

Wildlife Program

Week of March 7 – March 13, 2016

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Range Rider Meeting Request: Supervisor McCanna and Conflict Specialist Bennett met with a contracted range rider in Spokane per request. The discussion was on current contract and how to utilize range riders to the best ability possible with suggestions from WDFW and range rider.

District One Wolf Coordination Meeting: Biologist Shepherd attended the District One weekly coordination meeting.

Domestic Dog Incident: Biologist Shepherd examined a 5 month old Great Pyrenees dog that had extensive injuries obtained overnight southwest of Chewelah. The area in which the incident occurred is on the periphery of the Stranger (Huckleberry North) pack territory. McCanna also discussed with other department staff statewide.

Conference Call to Discuss Injured Dog: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Shepherd, and Supervisor McCanna discussed the injured dog in Stevens County southwest of Chewelah. Photos, collar data, and location were reviewed with a final determination of unknown cause of injuries.

Huckleberry Area: Biologist Shepherd discussed the continuation of the cost share program and wolf issues with ranchers who have a prospective buyer for their ranch. The current owners have a have used non-lethal measures and had a cost share contract, and the prospective buyer is interested in a continuation of the same type of relationship with WDFW.

Smackout Area: Biologist Shepherd submitted a livestock loss claim for a rancher after meeting with him to finalize the compensation packet.

U.S. Forest Service: Biologist Shepherd attended the Colville National Forest – WDFW Annual Coordination Meeting and discussed wolf-livestock issues in 2015 and a course of action for the 2016 grazing season with the U.S. Forest Service. A plan was also made to meet before the upcoming grazing meetings in April.

Dead Deer in Field with Cow/Calf Pairs: Biologist Shepherd discussed photos received of a deer carcass in a field with calves and cows. The owner suspected wolves. The photos did not suggest a wolf-related cause of death.

Region One Contract Range Rider: Biologist Shepherd discussed wolf mitigation strategies with a contract range rider, as well as other miscellaneous issues.

Wolf Trap Preparation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett worked on modifying and preparing wolf padded foothold traps. Modifications on the traps were made for use in grizzly bear areas.

5 Wolves in Asotin Co: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Rasley received a call from a horn hunter stating he has found very fresh tracks in the snow as well as hearing 5 wolves howling during the day. The horn hunter said the wolves have been in the area between Indian Tom and the Wenatchee Guard Station every day for the past 4-5 days and continue to use the freshly groomed road to travel back and forth. Rasley called Wolf Biologist Becker and updated him with the hope of getting some of the wolves collared. We are thinking this might be the Tucannon Pack.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Channeled Scablands Spring Waterfowl

Project: Biologists Atamian and Finger flew the second aerial survey of the project. Waterfowl numbers were equivalent to the first flight, still low and pre peak. Reports from California and Oregon still indicate the bulk of the birds have not moved north yet. Hopefully with all the rain we will have plenty of shallow wetlands for them to stop over at on their way north.



Shallow flooded wetlands along the CSSWS aerial route

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

Blue Mountains Wildlife Area Complex – Access Program: Natural Resource Technician Heimgartner serviced access sites on the upper Grande Ronde on Monday. Fishing activity on the river near Cottonwood creek is heavy. Heimgartner also looked at some signs posted by Rocky Dixon’s staff members on the South side of the river near WDFW land. Heimgartner didn’t find any unauthorized signs on WDFW property. On Tuesday Heimgartner serviced access sites on the Wooten Wildlife area and put away supplies ordered from Waxie in the afternoon. On Wednesday Heimgartner worked with Natural Resource Worker Steveson to spray Pramitol herbicide on parking lots in the Shumaker area. Heimgartner finished the day by traveling to Heller Bar and servicing access sites. Heimgartner spent Thursday back on the Wooten Wildlife Area servicing access sites and hauling a truck bumper with an old winch attached back to Clarkston.

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

Moose Hazing: Biologist Shepherd discussed moose behavior with the owners of a farm and visited with Technician Bendixen in the Huckleberry Mountain area near Valley, Washington. The moose was hazed with a paintball gun on Sunday morning. Officer Kirsch hazed the moose in the same area on Monday. Shepherd and National Ski Patrol personnel used radios and a paintball gun to haze a moose that was running at people on the slopes at the 49 Degrees North Ski Area. The effort met with limited success as the moose return to islands of thick trees. Due to significant amounts of new wet snow, Shepherd and Officer Kirsch could not attempt to haze the animal with paintballs and snowmobiles on Thursday when the area was closed.

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

Outreach/Education: Biologist Baarstad worked with a local volunteer and the Reardan High School shop classes to begin construction of wood duck nesting boxes in support of the Washington Wood Duck Project lead by Waterfowl Specialist Wilson.

Reardan High School students building wood duck nesting boxes



REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Sage Grouse: Biologists Gallie, Braaten, Comstock and Schroeder continue to make initial visits to sage grouse leks in Douglas County. Leks are active, but road access (deep mud, pooled melt water) to a couple sites is still difficult and will limit monitoring over the next week. So far, lek attendance appears similar to last year, with one exception, the Coyote Canyon lek has already had its highest count of males in 13 years! If weather improves, Sage Grouse Initiative will conduct a 4-day aerial infrared lek search next week.



