Wildlife Program

Week of January 25 – January 31, 2016

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Conference Calls: Supervisor McCanna participated on six conference calls this week regarding wolves.

Wolf - Domestic Dog Incident: Biologist Shepherd and an Enforcement officer investigated an incident of a wolf pack confronting domestic dogs east of Chewelah. Quick action by the owners prevented a physical attack. Several hours were spent over the course of the week discussing the incident with the owners and regional and headquarters staff members.

Wolf Advisory Group Documents: Biologist Shepherd worked on documents by providing corrections and edits that will be used for a Wolf Advisory Group meeting next week.

Wolf Risk Map and Selection Criteria for Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements: Biologist Shepherd participated in a conference call concerning a draft process for mapping wolf risk to cattle and another for selecting Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements for Livestock in order to distribute limited funds to the potential cooperators at higher risk to wolf-livestock problems.

December Wolf Advisory Group Debrief and Tasks: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett and several other staff members discussed topics covered at the last Wolf Advisory Group meeting held in Spokane. During this conference call and a later one, next steps for staff members and tasks were assigned. Items to be completed this month include a new Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement for Livestock. Defined non-lethal wolf deterrents will also be presented to the Wolf Advisory Group.

Wolf PowerPoint: Supervisor McCanna presented an educational wolf PowerPoint at the Walla Walla Cenex Harvest States Farmers Co-op Annual Growers' Meeting. The crowd consisted of over 125 people who were very happy with the educational presentation and asked multiple great questions. The most common questions regarded wolf identification, wolf track identification, and reporting wolf sightings.

Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Contact: Supervisor McCanna was contacted by Commissioner Holzmiller regarding the utilization of a landfill in southeast Washington to dispose of dead carcasses.

OR-29: Biologist Earl talked to Biologist Becker about the collar data website. OR-29 has been added to our sites now.

OR-29 Wolf: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Rasley and Biologist Jason Earl continue to respond to calls regarding OR-29. As of the end of the week, OR-29 was moving eastbound on U.S. Forest

Service land in southern Garfield County. Producers with winter feed lots and/or calving areas were notified when OR-29 was in the area.

Wolf Advisory Group Debriefing Conference Call: Biologist Earl participated in the Wolf Advisory Group call, which touched on DPCA-L contracts and moving forward with producers.

DPCA-L Conference Call: Biologist Earl participated and provided input on how to handle the growing non-lethal agreements with producers.

Risk Assessment Conference Call: Biologist Earl participated in the Risk Assessment call, which touched on mapping known wolf dens and rendezvous sites for packs with collars.

Region 2 Wolf Activities

Wolf Management: Biologist Heinlen was forwarded a photograph of a canine taken from a game camera in GMU 204. A University of Washington graduate student's field crew captured a single photograph of this animal. This crew has set up additional cameras in the area to monitor the site.

Single canine in GMU 204

Loup Loup Pack: Biologist Heinlen received a report of one set of large canine tracks on the Nordic ski trail system off the South Summit Snow Park on the Loop Loop summit. The area is within a mile of the where the Loup Loup Pack was originally confirmed and most likely comes from a member of that pack.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Presentation of Periodic Status Reviews to Fish and Wildlife Commission: Wildlife Diversity Division staff members presented four Periodic Status Reviews to the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission in Vancouver, Washington on January 22. The species involved were greater sage grouse (Derek Stinson), northern spotted owl (Joe Buchanan), snowy plover (Derek Stinson), and western gray squirrel (Gary Wiles). The Fish and Wildlife Commission will review and discuss the materials provided and make decisions about listing status of these species at their next meeting.

Island Marble Working Group Meeting: Ann Potter, Conservation Biologist, and Dave Hays, Restoration Ecologist, participated in a one-day Island Marble Working Group meeting in Seattle

along with San Juan National Historical Park, USFWS, BLM, San Juan County Land Bank, and San Juan Preservation Trust staff members. The group discussed organizational topics, including revising and updating the working group's role and structure to include new participants and the formation of technical advisory subcommittees. We reviewed monitoring and research findings from 2015, including the success of trials conducted to create Island Marble habitat, high larval mortality from unknown sources, and low adult numbers. Captive-rearing results from 2015 were presented and discussed. Seventy-four adults were released, and 110 larvae were reared to chrysalids (for release in 2016). We discussed the best methods for a habitat project outside of the park. The group agreed on high-priority actions for spring 2016, including ongoing butterfly monitoring, habitat research, and captive rearing, as well as the reinstallation of temporary deer fencing, development of a single summary annual report template, and a reassessment of captive-rearing goals.

Wildlife Diversity Citizen Science Initiative: Citizen Science Coordinator Wendy Connally continued to work with Wildlife Diversity and Game division teams to identify suitable citizen science project subjects for the Fiscal Year 16-17 biennium. We made progress on a Game Division short list. Wendy met with Wildlife Diversity Division biologists responsible for invertebrate Species of Greatest Conservation Need to discuss issues and opportunities. Additionally, working with the Pacific Flyway's Nongame Technical Committee representative Joe Buchanan and Conservation Assessment Section Manager Kevin Kalasz, Connally drafted scoping notes for our participation in a short-eared owl multi-state survey for Fiscal Year 17-19.

REGION 1

No highlights submitted this week.

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Northern Leopard Frog: Biologist Finger continued to discuss eDNA results with the WSU genetics lab and E. Duvuvuei (field lead) to assess issues with the results of the eDNA study (testing for northern leopard frogs, bullfrogs, chytrids fungus, and ranavirus). Multiple issues are confounding results and WSU continues to work through them. First, there was an issue detected with the extraction of batches, fortunately these batches are being re-extracted and results are now in line with expectations. The second issue is that Northern Leopard Frogs were not being detected on successfully extracted batches. WSU continues to investigate why the assay is not working for this population (it is possibly carrying an undocumented mitochondrial sequence). The good news is that there was not an issue with DNA degradation and therefore we expect to have useful results in the future.

Pygmy Rabbit Recovery: Biologists Gallie and Gibbs, Technician Erlenbach, and two volunteers continued progress on surveys for active burrows on the Sagebrush Flats Release area, which should consist mostly of wild surviving rabbits. To date we have completed five of the 20 areas. We have now detected 13 burrow systems and collected genetic samples from each. Interestingly, the majority of the burrow systems are located in CRP, with low densities of sagebrush, as opposed to the more typical dense native shrub steppe cover. Gallie also followed up on tracks/burrow detections made on the aerial survey. We have now checked 16 locations and confirmed seven were active pygmy rabbit burrows. DNA samples were collected to determine if these were wild born or captive-reared rabbits. We additionally documented six active burrow systems en route to these points. What is most exciting with the location of these burrows is they are outside the core recovery area, occupying dispersal habitat patches that connect with other large blocks of shrub steppe. They represent the most northern, eastern, and southern detections we have had on this project to date.

