will be brought up to Lake Terrell this week. Manager Kessler started contacting volunteers who will help with the pheasant release this year and put them down on the schedule. He met with both new and repeat releasers.

Lake Terrell Unit Small Brush Fire: A brush fire burned a small area on the east side of the Lake Terrell Unit along Rainbow Road. It is not certain how the fire was started, but it burned blackberry vines and other brush.



A brush fire burned a small area on the Lake Terrell Unit of the Whatcom Wildlife Area

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with volunteers to continue internal access road and trail improvements at this unit. Truckloads of wood chips are being donated and delivered by a local land clearing business. The chips

will form a base on the roads to allow vehicle traffic during the fall and winter season.

Island Unit: Natural Resources Technician Cosgrove did final plantings of millet in two small areas of the #1 and Seattle Pond fields on the Island Unit. Cosgrove monitored plantings and field conditions with Manager Rotton on Wednesday. Cosgrove began work on two temporary hunting blinds in corn strips on the Island Unit. Cosgrove coordinated with volunteers to assist building a blind on a mound at the west end of the Lorenzen field on the Island Unit. This area can get over two feet of water during the waterfowl season, making it difficult to hunt.

Samish Unit: Meis mowed at the Samish Unit and Samish River Unit for noxious weed control and pond vegetation manipulations.



Volunteers constructing hunting blind on the Island Unit

Private Lands/Access Management

Migratory Bird Enhancement Forage Enhancement Projects: Natural Resource Technician Otto checked the growth of migratory bird forage plots in Whatcom and Skagit counties. The plantings looked positive and there is plenty of growth in the barley, with excellent coverage in a variety of fields on or surrounding current quality hunt fields.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo started preparing materials for permanent blinds in Whatcom County using cut and bundled canary grass.

Wildlife Viewing and Diversity Management: Natural Resource Technician Otto completed a property check and conducted vegetation control for the access trail at the Whidbey Island Wildlife Viewing location. Otto added new sign-in sheets. Over 25 visitors used the site over the last month. Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell coordinated with several different landowners across Region 4 about enrolling in the Private Lands Access Program's Wildlife Viewing system. Several high quality sites were evaluated and discussed. Further negotiations

will take place next week. Two of the sites being negotiated offer ample access opportunity to coastal wetlands and are currently highly sought out locations for wildlife viewing.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Wild Future Meeting at Region 4: Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator Dazey assisted the Wildlife Program at the Wild Future meeting in Region 4. Dazey manned the table for the Wildlife Program and answered many of the questions the public had. He recorded their thoughts for compiling with the other comments presented to other program areas.



WDFW Director Jim Unsworth at the Wild Future meeting in Region 4

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

Wildlife Management

Permit Hunts: District Biologist Yarborough, Private Lands Biologist Wingard, and Natural Resource Technician Otto met with permit holders for GMU 418 and Elk Area 4941 to discuss access agreements, land ownership, and everything else related to their upcoming elk hunts. Representatives from Sierra Pacific and WDFW Enforcement were also on hand to provide additional information and answer any questions hunters had related to the hunt.

Wildlife Area Planning Process: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm participated in Core Team conference calls to discuss and plan next steps for the planning process.

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that the Sky Valley Tractor Club show was last weekend on the unit. Booths with local foods and crafts, antique tractors and farm equipment, and the annual tractor pull were just some of the family events available. Proceeds from the show help support local food banks, shelters, and Boys and Girls Clubs.

Wildlife Conflict Management

Ungulate Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist and Private Lands Biologist Wingard met with a commercial producer in the Acme area of Whatcom County to discuss deer and elk hunting access to address potential damage issues to agricultural crops. Wildlife Conflict

Specialist Witman met with a representative from Skagit Valley Farm to discuss recent elk damage to a potato crop in the Day Creek area. Hazing and other preventative measures are being implemented to address the situation. Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell, Regional Director Everett, and WDFW Wildlife Commission Chair Smith met with local and statewide Cattleman’s Association representatives to discuss elk conflict management in Skagit and Whatcom counties. Mitigation and management strategies, dilemmas, cost/benefits, land use equilibrium, and critical perspectives were discussed. Proactive and cooperative management measures were presented to ensure the safety and economic viability of local agricultural values, and likewise for elk species and their habitats. In conclusion of the meeting, WDFW and Cattleman’s representatives gained a better understanding of the fundamental complexities involved in managing elk presence, wildlife conflict, private landowner rights, co-management obligations, and hunting on private property being negatively influenced by elk.