Sage Grouse in Douglas County – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW



Views like this during lek surveys make the eventual sleep deprivation worth it – Photo by E. Braaten

Chelan County Mule Deer: District 7 staff members (Biologists Volsen, Gallie and Specialist Bridges) completed aerial surveys in Chelan County. Green-up conditions allowed us access to a large portion of the Chelan County herd and we observed 570 groups totaling 5,819 deer. We surveyed 41 units in GMUs 247, 250 and 251 in fewer than 3 days of flying. Group sizes ranged from one to 62 deer with an average of 10.2 deer per group. The survey time per unit averaged 21 minutes and ranged from 07 to 42 minutes. The highest density unit returned over 560 deer in 25 minutes. We observed 1245 deer in eight units in GMU 251, 2042 deer in 12 units in GMU 250 and 2532 deer in 21 units in GMU 247. Deer were compressed into a relatively narrow elevational band where spring vegetation was starting to grow. The majority of the groups were found below 2500 feet in elevation on south aspects. Only two white-tailed deer were observed during the surveys.

Okanogan Complex Fires: Okanogan Lands Forester Jamie Bass continued to coordinate with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Washington Parks to get an assessment of hazard trees that are a threat to public safety and infrastructure. Following this week's discussion assessment work should begin soon if the Parks arborist crew is available. FEMA and WDFW will be meeting them in the field to make sure the assessment meets FEMA's standards for risk.

Okanogan Valley Complex Wildlife Area Management Plan: Okanogan Lands Forester Jamie Bass set up a category system for identifying current issues, ideal conditions, and possible treatments for the Okanogan Valley wildlife areas' forested habitat. Bass worked on identifying management units under this system, and detail each category for the Forest Management Plan to go with the Okanogan Valley Complex Wildlife Area Management Plan. The Forest Management Plan will be as specific as possible on planned treatments to inform future management and allow the public to know what is being done to improve forest habitat.

Sinlahekin Ecosystem Restoration Project: Okanogan Lands Forester Bass and Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Manager Justin Haug performed field visit sites to areas covered by the SERP Phase 3 fund to discuss potential for treatment. For areas with poor access or no merchantability, they discussed alternate hand-thinning or firewood sale routes to reduce density of trees and fuels. Soon a prescribed fire team will be available to perform some of the time intensive, but low cost treatments needed to improve forest habitat within and outside the burned areas. In addition, Haug and Bass confirmed nesting sites and stream conditions inside areas with mechanical thinning planned to inform possible protection needs.

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

Wildlife Management

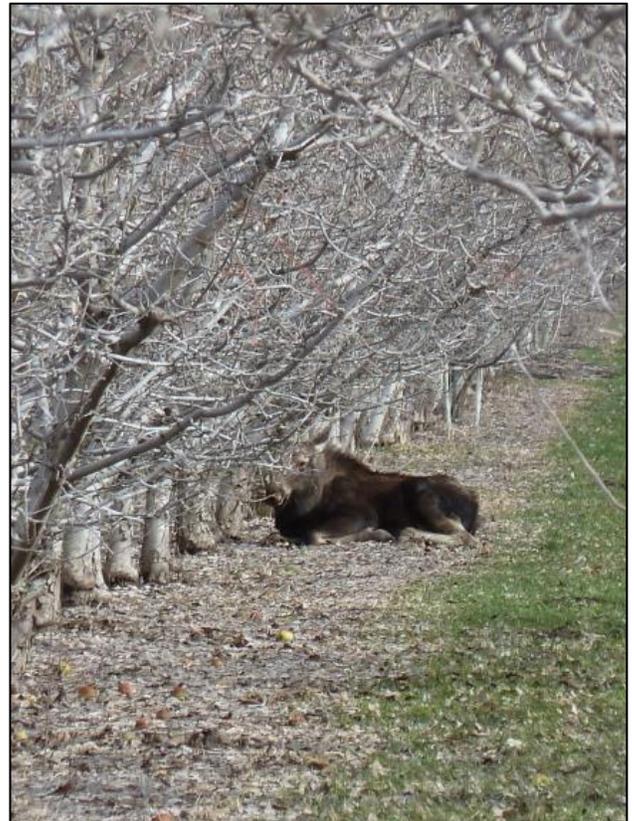
Okanogan County Moose Relocation: Successful cross-program effort to re-locate two moose that had habituated to an apple orchard. Both moose had been in this orchard for several weeks despite multiple hazing efforts. The capture, transport and release of both animals went extremely well.

One of the moose in the orchard – Photo by J. Heinlen

Columbia Basin Feral Swine - Assistant Manager Eidson assisted U.S. Department of Agriculture Aphis with the deployment of more remote cameras on the portion of the desert wildlife area where feral swine had previously been detected. With the area now closed and no known animals in the area the cameras were spread out to cover a much larger area in case the pigs had moved. All of the cameras were rebaited and supplied with fresh batteries. While in the area that was most heavily used by the pigs no new sign was detected.

Okanogan Trails Mule Deer Foundation – Mule Deer Summit: Manager Haug participated in the 1st

Mule Deer Summit hosted by the Okanogan Trails Chapter of the Mule Deer Foundation in Omak on Saturday. The purpose of the summit was to bring attention to the chapter and some of the important work it is doing; such as the ‘Safe Passage 97’ project aimed at providing wildlife underpasses between Riverside and Janis Bridge on Hwy 97. WDFW presenters included: statewide Deer Specialist Sara Hansen, research biologist Woody Myers, and assistant district biologist Jeff Heinlen. Also giving talks were Kelly McAllister from Washington State Department of Transportation and Caroline Shores from University of Washington. The summit was well attended and helped garner support for the chapters’ efforts.