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

Wildlife Areas

Beebe Springs: Wildlife Area Manager Fox met with consultants from URS Corp, JA Brennan Associates, Cascade Interpretive Consulting, and members of the Beebe Springs stakeholder group to start work on the last interpretive signs at Beebe Springs. The group worked on updating three existing signs on kiosks and interpretive signs for the new kiosk at the youth fishing pond. Wildlife Area Manager Fox received a report from a Chelan area birder that the Beebe Creek beavers were once again causing trouble. This time the beavers were gnawing on a good-sized cottonwood tree adjacent to their pond and one of the pedestrian trails, creating a safety hazard. After consulting with Habitat Biologist Connie Iten, it was decided to help the beavers out and drop the tree in their pond. Maintenance Mechanic Fidel Rios deftly dropped the tree in the pond, eliminating the safety hazard. While at the site, Ron and Fidel also checked the five culverts that were fenced last fall to prevent plugging by the beavers. All of the fortifications on the culverts are keeping the beavers at bay so far.

Maintenance Mechanic Fidel Rios felling hazard tree at Beebe Springs

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

Private Lands/Access

Fencing: The picture below shows what elk were doing. They had learned that they could cut the 16-foot distance in half if they went to the corner of the existing fence and jumped the eight foot gap! The problem was fixed that by adding the new section of fence.

Specialist Bridges spent half a day working on getting the 97a BHS fence repaired

Moose cow with two calves – Photo by Scott Fitkin

Bobcat at offal sets – Photo by WDFW remote camera

Observed Environment – District 6 Winter Conditions

Recent Weather: Rain and above freezing temperatures persisted all week at the lowest elevations in the Okanogan Valley and some south facing slopes began melting. The lower Methow Valley experienced similar weather. Snow melt and accumulation were about even in the valley at Winthrop. Higher elevations experienced significant snow accumulation and the current snow water equivalent is now well above average for this time of year at Hart's Pass.

Short-Term Forecast: Near seasonal temperatures are forecast for the coming week, with minor snow accumulations possible mid-week at lower elevations and moderate snow expected at higher elevations.

Long-term Forecast: Significantly higher than normal temperatures and below average precipitation are forecast for north central Washington for February – April. The snow pack depth at lower to middle elevations has likely peaked for the winter.

Snow Depths: Snow depths on deer winter range vary from bare ground at low elevation, south facing slopes to three feet at the upper limits. Snow pack at higher elevations ranges from three feet in the eastern portion of the county to eight and a half feet at pass level along the Cascade Crest.

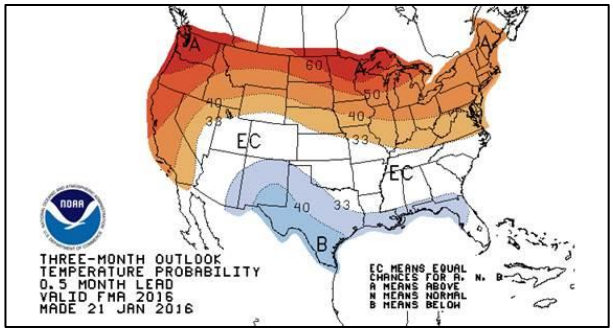
Snotel sites –*
Hart's Pass (6500 feet): 102 inches
Salmon Meadows (4,460 feet): 37 inches
Gold Axe Camp (5360 feet) (Okanogan Highlands): 35 inches
**No snotel sites exist in core deer winter range areas*

Habitat: Forage is limited in areas that burned during last summer's fires, although some areas may improve a bit as slopes bare up. Moderate amounts of forage remain available above the snow cover in unburned areas, and this is likely to improve as winter progresses.

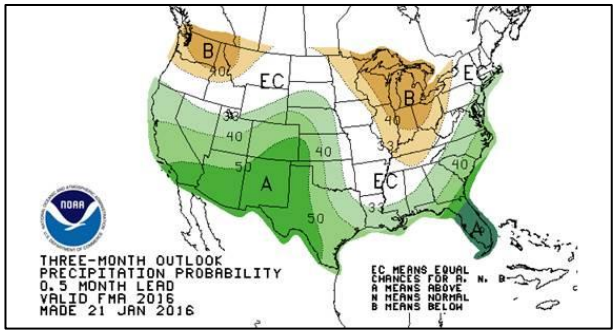
Animal Concentrations: In general, deer are fairly concentrated across the lower elevation of traditional deer winter range areas. Higher than normal concentrations around hay stacks and other agricultural areas are still being reported. Some dispersal is anticipated as snow depths begin to decline.

Animal Condition: Adult deer generally look to be in fair condition for mid-winter. As expected, some fawns are beginning to show poorer condition as winter progresses.

Mortality: Some fawn mortality has been reported, which is expected at this point in the season.