Bear Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman responded to a bear complaint in the Arlington area of Snohomish County. The bear has been frequenting a backyard and causing damage to fruit trees. The landowner was provided a motion alarm to deter the bear from the area.

Fruit tree damage caused by a black bear



Wildlife Areas

Fir Island Farm: Cosgrove prepared buoy markers with a second coat of buoy paint to three large orange buoys that will mark the intertidal boundary of the game reserve at the Fir Island Farm Reserve. Manager Rotton continued to research options for ground anchors for the buoys. Manager Rotton attended the Fir Island Farm construction meeting discussion and went through the final construction items and preparations for demobilization.

Skagit Headquarters: Meis continued to prepare, investigate, and repair water leaks in the pheasant pen for the early pheasant delivery. Cosgrove inspected a hunting/viewing blind at the Headquarters Unit and determined the materials needed for repairs. Manager Rotton scheduled entry road and dike brush cutting on the site with a local vendor. Cosgrove mowed areas at the Headquarters Unit and applied herbicides in parking and access areas at the Headquarters and Johnson/DeBay's Slough units. Manager Rotton cut and removed purple loosestrife plants along the dike trail.

Leque Island: Manager Rotton met with Project Engineer John Hansen regarding RCO Boating access grant applications.

Private Lands/Access Management

418/4941 Special Elk Permit Hunts: Private Lands Biologists Wingard, District Biologist Yarborough and Natural Resource Technician Otto met with 418 and 4941 elk special permit holders. Also at the meeting were partners from private industrial timberlands. Safety, access, and special permit hunt rules regarding private timber lands were the primary topics for the meeting. Information packets were also handed out to the hunters. The meeting was very well received. Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell coordinated with a statewide raffle tag winner on hunting prospects and area access in Region 4. After discussing matters, the raffle holder has decided to hunt in GMU 418 and is looking forward to a high quality hunting experience.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Private Lands Biologist Wingard continued preparing contracts for the waterfowl quality hunt program within the region. Natural Resource Technician Otto met with multiple partner landowners to discuss enrollment for the 2016 season, contract signings, and crop rotations.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey activated four new hunter education classes in Region 4. Coordinator Dazey assisted several hunter education instructors as they prepared for their classes. That included requesting an enforcement officer to present at a class, ordering supplies for several instructors, and assisting an instructor who recently moved to Region 4 with finding a new teaching team. Dazey also evaluated the teaching team out of Oak Harbor. Dazey arranged for the presentation of a 30 years of service plaque to an instructor in the Oak Harbor area. Dazey arranged for the Region 6 coordinator to assist a new instructor in the Federal Way area as he starts a new teaching team. The Region 6 coordinator also assisted Dazey to evaluate a team composed of instructors who live in Region 4 but only teach in Region 6.

Pre-Service Training: Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator Dazey conducted the first of the two required sessions for certifying new hunter education instructors. This PST session was held in Skagit County and had seven applicants attend. Session one covers teaching applicants the tricks of the trade and department policy, and gives them time to prepare for the second session. Session two will have the applicants actually student teach alongside an existing team and is scheduled in Burlington on August 21. Dazey arranged a venue for PST training in Black Diamond for September and a venue in Snohomish County in November. Invites for the two trainings were sent out to over 40 applicants.

Master Hunter Volunteer Support: Volunteer Coordinator Dazey assisted with recruiting for several service projects from his database of volunteers and master hunters in need of service hours. Projects included manning the informational booth at the Edmonds Bird Festival, assisting at the fishing booth at the Puyallup fair, and elk fencing in the Auburn area. Dazey proofed the draft Master Hunter Handbook and offered several suggestions to the author. Dazey answered several master hunter applicants' questions on where to turn in proof of service hour forms, approved projects, and how service hours are recorded.