WDFW statewide deer specialist Sara Hansen discusses the history of game management and WDFW's strategy on deer management – Photo by Justin Haug



***Big Bend Wildlife Area, Douglas County
– Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW***



Channeled Scablands in spring and an interesting pattern of green wheat and uncultivated habitat – Photos by R. Finger



Spring green-up in the foothills west of Wenatchee, WA. The area in the image is a portion of the 2015 Sleepy-Hollow wildfire that occurred in GMU 251.



Mule deer spring range within a portion of the 2015 First Creek Wildfire boundary



A pair of bald eagles near headquarters



A red-tailed hawk near Loomis



A Milbert's tortoiseshell out on March 5 on Quartz Mountain above Loomis



A group of trumpeter swans hunkering down in a late-winter snow on Forde Lake



Images of that late-winter snow above the headquarters looking north and south down the Sinlahekin Valley

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Elk Feeding/ Winter Conditions: Elk continue to hold in both Watt and Robinson feed sites. Numbers are in the 700's in Robinson and near 800 in Watt. Two sheds were found in the Watt feed lot towards the end of the week, and shed hunters will likely be out in force soon. There is potential for rain throughout next week with highs in the mid 50's and lows in the lower 30's.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area:Feeding operations continued at the Cowiche and HQ feed sites. Elk numbers dropped during the week with warm weather and rain, but came back up over the

weekend when it snowed. The visitor's center continues to be open daily. On Saturday morning, no elk were on the feed site when a volunteer arrived, he then observed someone jump the fence and run out onto the feed site to collect a shed antler. The volunteer contacted the person and told them the area was closed and took the shed. It is speculated that someone else had already been on the feed site earlier to get a shed and that is why all the elk were gone.

Manager Huffman located the active nest for golden eagles along the Tieton River. The nest is located in the same location/nest that has been used for the last couple of years. Assistant Manager Berry posted the closure signs around the nest location. The closure does not impact hiking or rock climbing at the developed sites along the river.

Peak Elk Counts for Week:

Headquarters~1000 total

Junction- 0

Nile-0

Sheep-0

Cowiche~900

Winter Weather: Weather this past week was very mild with and mostly sunny with some heavy rain during the week and then snow on Sunday. Grasses continue to green up but growth is still really short. Elk are ranging off the feed site but continue to return at feeding time.

Elk continue to be in seasonally fair condition, with a few mortalities still occurring.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Buser completed and submitted the Sunnyside / Snake River Wildlife Area Beaver Maintenance Report for the statewide general Hydraulic Project Approval.

Natural Resource Technician Kaelber spent some time getting an accurate count of the sandhill cranes using the wildlife area. Over 800 cranes are currently using Windmill Ranch and Bailie Youth Ranch.

Ferruginous Hawk: District Biologist Fidorra worked on landowner access and volunteer coordination for the Ferruginous Hawk Survey. Fidorra presented training materials to volunteers on Tuesday evening at the Richland Public Library. Over 20 volunteers were present which included some folks just interested in learning more about raptor identification and the project.

District Biologist Fidorra prepared and provided protocols and datasheets to Olympia staff members and partnering agencies that are assisting in Ferruginous Hawk monitoring this spring including U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Hanford Site contractor, Mission Support Alliance.

Project Nest Watch: District Biologist Fidorra reviewed Project Nest Watch documents to determine if implementation would be possible with the Richland Rod and Gun Club's Wood Duck Project. This seems like a good way to utilize data from the project in a meaningful way

and options will be discussed with Club members, as well as DFW Citizen Science Coordinator Connally and Waterfowl Specialist Wilson.

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

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Berry and Natural Resource Technician Kass completed a partial cleanup of pine tree shooting area on Cowiche Mill Road. They overloaded a Dodge pickup before getting rained out. Clean up will continue this coming week, as time allows. Berry did observe several turkeys down near the creek. They are picking a dangerous spot to hang out.



Flood damage and trash at the pine tree shooting area. The area is heavily used, but is not a very safe location.

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

Wayward Steer Roundup at Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman helped to organize a roundup of a wayward steer that had been on the Cowiche feed site all winter. The owner of the steer did not know anybody who could gather and rope the steer to get it back in a trailer. Huffman contacted Sunnyside Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Sak who contacted additional people who would help. On Saturday, after the initial feeding, the cowboys rode up onto the feed site and were able to rope and heel the steer and guide him back the hay barn then coax him onto a horse trailer. Elk spooked off the feed site but were back to high numbers by Monday. The owner of the steer was very grateful to Assistant Manager Sak who also hauled the steer to the Toppenish Sale Yard for the owner, thank you to Robby and the crew for helping the owner of the steer out.



Cowboys gathering up a steer that had been loose on the Cowiche feed site all winter. The deep mud made it hard moving, but they were able to get him back to load on a trailer.



Hiding behind the feed truck to get closer to the steer.



Bringing the steer back down to the hay barn to be loaded

Wildlife Education Corporation: Manager Huffman attended the monthly Wildlife Education Corporation (WEC) meeting. There are a lot of new volunteers this year so a lot of time was spent going over operations, and answering questions. Huffman also assisted the WEC in updating their roster and shift schedule.

Wenatchee Valley College Natural Resource Program: Colockum Wildlife Area Manager Lopushinsky participated in an advisory committee meeting for the Wenatchee Valley College Natural Resource Program. The committee makes recommendations on class offerings by the college.

Deer Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand met with the owner of a wine grape operation in the Plymouth area along the Columbia River that is experiencing deer damage. Multiple non-lethal techniques have been exercised as well as damage permits and although they have aided in the amount of damage observed, the landowner has requested additional hunting pressure by allowing a couple of Master Hunters the opportunity to hunt the property.