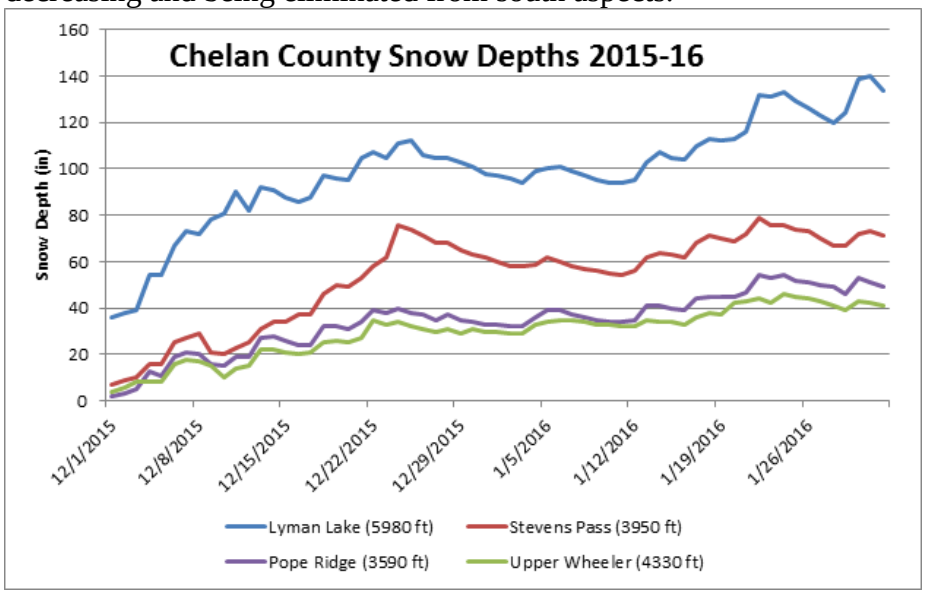
February – April Temperature forecast

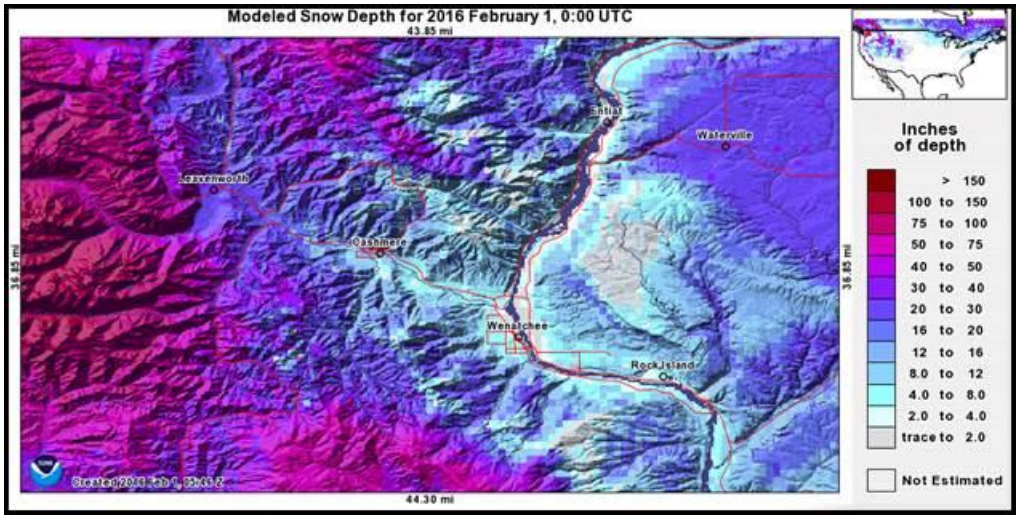


February – April precipitation forecast

Observed Environment – District 7 Winter Conditions

Recent Weather: Snow continues to increase in depth at higher elevations and along the crest of the Cascade Range. At lower elevations along the Columbia River (>2000 feet), snow depths are decreasing and being eliminated from south aspects.





The upper Methow Valley is still retaining a bulk of the ample snow it's received this season, despite warming temperatures in lower Okanogan. While the river valley is usually shrouded in clouds, the Methow Wildlife Area is usually sunny and clear up at the top of Bear Creek Road! – Photo by Jamie Bass

Fish Lake in all its winter glory – Photo by M. DeHart

A coyote feeding on a road killed deer near Malott – its tail has seen better days – Photo by Justin Haug

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Hunt drove out to Badger Pocket to check the status of the beaver problem in the Johnson Drain on the old WDFW Upland Restoration parcel. He couldn't detect any recent beaver activity, and the flow is getting through fairly well, but we'll need to do some more work there, weather permitting, to prepare for spring. Meanwhile, we'll monitor the site with help from the volunteer.

Johnson drain - beaver dam is dismantled, but a lot of material remains in the waterway

Elk Feeding/ Winter Conditions: Elk feeding was normal this week. There were 450 to 500 animals in Robinson and 800 animals in Watt. The weather this week was mild, with highs in the low 40s and lows in the upper 20s. It is supposed to stay warm next week, with chances of snow later on. Highs are predicted in the upper 30s and lows in the mid-20s.

Colockum Wildlife Area: Colockum staff members Lopushinsky and Hagan assisted Biologist Will Moore in locating a dead radio-collared mule deer doe in the Taneum Creek area. They used snowmobiles and snowshoes to reach the area.

Will Moore taking a femur sample from a mule deer doe

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Oak Creek staff members continued with winter feeding operations at all five feed sites. Elk continue to be present at high numbers on the feed sites. Forester Mackey continues to assist with feeding operations as needed.

Peak Elk Counts for Week
Headquarters – 1057 total, 74 bulls, 17 spikes, and 263 calves
Junction – 382 total, 40 bulls, eight spikes, and 105 calves
Nile – 345 total, 56 bulls, 18 spikes, and 62 calves
Sheep – ~180 and 17 elk
Cowiche – 1684 total, 134 bulls, 29 spikes, and 420 calves

<u>Winter Conditions</u>

Weather: Weather this past week was warm and sunny, with highs in the 40s. Lows were in the 20s. The warm temperatures made for continued snowmelt in the parking lot and feed sites. Weather this coming week is expected to be in the 40s for highs, with lows below freezing. Hillsides are opening up with good access to last year's plant growth at lower elevations on southern aspects.

Animal Condition: Elk are in seasonally good condition, but elk that arrived with injuries or in poor condition have been dying. Two calves died this past week, one at Oak Creek and one at Cowiche.

Wildlife Management

Ferruginous Hawk Survey: District Biologist Fidorra worked on landowner access and volunteer coordination for the Ferruginous Hawk Survey. Fidorra attended the monthly local Audubon Society meeting to discuss the project and recruit volunteers. There has been a great amount of interest in assisting.

Conference Call: District Biologist Fidorra participated in the Conflict Section conference call regarding updates from the last Wolf Advisory Group meeting.

Columbia Basin Mule Deer Survey: District Biologist Fidorra worked with Biologists Atamian and Finger to incorporate comments into the Columbia Basin Mule Deer survey report on Phase 2 flights.

Owl Banding: District Biologist Fidorra gathered supplies and protocols for the banding of western screech-owls during the maintenance of the Richland Rod and Gun Club's wood duck nest boxes. In past years, 30-40 western screech owls have been encountered, which creates a great opportunity to gather demographic data on them. They have been poorly studied in Washington so far.

Bighorn Sheep: Lab results from the Cleman ewe that initially tested positive for *Mycoplasma ovipneumonia* (MOVI) in December continue to be puzzling. There was no sign of pneumonia and tests on the samples sent in last week were all negative for MOVI. Dr. Besser at WSU sequenced the DNA and found it did not match any known strain, nor were any other samples tested that week positive. This would indicate that the positive result was not due to contamination at the lab. The initial nasal positive swab was re-tested and again came back positive for MOVI. In summary, MOVI was detected on the swab, but no longer in the animal. An ELISA test of all the initial samples should be run soon. ELISA will indicate exposure (antibodies) to MOVI. If all the samples are negative, this would indicate the herd is probably clean and sheep can be moved.

Ram Definitions: Biologist Bernatowicz worked with Enforcement, Region 2, and Section Manager Harris on a definition of non-mature rams. The idea is to have a permit season on young rams to reduce populations while maintaining quality rams. Bernatowicz and Captain Mann looked at numerous pictures of sheep and proposed a curl restriction, along with "non-broomed".

Elk Surveys: Biologist Bernatowicz worked with Biologist Moore on organizing Yakima elk surveys. Poor weather prohibited flying this week. Rather than hoping for three or four days of good weather, the new plan is to fly geographic areas where inter-mixing of elk is unlikely on any day weather is favorable next week.

Deer Study: Biologist Bernatowicz responded to three collar mortality signals this week and reviewed pictures taken by Biologist Moore on a fourth. Two deer died from starvation and one was killed or scavenged, possibly by bobcat. The fourth deer was not dead, it just had not moved in 13 hours. A few other false mortality reports on lethargic deer were also received. South slopes have opened, but there is little green. The deer are heavily reliant on woody browse and appear to be in poor shape. Other carcasses were seen near the dead radioed deer, along with live deer with low fat reserves. More mortalities are expected before spring.

Two radio collared deer that died from starvation

Yakima Elk Herd Surveys: Poor weather conditions postponed our survey efforts in January. Therefore, Biologist Moore rearranged the schedule in the hopes that early February will provide clear skies and less precipitation.