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

Wildlife Management

Volunteer Opportunities: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated volunteer efforts for the units this week. Volunteers prepared the pheasant pens for the arrival of birds, an operator worked at the Crescent Lake Unit clearing winter blow-downs off roads and trails, and volunteers pulled invasive purple loosestrife and tansy at the Ebey Island Unit.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Mount St. Helens Mountain Goat Survey: Regional Wildlife Biologists Holman, Stephens, Bergh, George, and Meyers teamed with staff members from the Cowlitz Tribe and USFS and volunteers organized through the St. Helens Institute to conduct a survey of mountain goats on and around Mount St. Helens. Goats have re-colonized the area in the decades following the 1980 eruption. The survey was partially impacted by unusually cloudy, foggy, and wet weather for August. In spite of the often limited visibility, initial survey results indicate that roughly 150 mountain goats now inhabit Mount St. Helens and the surrounding areas. The data are still being

processed and reviewed to assure that no goats were counted more than once, so final results are pending. Similar efforts conducted during 2014 and 2015 resulted in 65 and 152 goats respectively. Thanks to all who participated in the third year of the Mount St. Helens mountain goat survey. The project exemplifies the importance and value of cooperation among Tribal, State, Federal, and private stakeholders related to this valuable wildlife resource.



Western Pond Turtle: Biologists Anderson and Bergh, along with Frank Slavens (retired curator of reptiles – Woodland Park Zoo), conducted a site visit to WDFW’s Sondino Ponds with 10 students and two instructors from the Seattle area. The summer class is being presented by the Woodland Park Zoo and is a continuing education program for science teachers and interested citizens wanting to learn about reptile and amphibian conservation in Washington. The course is designed to inform students about the human dimensions of conservation issues. The course also uses science and management through field participation to give students a better idea of how current wildlife issues are being addressed in different communities around the state.



Woodland Park Zoo class



WDFW western pond turtle site

Confiscated Spotted Turtle: WDFW Enforcement Officer Hughes confiscated a spotted turtle from an individual who was attempting to sell the turtle on Craigslist. Spotted turtles are one of twenty turtle species prohibited to possess in Washington. Biologist Stephens coordinated with the Oregon Zoo to find placement for the turtle, and the turtle was shipped to a Connecticut



Aquarium where it will be on display to visitors. Spotted turtles are native on the east coast and the Great Lakes region.

Spotted Turtle

Annual Region PR Reports: Region 5 biologists have completed work on the annual Pittman-Robertson (PR) Status and Trend reports for mountain goats, elk, and deer management in Region 5. The reports summarize activities related to each species, including hunter harvest, season structure, survey efforts, research projects, habitat enhancements, population estimates, etc. The reports will be compiled with similar documents on all hunted species in Washington and finalized this fall. Interested parties can read the annual reports from past years by visiting the hunting page of WDFW's website and selecting Game Status and Trend Reports.

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

Access Sites: Access sites across the region are being used heavily. Access staff members Spangler and Rhodes are hauling away very large amounts of trash and trying to keep up with the high use.

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

Wildlife Conflict

DPCA: Biologist Meyer continued working with a landowner in Klickitat County to renew his DPCA contract.

In the Field: While out in the field in the Mount St. Helens area, Biologist Meyer and Conflict Specialist Conklin observed a barred owl.



Barred Owl

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Satsop/Mason Deer Project: In 2009, WDFW initiated a study of the effects of forest management practices on black-tailed deer reproduction. Two of eight study sites are represented in District 15: Mason and Satsop. The Mason cluster includes five GPS-collared does, while the Satsop cluster has two. Three fawns collared this spring remain active. Biologist Murphie reports no new mortalities have occurred recently. Additionally, six does from Mason

with GPS collars scheduled to drop-off this year did so as scheduled, and all collars have been recovered.

Heron Rookery: Biologist Novack coordinated a site visit by DNR to a recently reported heron rookery. A former rookery for the area had been abandoned and DNR was unaware of the new location. The site was confirmed by a DNR biologist on Friday.

Fisher Monitoring: Biologist Michaelis reviewed photos from three camera stations along the Wynoochee River. No fishers were detected. One site had two aerial scavengers detected on the same image.



Turkey vulture and raven each taking their turns at chicken drumsticks!