Nuisance Turkeys in Walla Walla: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand assisted Wildlife Conflict Specialist Rasley with trapping nuisance turkeys within the city limits of Walla Walla. Along with Biologist Thorne-Hadley and Earl we were successful in trapping 11 hens and one tom that were later released on property that is currently enrolled in our Hunter Access program in the Blue Mountains. Many positive remarks were received from the public for our efforts and results.



A group of Trumpeter Swans hunkering down in a late-winter snow on Forde Lake



Turkey Release in the Blue Mountains

Deer Damage Near McNary Dam: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand patrolled tree fruit and wine grape operations near McNary Dam for deer damage activity and remedial actions. Moderate deer activity was observed near a couple of new tree plantings and increased hazing will be conducted in the area to aid in reducing damage impacts.

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

Wildlife-Friendly Fence: L.T. Murray and Colockum staff members attended a meeting in Ellensburg to discuss wildlife-friendly fence design with other Wildlife and Habitat staff. The group began discussion regarding how to ensure that wildlife friendly criteria and design is applied when livestock or boundary fence is constructed.

Parke Creek boundary Fence: Manager Winegeart worked on a Capitol Project proposal to complete the upper Parke Creek boundary fence.

Floating Toilets at Quilomene Bay: A proposal by Grant County Public Utilities Department to install floating toilets at Quilomene Bay is moving toward: the permitting stage. There was some initial confusion, as WDFW staff members thought the project had been dropped, but it seems as though it was just put on hold and is now moving again. Manager Winegeart worked with Habitat Biologist Renfrow to find the permit documents for review.

Washout of Robinson Canyon Road: Assistant Manager Hunt and Habitat Biologists Renfrow and Downes visited the site of a reported washout at the end of the pavement on Robinson

Canyon Road. They were joined by Kittitas Reclamation District (KRD) personnel while on site. KRD and County staff were to make plans to repair the roadway and deal with the plugged and washed out culvert. Natural Resource Technicians Leuck and Hill had reported it originally, and monitored the problem daily as they traveled through to feed elk. Flow had subsided somewhat by week's end.

Robinson Creek Overflow: Natural Resource Technicians Hill and Leuck dealt with water overflow in Robinson Canyon. Heavy rains came over the weekend causing Robinson Creek to

overflow its banks. The water was too high for a drainage ditch next to the elk fence and created a channel in the road. It is passable for now but it will have to be filled in when the rains subside.



Flood overflow on Robinson Road

Flooding Along Cowiche Mill Road: Oak Creek Wildlife Area Manager Huffman checked flooding along Cowiche Mill Road again finding a lot of additional damage on the county road. Huffman contacted CAMP about doing any kind of assessment of the creek and what upgrades they would recommend for the road. They did not see a need to check the road out and suggested submitting a Capital Project Request. They did say someone would come inspect the bridge at some point to make sure it was stable. Huffman completed a Capital Project Requests for upgrading the road to the Cowiche hay barn that has been damaged twice from flooding in the past

month. Huffman also submitted a proposal to repair the road near the Junction feed site that was damaged in 2015 flooding. Water continues to flow over the road from the creek and the canyon culvert plugged again following another rain storm and needed to be cleared by hand to keep water flowing through it.

Photo: Water flowing over the Cowiche Unit road south of the creek 2 days after the rain event. The water is flowing right where the Yakama Nation used to have their coho acclimation tanks and pumps set up.



Manager Huffman attempted to inspect the NF Cowiche Creek Area for any damage but flows in the creek were too high to drive through. Huffman did inspect the Worrell Ranch Unit ahead of expected livestock turn out. No elk were observed on the pasture to be grazed but the area did have extensive flood damage where usually dry channel crossed the road. Damage of the piping for one stock tank was observed. The main pond at willow springs was full with the overflow working well.

Natural Resource Worker Farias standing knee deep in a washout on the hay barn canyon. The sediment removed ended up blocking the culvert just downstream.



Washout of a crossing and the main road accessing the Worrell Ranch area of the Cowiche Unit

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE



Wildlife Conflict staff members Meyer, Caldwell and District Biologist Yarborough accompanied other WDFW staff and members of the Skagit Cattlemen Association to look at a variety of elk related issues in the Skagit Valley.

Weekly Swan Mortality and Morbidity Report: Swan Mortalities in Whatcom and Skagit counties continue to decrease as swans begin to migrate north for the spring. Two powerline related mortalities were recorded in Whatcom and Snohomish County this week. Total swan mortalities have now reached 343.

San Juan Islands National Park Prairie Restoration Environmental Impact

Statement: District 13 staff members reviewed and provided comments to a 300+ page draft Environmental Impact Statement. WDFW is a supporting partner to the Park and cooperates regularly with Park staff on plans for prairie restoration and conservation of the Island Marble Butterfly.

Skagit/Stilly Shorebird Survey: District 13 staff members conducted an aerial shorebird survey of Skagit and Port Susan Bays. Fewer than 5,000 dunlin were seen, which is highly unusual for these bays at this time of the year. Follow-up ground surveys failed to turn up large flocks of dunlin. Typically a minimum of 20,000 birds are easily found in this area during winter surveys.



Exposed mudflat in Port Susan Bay

Peregrine Falcon Conflict

Management: District 13 staff members performed an early season survey of the Index Town wall for peregrine falcon activity. WDFW surveys this wall in conjunction with State Parks (the site manager) and the Washington Climbing Coalition to determine nesting activity and necessary management actions to protect the breeding site.