Muckleshoot (MIT) Deer Mortality Investigation: Biologist Moore snowmobiled into a remote location in the Taneum drainage along with Colockum Manager Lopushinsky and Assistant Colockum Manager Hagan to investigate a MIT deer mortality. This deer had been wintering at nearly 4000-foot elevation and in heavy snows prior to its death.

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

<u>Wildlife Areas</u>

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technician Hill drove the open route through the Whiskey Dick winter closure to prepare for posting it on February 1. The route was clear to Jackknife Ridge with some mud. Access to the Quilomene Ridge Road will be difficult, as there is two feet of snow at the gate coming off the Beacon Ridge Road. Assistant Manager Hunt and Technician Hill drove out to Parke Creek to check access through Parke up to Quilomene Ridge and found that it is not passable. The motorized closure begins Monday, February 1, and ends May 1.

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

Wildlife Management

Nuisance Turkeys: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received and handled a complaint of nuisance turkeys at Kahlotus Elementary School. An adjacent landowner to the school is providing an attractant (food) and school administrators are concerned the birds will become a safety issue for the students. Further follow-up will be done next week.

Elk Areas: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand monitored elk distribution and movements in Elk Areas 3721 & 3722. A few small groups of elk were observed near the western boundary of ALE, but the majority of the Hanford herd continues to occupy mid to lower elevations of Rattlesnake Mountain.

Fencing: Conflict Specialist Wetzel was assisted by 10 master hunters in constructing a 3D addition to the north side right-of-way fence on I-90. Over one mile of fencing was installed between MP 132 and 133 this past weekend. Conflict Specialist Wetzel met with the Washington Department of Transportation and ordered an additional seven miles of fladry-type fence to install in the coming week. Wetzel hazed 46 elk away from I-90 at MP's 130 and 126, and several large groups from MP 134. Some slopes are snow free in the area. South of I-90, Wetzel counted 188 elk from elevated points along the freeway and Huntzinger Road.

3D-type fence addition at MP 132 elk crossing point

Hazing: Residents of Vantage continue to call about elk and deer in town. Nonlethal hazing advice and fencing options were offered to callers.

Elk and Deer Conflict: Hay growers with barns have for the most part placed sufficient barriers to elk access in most parts of Kittitas and Yakima counties. Elk and deer are searching for other barns and feeding areas and new calls are received daily. In all cases, advice is given to place barriers on hay stores and limit feeding to what livestock can consume in short feeding periods.

Deer Conflict: A Thorp berry grower called to report deer had broken through electric fence to get into vines. He requested fused rope and was issued salutes, rope, and a launcher.

Elk Damage: A horse owner on Weaver Road called to report six bull elk in her barn that were eating horse hay. Advice was offered for reducing fence damage and hay loss.

Typical elk feeding evidence in unprotected hay barn

Hazing: Approximately 80 elk were reported below Cove Road, and with the help of local landowners they were moved up toward the elk fence. The elk returned that night and bedded down on the county road. They were moved again the next day.

Elk group that prefers the wrong side of the elk fence

Elk Herding: Great help and assistance was offered by Wenas Wildlife Area and LT Murray Wildlife Area staff members again this week. Several days of successful elk herding were accomplished. Several hundred elk were again herded back through the elk fences in each area, which has greatly reduced the damage effects in Ellensburg and in the Wenas. A pattern of elk breaking out of the elk fences again and again is emerging. Fence patrols have been increased to help detect fence damage as soon as possible.

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

<u>Wildlife Areas</u>

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: On Tuesday, while Manager Huffman was at the Junction feed site, a rear stabilizer arm separated from the bushing on a feed truck, causing the axle to shift. Huffman was able to slowly drive the truck the two miles down the highway crab walking so repairs could be made. Oak Creek staff members realigned the axle and were able to remove the arm and search for parts. A new arm was ordered later in the week. In addition, another feed truck had a water pump go out, causing the truck to overheat. A new water pump has been ordered and Assistant Manager Berry has been researching the steps to complete the work online. The truck is still being used for feeding, but is not being driven long distances. This leaves one fully operational truck for winter feeding. This truck had the rebuilt heater core installed so it now has heat.

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Hunt is working with Luft Trailer Sales to mount our snowplow on the 2015 Motor Pool Chevy pickup that is hopefully close to heading our way. They'll order in the necessary mounting hardware and wiring for the newer truck. Luft sells and

services plows in Ellensburg, which will save us having to get everything to a Yakima vendor for installation.

Colockum Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Hagan continued to work with CAMP and engineer Ray Berg on specifications for the fence construction project on the southern boundary of the wildlife area.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Sak received a call from Manager Bjornstrom that three vehicles were stuck in the Byron Unit. Assistant Manager Sak drove over and met with Officers Horn and McLerran. It was obvious that another pickup was not going to get them out, so Assistant Manager Sak called Natural Resource Technician 2 Medina to bring the dozer over to pull them out. While waiting for the dozer, Assistant Manager Sak and Officer Horn drove into the Bryon Unit and found where the trespassers had dumped boxes of books and abandoned a small trailer. After returning to the vehicles, the whole story was told and fines were given accordingly. The perpetrators went back and cleaned up all the trash and removed the trailer.

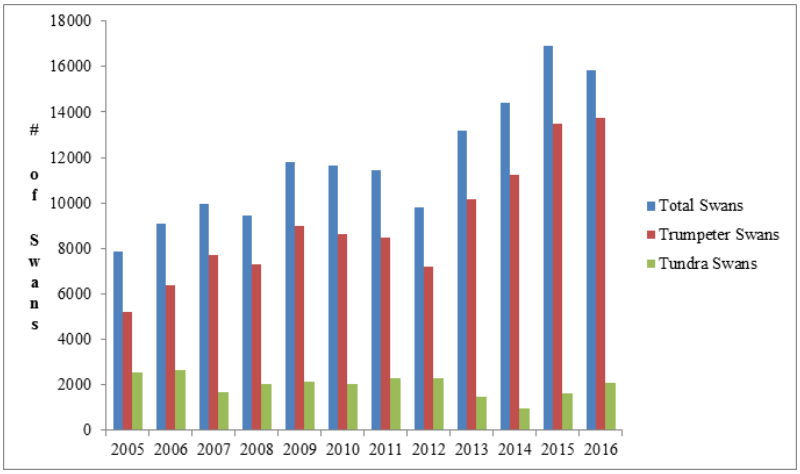
Assistant Manager Sak assisting the stuck vehicles at Byron Ponds

REGION 4

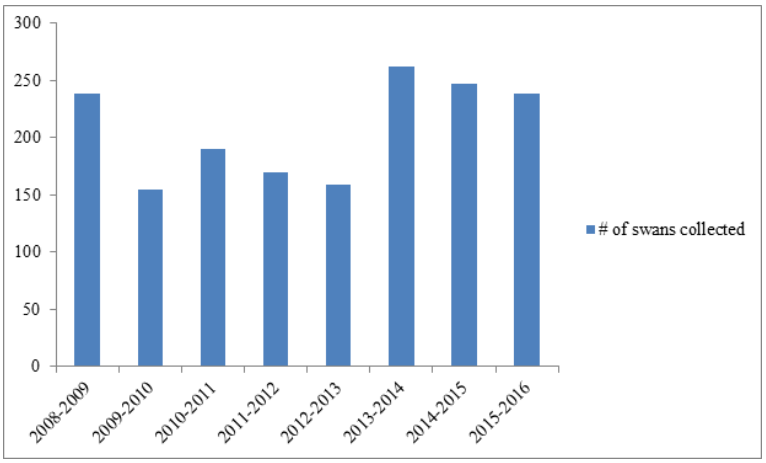
GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

East/West Bear Project: Biologist Smith assisted Bear and Cougar Specialist Beausoleil and Biologist Maletzke with ongoing bear den work. This portion of the project entails locating dens, placing cameras to document emergence and cub numbers, recollaring/adjusting collars on sub-adult males, recollaring/adjusting collars on adult females, and potentially collaring yearling cubs. Work where newborn cubs are known to be present will be limited (camera placement only) to avoid den abandonment.