Bat Acoustic Project

Nolan Creek: Biologist Ament retrieved one set of equipment for acoustic monitoring of bats on August 9, 2016. This unit was set up on a slough near Nolan Creek, along the Hoh River. The unit seems to be working properly. Three of the cards in the unit had recorded data. The unit was transported to District Biologist McMillan for card submission and replacement. Biologist McMillan managed the bat detectors after Biologist Ament deployed the units. Biologist McMillan took the SD cards out of the unit, backed them up, and mailed them to Biologist Buchanan for interpretation and analysis.

Clearwater/ Hoh (ONP): On August 11, 2016, two units were deployed for the second of three proposed visits. One set of gear was set-up at a wetland area near the Clearwater River. Biologist Ament made the effort to find a new location for the station at the Clearwater site. There was some concern that vegetation at the original station could have triggered recording events. She located a nice spot on a small finger of land that protruded into the wetland. The other set of gear was set up along the Hoh River within Olympic National Park. A park research permit had been obtained and the Hoh Ranger was notified. The two units will be retrieved on August 15, 2016.



Microphone on pole near wetland area

Wetland area with acoustic monitoring unit nearby

Dead Bat Collection (Unintentional): On August 12, Biologist Ament discovered that she had a dead bat on the front grill of her Ford work truck. She had come home late the night before from setting up bat acoustic monitoring equipment on the west end of the Olympic Peninsula. She was not aware that she had unintentionally collected this unfortunate bat. It was likely foraging on the abundance of insects. Some of these insects were also collected on the grill of the truck. The bat was frozen and will be submitted with other collected bats to Veterinarian Haman.



Bat unintentionally collected by Biologist Ament while working on the bat acoustic monitoring project

Fisher Monitoring Project: Biologist Ament initiated work for the fisher monitoring project last week. She had been communicating with Point No Point Biologist Tim Cullinan to discuss scheduling for the fisher project. He has limited time to assist this season, but conveyed that a technician from Port Gamble, Charin Godbolt, would be able to dedicate some time to the project. A total of three hexes will be monitored by the team this season. Flagging was put out on routes to each station and some brushing of the trails was completed the previous week. All project gear had been obtained from ONP. Biologist Ament spent time early last week on getting all cameras and other station gear ready for deployment. On August 10, Biologists Cullinan, Godbolt, Ament, and WCC volunteer Jamie Becker met to set up three stations each for Hex 514 and Hex 515. A culvert replacement project was encountered on the way to one station, but an alternate route was possible. It was a long day, but the team was successful in getting all stations set up. Stations at another hex will be set up this week. The stations will be monitored by the team members on alternating Wednesdays until the end of September.



District 16 fisher team setting up a station



Charin and Jamie playing with lighters (to burn hair snares)



Tim Cullinan does a “crawl-by” to test the camera and last task of putting out the smelly attractant lure



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

Wildlife Management

Mourning Dove Banding: Biologist Michaelis continues to capture and band mourning doves at two locations. A total of 171 birds (140 hatch year, 30 adults, and 1 unknown age/sex) were banded. Juvenile birds (hatch year) are captured in higher proportion to adults. We are seeing newly fledged birds where no molt is present. These birds are very small in size when compared to older juveniles and adults.

Recently fledged mourning dove. Buffy-tipped feathers on the wings are a distinct indicator of age. Lack of pigment around eye and beak are additional indicators.

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



Wildlife Management

Benefit for Local Wildlife Rehabilitators: On August 8, Biologist Ament attended a benefit that was held at the Birds Unlimited store in Gardiner to generate some financial assistance for two local wildlife rehab facilities. Director Jaye Moore (and staff members), from the NW Raptor and Wildlife Center, and Director Cynthia Daily (and staff members), from the Discovery Bay Wild Bird Rescue organizations, were both present at the event with live birds. There was also

live music and a raffle of various items was conducted. Attendance was good. She especially enjoyed seeing a “Perlin” (hybrid between a peregrine falcon and a merlin) for the first time. See photos below. Biologist Ament will be holding her twenty-first annual Rendezvous for Raptors benefit on August 20, 2016.



*“Perlin”
(peregrine/merlin)*



*Cynthia Daily (second left) and
other staff members*



*Jaye Moore with new owl
handler, Ethan Priddell*

Washington’s Wild Future: Biologist Novack participated in the Wild Futures public meeting at South Bend. A number of waterfowl hunters were present to discuss goose hunting in GMA 2 and the relationship between eel grass and duck numbers in Willapa Bay.