Surveying the Upper Index Town Wall for Peregrine Falcons.

Protected Species Management: Biologist Anderson provided information and a short notice amendment to two entities regarding Osprey nest destruction permitting to meet state take needs. Anderson also spent a good part of a day in dialog and research regarding logging and potential eagle take in Kirkland with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Biologist. It was finally determined that another USFWS biologist had issued a permit and that the actual supposed nest tree (not in WDFW data) was not being cut. Communication regarding this subject and similar scenarios between federal and state management entities continues to need a bit of streamlining to meet both federal and state regulatory needs and provide for local municipal regulations (e.g. under critical areas code) as well as citizen and media complaints and inquiries.

Agricultural Leases: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm worked with the Sky Valley Tractor Club to develop a draft agricultural lease for a portion of the Crescent Lake Unit.

Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project Funding: Project Coordinator Brokaw edited the grant pre-application materials to the Stillaguamish Watershed Council for consideration in the upcoming Salmon Recovery Funding Board opportunity. He also worked with The Nature Conservancy to develop a proposal for an opportunity with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Milltown Island Restoration: Projects Coordinator Brokaw reviewed, scored, and provided questions for proposals from consultants who responded to a request for proposal for providing technical design work for designing the next phase of restoration at Milltown Island in the Skagit River.

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

Urban Outreach Efforts – Amphibians: Biologist Anderson worked on researching and compiling pertinent literature to be incorporated into an upcoming field practicum and lecture on area amphibians – identification, conservation concerns, how the public can help and educate

others regarding this most rapidly declining vertebrate taxon. One in three species of amphibian is at risk of extinction worldwide.

Samish River Unit Wetland Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw completed financial paperwork needed to process an amendment to the grant with Natural Resource Conservation System that funded construction of the project, including an indirect cost waiver form and an amendment in the spending plans.

Spring Bear Hunt: Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Natural Resource Technician Otto determined lock needs for gates that will be open to hunters with a North Skagit or Monroe spring bear hunt permit. Biologist Wingard completed touring the two spring bear hunt areas.

Migratory Waterfowl Forage: Natural Resource Technician Otto completed order payment forms for fava beans that will be planted this spring for waterfowl forage. This is the first year the Private Lands Access Program will be planting fava beans. Otto scheduled a meeting with a landowner to discuss planting migratory waterfowl forage on their property.

Private Lands Wildlife Viewing: Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell and Private Lands Biologist Wingard met with Seattle Audubon to discuss opportunities for private lands wildlife viewing in the Seattle Metro area. Seattle Audubon was very excited about the project and provided several good leads on landowners and regions to focus our efforts on. Biologist Wingard drafted contracts for landowners who have agreed to participate in Private Lands Wildlife Viewing.



Region 4 Access staff repaired storm damaged property boundary fence at Lake Stickney.



Access program cleaned off the boat launch in Hamilton on the Skagit river to allow access for the upper Skagit tribal fishery in early March.

Other Access Accomplishments: Staff fixed and filled potholes on the entry road to Tanwax Lake in South eastern Peirce County. Torey Composites from Tacoma did an adopt an access clean-up of Lake Kapowsin in Pierce County.



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

Wildlife Outreach: Biologists Paul DeBruyn and Patricia Thompson joined habitat outreach staff at the Cedar Creek Correction Center for a Math & Science Event that promotes science and math to school-aged children, provides a family-bonding event, provides an educational, fun and resource-rich experience to families affected by incarceration with the ultimate goal of reducing re-offense. Department staff presented a large array of natural history material including a live peregrine, mammal skins, skulls and other outreach information.

Faith Sexton and Karma the Peregrine talk with a resident offender and his family at Cedar Creek



Biologists Yarborough, DeBruyn, and Technician Trejo lead an interactive presentation at Jefferson Elementary School. After a brief presentation, the students were able to trace swan wings, feel the weight of a swan, compare their height to a swan, and perform a mock swan survey. After initially asking the kindergarteners what a swan was, one student's answer was "A leaf." Learning objectives included teaching students about the size, wings, and migration of swans. After the presentation and "hands on" stations, students could successfully differentiate between leafs and swans.



Technician Trejo leads an interactive presentation

Safety Issues: Snoqualmie

Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with CAMP Engineer Webster Bergford at the Cherry Valley Facility to view safety-related concerns at the barn and pheasant net pen. Plans are in the works to improve the stairway access to the loading room, electrical upgrades, and providing a safer access lane inside the net pen.

Leque Island Dike Breaches: The perimeter dike at Leque Island that is south of Highway 532 breached in a new location during the early morning wind storm and high tide on March 10. As of March 11th, there are two breaches adjacent to Davis Slough that are within 50 feet of each other; both are smaller than 15 feet wide. Staff members are investigating options to temporarily repair the dike.



A new dike breach adjacent to Davis Slough is causing Leque Island to be inundated with tidewater



Dike Failure on Leque Island on Davis Slough near parking area



Portions of the levee at the Fir Island Farm Snow Goose Reserve overtopped and sustained damage during the March 10th windstorm. Fortunately, the areas of damage appeared to be on the portions of levee that are slated to be removed this year during the Fir Island Farm Estuary Restoration Project. In the photo above, you can see water, driftwood and sediment deposition on the interior of the site and on top of the dike.

Skagit Headquarters: Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove began work early Thursday morning, documenting the effects of the wind and storm surge at the Headquarters site.