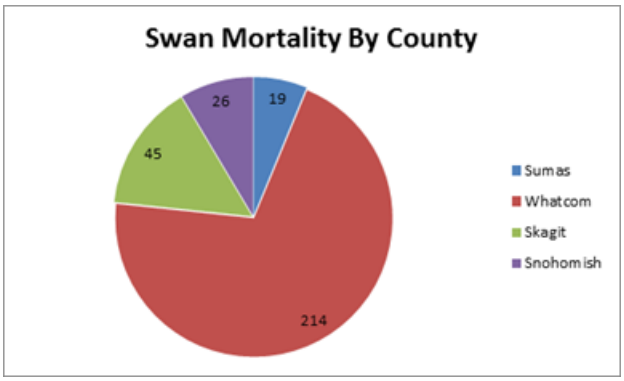
Swan Surveys: District 14 staff members completed data entry and analysis for the annual swan surveys.

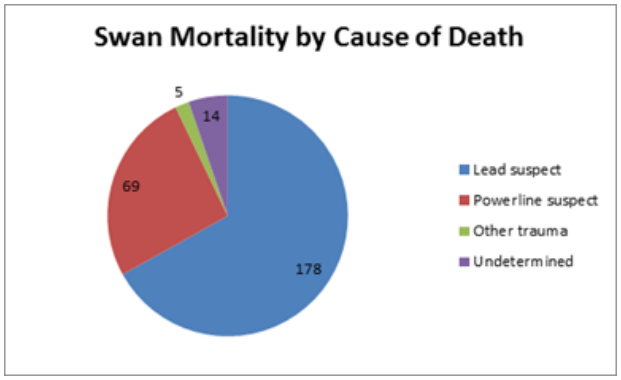


Swan Collection: Total number of swans collected by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Puget Sound Energy, volunteers, and numerous other groups from 2008 – 1/22/2016. Swans collected consist of live and dead birds. A swan collection season is from November-March.

Swan Mortality and Morbidity Study: Biologist DeBruyn and Swan Technician Trejo continued to monitor for swan mortality and morbidity in Whatcom, Skagit, and Snohomish counties. Surveys for carcasses, live birds, and feather piles were carried out on foot and from an airboat on Judson Lake. In total, sixty four mortalities were recorded this week, bringing the season total to 285 swan mortalities. Twenty-four of the 64 weekly mortalities were feather piles found on Judson Lake or Whatcom County gravel pits. Swan mortalities during the 2015-2016 season have far surpassed the 227 recorded mortalities of the 2014-2015 season. DeBruyn also participated in a conference call with cooperators on the swan project to discuss an apparent spike in swan mortality this year and to plan future operations at Judson Lake. An effort will be made to do lead sampling at the lake in the spring using previously established methods.

Swan Technician Nick Trejo with swan carcass





Marine Waterfowl Surveys: Biologist Cyra, District 15 staff members, and the Marine Waterfowl Specialist continued flying the 2015-2016 marine waterfowl surveys. These multi-species marine aerial surveys cover the entire shoreline and the majority of open water in the Puget Sound. They are the longest continuous dataset of their kind. Information is used to inform

marine sea duck harvest guidelines, as well as provide trend data for game species and diversity species such as western grebe and harbor porpoise. Continued unsettled weather resulted in only one day with appropriate conditions for surveying. Surveyors completed the eastern bays and southern Strait of Georgia. The remainder of the week was consumed with data transcriptions and other data requests.

San Juan Islands National Historic Park EIS Meeting: Biologist Milner attended an all day meeting with staff members from the San Juan Islands National Historic Park to go over points for a draft EIS regarding prairie restoration.

Bureau of Land Management San Juan Islands National Monument Public Meeting: Biologist Milner attended a public meeting seeking input for recreational activities within the National Monument and was able to hear some of the ideas the public is offering for management actions.

Estuary Restoration Monitoring: District 13 staff members continued evaluating sites for avian monitoring in the Skagit/Stillaguamish estuaries. We are looking for walkable transects in the brackish marsh that are long enough and wide enough to meet the survey protocol design. Deep, wide channels make site selection challenging.

Channels and mud make walking a transect challenging

WDFW King County Citizen Breeding Amphibian Monitoring: Biologist Anderson, along with Woodland Park Zoo staff members, have been providing direction to volunteers in order to establish relationships with new survey site landowners and reinitiate contacts with previous survey site landowners. Anderson and zoo staff members have also provided guidance to volunteers on protocol, field survey techniques, equipment questions and further biosecurity explanations. Anderson updated reference web data entry tutorials for volunteer use. Anderson has been conferencing with partners, landowners, and municipalities regarding any other kick-off needs now that 2016 sites have been chosen. Anderson is examining 2015 data for partners. More information can be found at http://www.zoo.org/citizenscience

Long-toed salamander egg mass noted by WDFW-Woodland Park Zoo citizen monitoring efforts using techniques provided in training to limit intrusion and disturbance while recording baseline observations over time

US Fish and Wildlife – Seattle Proposal as an Urban Bird Treaty City: Seattle Partners (Audubon Washington, Heron Habitat Helpers, Seattle Audubon, Seattle Parks and Recreation Department, and WDFW District 12) provided final review and comment on a letter now submitted to USFWS outlining justification and proposing Seattle be granted nomination as a USFWS "Urban Bird Treaty City" in 2016. Biologist Anderson conferenced with a number of these partners to discuss needs, as well as with USFWS Pacific Region Migratory Birds and Habitat Program Chief Seto to clarify and finalize any needs regarding submittal.

Private Lands/Access Management

Management and Educational Outreach Materials Nuisance/Conflict Waterfowl Species, within Northwest Washington: Upon request, Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell organized and drafted management and depredation education/outreach materials for the Western Washington Agricultural Association. These materials will be provided as a packet and will include: background and status of Wrangel Island Snow Geese, Pacific Flyway Council Management Plans, Washington State waterfowl game seasons and regulations, wildlife conflict management techniques and resources, Revised Codes of Washington and Wildlife Administrative Codes, selected scientific research resources, and federal agency resources. This document is being produced to provide education and outreach on matters related to waterfowl nuisance and conflict management within northwest Washington. The intent of this document will be to improve and guide adaptive and lawful decisions related to waterfowl conflict scenarios on an ever-changing landscape.