The remainder of the week Manager Rotton and Cosgrove worked on clean-up and repairs at the Headquarters and Fir Island Farms Units following extreme high tides early Thursday morning that over-topped the dikes in several places. Rotton coordinated with Headquarters and local contractors to complete an emergency repair of the breach point and to prepare for next storms predicted for the weekend. Cosgrove assisted Dike District #22 personnel with repairs to the Wiley Slough tidegate boomlogs. Cosgrove began clearing large amounts of cattail debris and trees from the dikes at Headquarters. Cosgrove repaired washouts in the road to the Dike District pumphouse. Rotton worked with contractor to repair road washout and shore up Wiley Slough bank along the road way.



(Left) High tide and storm surge overtop the dike at Skagit Headquarters along Wiley Slough



(Right) Damage to dike following overtop event at Skagit Headquarters near Wiley Slough tidegate

DeBay's Slough: Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove continued waterfowl use surveys of the Johnson/DeBay's Slough Unit and surrounding Nookachamps Creek area. Swan numbers in the area decreased dramatically over the past week.

Samish Unit: On a windy cold Saturday morning, Manager Rotton met with a small but hardy group of volunteers with the local chapter of Washington Waterfowl for a scheduled cleanup day at the Samish Unit. Volunteers picked up trash and shot gun shells and wads exposed following the drawdown of the ponds and fields.

Washington Waterfowl volunteers at the Samish Unit Cleanup day



Island Unit: Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove walked the dikes on the Island Unit to survey damage following the windstorm and extreme high tides. No over-topping was observed, but about 25 alder trees have fallen across the dikes.

Wildlife Area Management Plan Update: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continues to coordinate with the Wildlife Area Management Planning Team in preparation for the first stakeholder meeting scheduled for April 11. Updates to the planning process include additions the stakeholder database, providing comments on the Wildlife Area Fact Sheet, comment card, information pamphlet, and meeting format.

Wildlife Area Advisory Committee: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Boehm finalized the February 24 Advisory Committee meeting minutes and Charter. These documents will be posted on the Wildlife Area website as public record.

Washington Waterfowl Association Meeting: Supervisory Biologist Caldwell and Biologist Wingard presented at the monthly meeting of the Washington Waterfowl Association (WWA). Included in the presentation was information gathered through surveys conducted by Private Lands Access Program staff members and volunteers, and through hunter success survey cards. WWA members were eager to make suggestions to improve the program for the coming year.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Unit Breakdown: Natural Resource Technician Otto continued unit breakdowns throughout Skagit, Whatcom and Snohomish counties. With recent heavy rains and strong winds it has made for some challenging conditions out in the field. Otto was able to get some units down and supplies stored away for the season.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program Analysis: Private Lands Biologist Wingard completed analyzing data collected this waterfowl season at Waterfowl Quality Hunt sites. Wingard and Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell will now assess the data and use any pertinent findings to improve and guide better management decisions throughout Region 4.

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 5 years to return their 5 year background authorization forms. Coordinator Dazey activated 2 new hunter education classes for 2016. Coordinator Dazey assisted a new instructor to post their class and advised about the needed forms. Dazey also assisted a chief instructor to find other instructors in his area that could assist him at his classes. Coordinator Dazey Conducted two first session pre-service trainings (PST) one at MC-1 and one at Black Diamond Gun Club. The first sessions cover teaching tips and techniques, Department policy, and how to put together teaching teams with best practices. Dazey also held one second PST session where the applicants are actually evaluated on their ability to teach an actual class.

Range Safety Officer Training. Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey assisted National Rifle Association (NRA) Range Safety Officer (RSO) instructor Bob Palmer to verify instructor status on the signups for Palmer's RSO class being offered at cost to Hunter Education Instructors. The instructor policy manual directs that when live fire is offered in a hunter education class that one

instructor 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 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. Palmer has offered this class two times previously and both times the class filled and there was a wait list.

Volunteer Recognition: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey assisted Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Boehm to put together a recognition certificate for the volunteer that assisted him in the pheasant release at Snoqualmie Wildlife Area during the fall 2015 season.

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

Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary: Biologist Anderson drafted initial spending plan and is in discussion with fiscal regarding fiscal management changes and needs to meet this program and book sales. Anderson lined-up specimens for Biologists Thompson and DeBruyn for their weekend outreach efforts. Anderson worked with HR/Volunteer Program Manager Redmond regarding a formal request and providing response.

Training: Private Lands Biologist Wingard completed training for the Travel Expense Management System. Natural Resource Technician Otto completed Records Training in the Learning Management System.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Mt. St. Helens Elk Herd Population Survey: Region 5 Biologists Holman, Stephens, Bergh, and Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald were joined by Region 6 Biologists Novack and Michaelis as well as Game Data Specialist Kindschuh to conduct the annual survey of the “core” Mt. St. Helens Elk herd area. The survey effort was completed in 3 days with pilot

Jess Hagerman of Northwest Helicopters doing the flying while the above staff members rotated among the various tasks of observing, classifying, spotting, recording data, and navigating. Sightability corrected estimates of the elk population in the 5 surveyed Game Management



Mt. St. Helens Elk Herd Population Survey

Units will be developed in the coming weeks. The raw survey results include observations of 379 elk groups totaling more than 2,000 elk with good representation among the ages and sexes and good distribution throughout the surveyed landscape.

Western Gray Squirrel Webinar: Biologists Anderson and Bergh attended a webinar presented by Research Scientist Vander Haegen on this year's Western gray squirrel survey efforts. The protocol has been slightly modified from last year and the survey routes will be more concentrated in the squirrel's core range, eliminating routes on the very periphery of the range. District 9 will also be hiring a temporary field technician to help with the surveys this summer.