Migratory Bird Enhancement Project Proposal Development: Manager Link submitted 12 Migratory Bird Enhancement Project Proposals for Region 4.

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

Wildlife Management

2016 WDFW Mid-winter Waterfowl Survey: Biologists compiled district waterfowl data, QA/QC'd, and sent material to Waterfowl Section Manager Kraege.

Urban wood ducks in Seattle…how many?

<u>Private Lands/Access Management</u>

Wildlife Viewing Opportunity Coordination: Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell and Private Lands Biologist Wingard met with members of several regional Audubon groups. Discussion topics centered around how to expand wildlife viewing opportunities on private lands, what issues Audubon groups experience, and how Private Land Access Program staff members can help alleviate those issues. The meeting was very productive. Private Lands Access Program staff members are looking forward to increasing coordination with these groups to expand wildlife viewing opportunities on private lands.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Units: Natural Resource Technicians Deyo and Otto, along with Private Lands Biologist Wingard, conducted use surveys of Waterfowl Quality Hunt sites in Whatcom, Skagit, and Snohomish counties, taking notes and resolving any issues regarding the sites.

An abundance of waterfowl have been observed foraging and loafing at Waterfowl Quality Hunt sites across Region 4, providing excellent opportunity for the last week of the season

Public Comment and Questions: Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell responded to public comments and questions regarding private land access and hunting for waterfowl species. Information was provided on habitat conditions, waterfowl use, hunting success, and web-based access options for reserving and viewing private land access sites across the state.

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

<u>Wildlife Management</u>

Wildlife Conflict Monitoring & Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman responded to a call from a cattle producer that wanted to discuss the current status of the hoof disease specimen that was discovered in Skagit County. The producer was contacted and provided with a

WDFW pamphlet on hoof disease. He was also advised to contact District Biologist Yarborough if he had any additional questions. The cattle producer was appreciative.

Fencing Project: Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal worked on a fencing project in Day Creek and completed installation of the remaining "H Braces". Old barbwire fencing material was removed by the landowner and new smooth wire fence will be installed as soon as weather conditions allow access.

Sick Elk: Specialist Witman assisted WDFW Enforcement Officer Vincent with euthanizing a verifiably sick elk that was located in Skagit County. The animal was euthanized and hooves and teeth were collected for testing and age determination. Specialist Witman fielded a call from a landowner in Snohomish County who was requesting resources to address an eagle depredation on his farm. The landowner was provided contact information for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services to address his concerns.

Fladry Fence Installation: Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal installed electrified fladry fence at a residence in Skagit County after several reports of tree damage and grazing on a pasture that is needed for the landowner's horse. Specialist Witman has received several complaints from the landowner and previously installed audible deterrent devices that were relatively ineffective.

Elk Activity: Biologist Smith used trail cameras to monitor intermittent elk activity on agricultural properties in King County. Smith also met with landowners in the Enumclaw area with damage to fencing and grass crops due to elk. Nonlethal alternatives (fencing, hazing) were discussed in addition to harvest options. Several landowners in the area are attempting to exclude elk using electric fladry fencing. Smith also met with landowners in the North Bend area to discuss fencing options to exclude elk from pasture lands and protocols for safe harvest opportunities.

Wildlife Conflict staff members place the final wood post in at an elk exclusionary fence project in Skagit County

Wildlife Conflict staff members placed electrified exclusionary fence materials around an area that has repeatedly been experiencing browsing damage from elk in Skagit County

North Cascades Elk Herd Plan Meeting: Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell, District Biologist Yarborough, and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman attended an internal meeting to discuss future North Cascades Elk Herd Plan options and Wildlife Conflict Program needs and concerns.

North Cascades Elk: Biologist Yarborough met with members of Sierra Pacific Timber Company to discuss elk and bear issues on their property.

Upper Snoqualmie Valley Elk Management Group (USVEMG) Meeting: Biologist Smith attended a meeting of the USVEMG, where Wolf Policy Lead Martorello gave a talk on wolf management in Washington State. The meeting was well attended and the talk well received.

Wildlife Legalities: Biologist Anderson assisted on a request that went to Team Mill Creek regarding the legality of a bird skull and any other wildlife collection. The request came from a wildlife volunteer at the Burke Museum, University of Washington. To summarize, for most wildlife, one can't just go out and collect dead or live specimens without some permit or license. There are only a few exceptions.

Urban Beaver Management: Biologist Anderson was interviewed by some entity from Portland regarding the value of urban beaver occurrence, beaver in Seattle, and overall coexistence techniques. Anderson does not recall the non-profit/Metro Portland collaborator's association but they have published some beaver outreach and management pieces.

Puyallup Sportsman's Show: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman, District Biologist Yarborough, and Private Lands Biologist Wingard staffed the WDFW booth at the Puyallup Sportsman's Show. They fielded many questions on a wide range of topics, answered questions as best they could, and referred people to the website for questions in which they did not have

the answer. Overall, it was an excellent experience and a great opportunity to interact with the public.

Private Lands/Access Management

Hunt by Reservation Analysis: Private Lands Biologist Wingard continued analyzing Hunt by Reservation site data for the Region 4 Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program. The results of this analysis will help managers understand how often these Hunt by Reservations sites are booked and used. These data will later be compared with other data to determine the success rates for hunters who use these sites.

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 activated 17 new hunter education classes for 2016. Dazey answered instructor questions about the application process for the instructor incentive permit draws. After sending out a reminder of the upcoming In-Service Training for hunter education instructors and also a reminder of the deadline to nominate for the Terry Hoffer award, Dazey received many RSVPs and several nominations from the instructors in Region 4.

Range Safety Officer Training: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey assisted NRA RSO Instructor Bob Palmer in verifying instructor status on the signups for Bob's RSO class, which is being offered at cost to hunter education instructors. The instructor policy manual directs that when live fire is offered in a hunter education class, one instructor should be assigned to supervise the activity. The Range Safety Officer training is designed to give the instructors the training to be better able to accomplish this. Hunter Education Instructor Bob Palmer is certified by the NRA to provide their Range Safety Officer training and conducts these classes just for hunter education instructors at only the cost of training materials. Bob has offered this class two times previously and both times the class filled and there was a wait list.

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

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Conflict Program Staff Needs: Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell drafted and circulated a document outlining Wildlife Conflict Program staff needs in District 12 of Region 4. This document has been submitted to upper management for review.

Wildlife Areas

Wildlife Area Management Plan Update: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm had a conference call with Planning Team staff members to work towards scheduling the first stakeholder/public meeting to kick off the next stage of the plan update.

Training Opportunity: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm completed two days of Herbicide Certification training in Mill Creek sponsored by WSU. Training is required as part of the certification process.

Private Lands/Access Management

Private Lands Statewide Coordination Call: Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell and Private Lands Biologist Wingard participated in a statewide Private Lands Access Program coordination call. Many topics were covered during the conference call, including working group coordination, online/GoHunt needs and changes, drawing system options and updates, funding/budgeting information, land-locked public lands and fee access timberlands, Hunter Education coordination, and Regional updates. Region 4 Private Lands Access Program staff members provided updates on seasonal successes, closures, and upcoming analyses, linking Wildlife Conflict Program work with Private Lands Access Program goals, program evaluations, staff hiring updates, Americans with Disabilities Act access, and other miscellaneous topics. Now that the waterfowl hunting season is coming to an end, Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell will be coordinating Private Lands Access Program staff meetings, WDFW Law Enforcement meetings, Washington Waterfowl Association meetings, and WDFW Wildlife Area meetings to discuss and debrief staff members on seasonal outcomes.

Washington Wild Future Initiative Meeting: Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell and Natural Resource Technician Otto attended the staff comment portion of the Washington Wild Future Initiative. Staff members were able to provide comments on several topics and provide positive solutions towards the future success of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Training Opportunities: Coordinator Dazey attended the last of two sessions of a grant writing workshop. This workshop covered tips for both NGOs and also government grants. Dazey also attended and participated in the Wild Futures meeting.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Pierce National Wildlife Refuge/Port of Skamania Wetland Project: Biologist Anderson met with representatives from the Port of Skamania and USFWS to discuss a wetland enhancement project for western pond turtle habitat. USFWS is applying for a small grant through its Restoration and Recovery Program, which allows for money to go for wildlife projects on private lands that benefit USFWS goals and objectives on adjacent refuge lands. The Port of Skamania has a historic beaver pond that was used by western pond turtles until the flood of 1996, which destroyed the dam. The proposed project on Port of Skamania land would remove

reed canary grass and replant the area in willow in an attempt to enhance the site for beaver. Improving this wetland on Port of Skamania property would be a benefit for western pond turtles and potentially provide the Port of Skamania wetland mitigation credits. WDFW appreciates this partnership with the USFWS and the Port.

TAHD Survival Study: Biologists Holman, Stephens and George, along with Elk Specialist Hoenes, conducted field necropsies on two cow elk associated with the ongoing hoof disease survival study. The cause of death for one elk was indeterminate in the field, while the other was scavenged by a cougar. Both elk were positive for TAHD. These elk are part of a four-year study aimed at understanding the survival of cow elk with hoof disease as well as the effects of hoof disease on body condition and reproductive rates. The most recent information from this study can be found on the hoof disease webpage http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/hoof_disease/

Cougar predated elk

Cougar track

Dusky Canada Goose Survey: Biologist Butler conducted a dusky Canada goose survey this week in 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 counted throughout the area and a few resident dark geese, including one collared goose, were observed near Grays Bay. More dusky Canada geese were seen within the area than during previous weeks, with some mixing in with flocks of cacklers. In addition, hundreds of Sandhill cranes were observed using the Shillapoo Wildlife Area.

Columbian White-tailed Deer Management: Regional Wildlife Program Manager Jonker, as well as Biologists Stephens, Azerrad, Bergh, and Holman, participated in ongoing coordination efforts to manage the State and Federally listed Columbian white-tailed deer. Participants in management include WDFW, USFWS, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington State Department of Transportation, and the Cowlitz Tribe. Current projects include the initiation of a Population and Habitat Viability Analysis and development of a Habitat Connectivity model. Columbian white-tailed deer are currently proposed for downlisting from Endangered to Threatened at the federal level and are subject to a five-year status review by WDFW's Wildlife Diversity Division. To learn more about the Federal aspects of Columbian white-tail

management, visit the U.S. Fish and Wildlife website at: http://www.fws.gov/news/ShowNews.cfm?ref=u.s.-fish-and-wildlife-service-proposes-to-downlist-the--columbian-&_ID=35257. Look for an opportunity to comment on WDFW's Status Review later this year.

Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area

Band-tailed Pigeon Habitat Enhancement: Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Assistant Manager Sample have completed a Migratory Bird Habitat Project Proposal to acquire funding from the Migratory Bird Stamp Program. The funding would help to begin a project to enhance a natural mineral spring site located on the Jenny Creek satellite unit of the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area. Band-tailed pigeons need access to minerals, such as sodium and calcium, during the breeding season, as they are essential nutrients for rearing young. Historically, within 15 years, a mineral spring existed on the Wildlife Area and pigeons were documented and surveyed using the site. Since then, the mineral spring has filled in with sediment from Jenny Creek and has become overgrown with vegetation. The primary goal of this project is to find this mineral spring, remove existing sediment to allow access for pigeons, and clear away vegetation. Additionally, 300 native fruit bearing trees will be planted at this site to provide additional summer forage for band-tailed pigeons and other migrating songbirds. Another component of this proposal includes the treatment and removal of weed species, including Himalayan blackberry, scotch broom, reed canary grass, cat tails, and English ivy. If approved for funding, work to restore the mineral spring will begin this summer and trees will be planted during spring of 2017.

Jenny Creek – Photo taken 1/25/2016

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

Wildlife Management

Southwest Washington Management Area 2A and 2B Goose Hunt: The 2015-2016 southwest Washington goose hunting regular season came to an end this week. WDFW Biologist Butler and Scientific Technician Miller traveled throughout Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum counties to monitor hunting activity in the field on both public and private land. While many geese were seen throughout the area, most were flying high and landing outside hunting areas. Despite this, a few hunters were still able to end the regular season by harvesting a goose. As of Sunday, January 31, approximately 355 hunters have been contacted and 190 geese have been checked this season. One dusky Canada goose was harvested in the area this week. This brings the total number of dusky Canada geese known to have been harvested in the area to 14.

Hunters should note the regular season closes at the end of the day on Sunday, January 31 within Management Area 2A. The late season goose hunt will open February 10 for all southwest Washington goose card holders on private lands only. Public lands are closed to goose hunting during the late season. More information on the late season hunt can be found within the Washington State Migratory Waterfowl and Upland Game Seasons Pamphlet, located on the WDFW at http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/

Access

Beginners Hole and Hand Access Sites: The WDFW Lacy crew hauled equipment and began silt cleanup caused by floods at the Beginners Hole and Hand access sites on the Kalama River. Many dump truck loads of silt were loaded and hauled off site. The ADA walkway and restroom were also dug out and pumped. The river bank near the parking lot collapsed during the floodwaters and is in need of reinforcement to prevent further damage to the parking lot (danger tape has been placed around the parking area where the bank has collapsed). The vault toilet was pumped and cleaned and is available for use again.

Cleanup of Beginners Hole and Hand access sites

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

District 10 Wildlife Conflict

Elk: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin deployed a disabled hunter to a landowner in Randle. He was able to harvest the animal on his first day!

In addition, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin met with several landowners in Randle. One of the landowners is complaining that the elk are running off his cattle so they can eat the hay from the feeding station. Conklin issued Mylar, hazing equipment, and some temporary fencing to protect the property that is being damaged by elk.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin fielded numerous calls regarding an elk in Randle that was wounded in a youth hunt. Apparently the elk is not keeping up with the herd and is laying down a lot. Some of the landowners reached out to Conklin to ask if they can assist with removing her from the herd. Conklin is working with the landowners and WDFW Enforcement to euthanize the animal.