Ferruginous Hawk Surveys: Biologists Anderson and Bergh met with owners of the Mc Bride Ranch in eastern Klickitat County to discuss access issues for our upcoming ferruginous hawk surveys. Information was provided to the land owners about the current population status of this species and WDFW's planned statewide nesting survey in 2016. The landowners agreed to consider allowing WDFW access to their property and we agreed to have further discussions regarding coordination of the survey this spring.

Oregon Spotted Frog Surveys: Biologists Anderson and Bergh searched sites around Trout Lake for Oregon spotted frog egg masses this week in preparation for next week's annual coordinated survey effort. The cold and rainy weather was not ideal for surveys, but some freshly laid egg masses were found. Biologists Bergh and Peterson searched private land adjacent to Conboy NWR with the landowner. Last year the landowner found an Oregon spotted frog and he also has appropriate habitat adjacent to where egg masses have been found on the Refuge. Survey conditions were difficult due to high winds, but the landowner gave a good tour of spots that may be suitable for frog egg laying. (see photos of Matt and I surveying)



Oregon Spotted Frog Surveys

Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area March Elk Survey: Biologists Holman and Meyer conducted the monthly winter elk count on the Mudflow Unit of the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area. A total of 94 elk were observed on the valley floor. No mortalities were observed. Winter conditions remain mild with snow levels higher than 3,000'. See the attached photos of wintering elk on the St. Helens Wildlife Area.



Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area March Elk Survey

Dusky Canada Goose Survey: Biologist Butler conducted two dusky Canada goose survey within Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum Counties. Areas surveyed included: Shillapoo Wildlife Area, Woodland Bottoms, Kalama, Willow Grove, Puget Island, and areas near Grays Bay. Multiple flocks of dusky Canada geese were observed in and around the Shillapoo Wildlife Area. Among those birds, five collared dusky were spotted. In addition, large flocks of cackling geese were observed with cackler collars spotted. Small flocks of western Canada geese were spotted on Puget Island along with a small mixed flock of cacklers and taverner geese

Weyerhaeuser's Mount St Helen's Tree Farm: Wildlife Program Regional Manager Jonker, Private Lands Biologist Meyer, and Biologists Holman, Stephens, and George attended a meeting with foresters of Weyerhaeuser's Mt. Saint Helens Tree Farm to provide updates on ongoing permitted research efforts and to discuss topics related to forest management and wildlife. Biologist Holman presented population and harvest estimates for elk and black tailed deer in GMU's spanning Weyerhaeuser lands as well as population trends in elk since 2009. Biologist George presented results on the citizen science treponeme-associated hoof disease (TAHD) prevalence survey conducted last March and April as well as updates on the TAHD survival study and current diagnostic findings for TAHD. Biologists Stephens also provided results on recent camera deployment efforts on the Mt Saint Helen's tree farm. Discussions with foresters included fee access program results from the previous hunting season, elk browsing rates, bear depredation, access permits for 2016 and potential changes to that program.

Goose Nesting Platforms in the Shillapoo Wildlife Area: Last week, WDFW staff members built and installed six goose nesting platforms at key wetlands on Shillapoo and Vancouver Lake Wildlife Areas. The platforms are a 3'x3' made from cedar planks and mounted on four

posts. These platforms were installed at a water depth of 2-3 ft. as well as 2-3 ft. above the water surface. Sticks and straw were added to provide some structure and pre-nesting material. These platforms aim to provide additional nesting opportunities for Washington's only breeding goose, the Western Canada goose. By the beginning of March, Westerns are in search of nesting sites if not already actively nest building. The locations that these platforms were installed at are wetlands that have historically been used by nesting geese and or consistently have Westerns present through the nesting season.



Technician Fox installing nesting platform in V-3 on Vancouver Lake Wildlife Area

Forest Management Project in the Klickitat Wildlife Area: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis worked with the Cultural Resources Team and WDFW Forestry staff members to survey the proposed project area for culturally significant items or



features. The Klickitat Wildlife Area staff members learned how to record discoveries that may warrant addition to the statewide database of archeological and historic sites. This work spanned most of the week and provided a great opportunity to learn from our cultural resources specialists. Additionally, WDFW foresters began marking the boundaries of the project area, and more details were discussed regarding how the project should be implemented.

Cultural Resource Team

Bear Creek Riparian Restoration of the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Assistant Managers Sample and Hand supervised a planting crew from Roque Reforestation this past week as they planted trees along Bear Creek on the Mudflow Unit of the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area. The goal of the planting is to enhance and restore the riparian area along the stream for wildlife and salmonid habitats. The crew planted over 17,000 trees in one day and along more than two miles of the stream. Staff members will complete the plantings next week with an additional 3,000 trees. This restoration project is being funded by a grant from the Restoration and Conservation Office.



Roque Reforestation crew planting along Bear Creek

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

Southwest Washington Management Area 2A and 2B Goose Hunt: The 2015-2016 SW Washington late season goose hunt came to a close this Wednesday. WDFW Biologist Butler traveled throughout Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum Counties to monitor hunting activity in the field on private lands. While many flocks of geese were seen in fields throughout the area, few geese were seen flying. Despite this, many dedicated hunters endured the rain for a finale opportunity to harvest geese this season.

The late season ended Wednesday, March 9th and approximately 98 hunters were contacted and 208 geese were reported. A total of approximately 390 geese were reported during the regular and late seasons combined with 16 of those geese being dusky Canada geese. With the end of the goose season, a large thank you needs to go out to all the hunters and landowners for their continued cooperation throughout the season.