D-9 Wildlife Conflict

Deer: Conflict Specialist Peterson and Biologist Meyer met with landowners near Goldendale to check if they were experiencing any issues with deer or other wildlife and to confirm they were still interested in allowing hunters on their properties. Both landowners reported no recent damages and said they would like to continue the hunts.

District 10 & Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area Winter Conditions

Past Weather: November temperatures and precipitation were both below normal, with several days of low temperatures in the 20s. December temperatures were slightly above normal and the month had record high precipitation, causing some flooding throughout the district. There was some low elevation snow the last week of December, with depths of perhaps a few inches on the valley floor of the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area. The area has since been snow free.

Short-Term Forecast: Snow levels will fluctuate between 2,500 to 5,000 feet during the upcoming week. The 6-10 and 8-14 day forecasts are for above average temperatures and precipitation.

Long-Term Forecast: The February forecast is for above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation. The three month forecast is for above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation.

Habitat: Forage is available at middle and lower elevations, with the Wildlife Area being heavily utilized.

Snow Depths: Lower elevations are currently snow free below about 3,000 feet, with snow depths increasing in the middle and upper elevations.

Animal Concentrations: No unusual concentrations noted to date. The second winter elk survey was conducted on the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area on December 31, with 353 elk being observed. This is the highest survey count since the winter of 2011-12 on the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area.

Animal Condition: The majority of animals appear to be in good condition, but a couple observed have been in poor condition.

Mortality: One mortality has been observed while conducting other work on the wildlife area.

Public Contacts: None to report regarding winter conditions.
The public is reminded the portion of the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area lying east of a line defined by Hoffstadt Creek, The North Fork Toutle, and Deer Creek is closed to public access through April 30, 2015, to minimize disturbance and associated energy demands on elk wintering there.

District 9 Winter Conditions

Past Weather: Weather has moderated in the past two weeks with milder conditions. Storms this weekend will bring snow to the higher elevations. Current snow water equivalent data indicates that the south Cascades are 100 percent of normal. The Goldendale and Husum areas have lost much of their snow, while snow remains in the Trout Lake and Glenwood valleys.

Winter Severity: Winter conditions continue to be typical of January weather in the south Cascades and Klickitat River drainage. Snow coverage is primarily above 1,500 feet in elevation. There are no current concerns for big game populations in eastern Klickitat County, as most animals came into this winter in favorable physical condition.

Habitat: There is no concern for the current severity of the winter conditions on big game populations in Skamania County and the western portion of Klickitat County in the White Salmon River drainage. Deer are generally absent from open areas above 1,500 feet, as snow conditions have pushed them into dense forested habitats.

Animal Concentrations: Deer are bunched in normal concentrations throughout the district, with deer in Klickitat County seen more in the timber associated with recent snow depths. Elk are reported in some agricultural areas associated with Trout Lake and in the Gilmer Valley, which is common this time of year.

Animal Condition: Deer and elk appear to be in good condition and no winter stress/mortality has been reported.

Mortality: Mortalities this week were primarily associated with road kills. No reports of deer in poor condition.

Public Contacts: No concerns raised by the public this week related to winter conditions.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Sea Duck Surveys: As part of a long-term, multi-species monitoring effort, Biologists Murphie, Evenson, and Cyra continued their annual sea duck, marine bird, and marine mammal survey effort of Puget Sound. Due to winds outside the desired range for surveying, they surveyed only one day last week in areas near Anacortes, WA. Instead, Biologist Murphie conducted data management activities and transcribed all data collected so far this season. They have an estimated three days remaining, with surveys to be conducted in the San Juan Islands and the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Mid-Winter Waterfowl Surveys: Biologist McMillan consolidated the data that was submitted and collected during the mid-winter survey period. Biologist Sue Thomas (USFWS Biologist) has not yet provided the data for Dungeness Spit/Harbor, Lower Dungeness Basin sites, and Port Angeles Harbor survey counts. This season there were five new sites located and mapped, plus four previous sites were updated regarding the mapped delineation of habitat use. Biologist Ament spent some time late last week reviewing the data forms for annual mid-winter waterfowl surveys conducted in District 16 earlier in the month. She had previously provided her finalized data forms, summary reports, field notes, and maps to District Biologist McMillan. Data forms from others assisting with the surveys needed to be reviewed and then compiled with other data. Biologist Ament provided comments back to District Biologist McMillan after reviewing a draft spreadsheet for compiled data.

Trumpeter Swan Monitoring: There were no reports of sick or injured swans last week. The swan monitoring volunteers reported the following for last week: *Jim and I did the swan survey this week on Tuesday afternoon. We were only able to see a total of 75 swans (all trumpeter) and they were in four different places. At the airport we saw 16 swans, with six being juvenile. At Lamar Road we saw 12 swans, with only one being a juvenile. At the Clapp Farm we saw 26 swans, with five being juvenile. At Schmuck Road we saw 21 swans, with five being juvenile. We are not sure why we saw so few swans, but we checked every place we could imagine and did not see any more.*

Snowy Plover: Biologists Sundstrom and Michaelis attempted to conduct the winter snowy plover surveys at the remaining north coastal locations, but once again, adverse weather conditions and high tides limited access from Pacific Beach to Damon Point. A continuous driving survey was completed from just north of the jetty at Ocean Shores to Pacific Beach. High

winds and rain prevented a walking survey at the Damon Point/Oyhut location. No further attempts to survey those locations will be performed this winter.

Incoming tide at beach access road along the north coast prevents a driving survey for snowy plovers

Sundstrom began scheduling for the 2016 Washington snowy plover pre-season meeting. Sundstrom worked on inventory items and created a list of new replacement parts needed for various pieces of equipment. A replacement GPS unit was received from Garmin.

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

Wildlife Management

Puyallup Sportsmen's Show: Biologists Novack and Michaelis each spent two days working at the Puyallup Sportsman's Show. Biologist Michaelis assisted with the installation and breakdown of the booth. Attendance on Friday and Saturday appeared diminished from previous years. Attendance on Sunday was relatively large and favorable contacts were made with the public. Elk mount "Herman" was displayed, and much of the public recognizes this bull and his life story. Biologist Novack should be recognized as playing a key role in WDFW's outreach at this year's show, and many other program staff members in the region participated as well.

Private Lands /Conflict

Distressed Deer: Conflict Specialist Blankenship received a report of an emaciated deer in Port Orchard. Blankenship was able to contact the homeowner who reported the deer and gather more information. Enforcement staff members and Blankenship will continue to monitor the status of the deer.

Fox Concerns: Conflict Specialist Blankenship was contacted by a homeowner in Tacoma who was concerned about a fox in the neighborhood. The homeowner was concerned that the fox would depredate on his neighborhood pets in the area. Blankenship was able to advise the homeowner on how to prevent conflicts with fox and coyotes.

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

Wildlife Management

NOVA Application: Biologist Novack submitted a request to apply for a NOVA grant through the RCO office. The grant proposal is titled "Using Technology and Focused Outreach to Improve Enforcement of Road Closures".