Kandoll Farm: Biologist Meyer finalized a contract with the Columbia Land Trust to provide hunting access for waterfowl in Wahkiakum County.

Inter-Regional Collaboration: Biologist Meyer spent two days with Biologist Caldwell (Region 4) observing and learning how private lands and wildlife conflict programs work in WA's north-western region. Biologist Meyer, Biologist Caldwell (Region 4), Biologist Yarborough (Region 4) and several other WDFW staff members spent a full day meeting with local members of the Cattlemen's Association and visiting several properties where elk damage is occurring or has occurred. The group discussed elk movements and damage mitigation techniques including new and improved fencing and lethal control.



Conflict Specialist Witman explaining elk movement and damage techniques to WDFW staff and local members of the Cattlemen's Association.

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

District 10 Wildlife Conflict

Chicken Depredation: Officer Chamberlin and Biologist Meyer responded to a call about 6 depredated chickens near Fifth Plain Creek. Officer Chamberlin and Biologist Meyer searched the area for predator signs but didn't find any, so they offered suggestions to the landowner for

protecting their chickens in the future. They also recommended the landowner set up their personal trail cam in case the predator returned and to follow up if the problem persists.



Elk: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin deployed Master Hunters to the Mossyrock area and Randle to address elk damage to commercial crops. The land owner in Randle is reporting approximately 5 limping elk in a herd of about 50. The master hunter will focus on harvesting one of the limping elk that is still healthy enough to consume.

Elk on agricultural lands, Randle, WA

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin visited two dairies in the Mossyrock Unit reporting elk damage to fields. Both land owners stated concerns about how large the local elk herd has gotten. The elk herd has been reported to Conklin for about a month now and appears to have at least 50 head. Kill permits and Master Hunters were deployed.

Injured Owl: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin responded to an injured owl call at a Longview industrial site. It appears the young fledgling Great Horned Owl fell from its nest. Conklin captured the owl and transferred it to Ocean Beach Veterinary Clinic to be assessed. The owl was given a clean bill of health. The owl was taken back to the general vicinity where it was found per the Audubon Society's advice. This is considered a common occurrence and typically the adults will continue to feed the young owl on the ground until it can fly. If the owl struggles, the workers at the mill site were instructed to return it to the Clinic and it will be transferred to the Audubon Society for care.



Great Horned Owl fledgling

District 9 Wildlife Conflict

Chicken and Geese Depredation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Peterson worked with a Washougal resident who has lost about a dozen chicken and geese over the past two weeks. Peterson set a live trap and gave the resident information on how to better protect his animals. The day after the sight visit a bobcat was lethally removed from the property while in the act of depredating on the chickens.

Elk: Large numbers of elk damage are continuing to be reported in the Husum, Trout Lake area. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Peterson is working with landowners on a case by case basis to mitigate damages and encourage better deterrence. Peterson will be working with a vineyard and a golf course on an electric fence trial this coming week.

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

Natural Resource Conservation Service Training Preparation: Biologist Meyer completed course prerequisites, paperwork, and underwent a federal background check in preparation for a Natural Resource Conservation Service Certified Planning course.

District 10 & Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area Winter Conditions

Past Weather: November temperatures and precipitation were both below normal, with several days of low temperatures in the 20's. December temperatures were slightly above normal and the month had record high precipitation causing some flooding throughout the District. January temperatures were average and precipitation for the month was above average. February temperatures were above normal and rainfall was average for the month.

Short-Term Forecast: Snow levels will fluctuate between 2,500 to 7,000 feet during the upcoming week with temperatures in the valleys ranging into the 50's. The 6-10 and 8-14 day forecasts are for above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation.

Long-Term Forecast: The March forecast is for above normal temperatures and precipitation, and 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. Green up is slowly starting at the lower elevations on the Wildlife Area.

Snow Depths: Lower elevations are currently snow free below about 3,500 feet. Snowpack is slightly below average for the region (see spreadsheet below).

Animal Concentrations: No unusual concentrations noted to date. The fourth winter elk survey was conducted on the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area on March 2nd, with 94 elk being observed.

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

Mortality: Three mortalities have been observed while conducting other work on the Wildlife Area so far this winter.

Public Contacts: None to report regarding winter conditions.

The Public is reminded the portion of the Mt. 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: Temperatures remained moderate this past week with mild conditions across the District. Rain and warm temperatures continue to melt the snowpack and there is a lot of surface water flow. Current snow water equivalent data indicates that the south Cascades are at 94 percent of normal. The Soda Springs Unit of the Klickitat Wildlife Area has no snow cover and green up has just started. Grass widow and salt and pepper flowers are blooming at the Wildlife Area.

Winter Severity: Winter conditions continue to be typical of February/March weather in the south Cascades and Klickitat River drainage. Snow coverage is primarily above 3,000ft 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 3,000ft as snow conditions have pushed deer into dense forested habitats.

Animal Concentrations: Deer are bunched in normal concentrations throughout the District, with deer in Klickitat County seen at higher elevations with the melting snowpack. Elk are reported in some agricultural areas associated with the Trout Lake and Husum areas, 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 WILDLIFE

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. An objective of this study involves determining sources of mortality among all radio-collared deer. The radio-collars in the Mason cluster have remote monitoring capabilities and text messages are sent when certain events occur; although periodic field checks are recommended. The Satsop collars require field monitoring to determine status. Biologist Murphie reports that no mortalities have occurred recently. Two does and four fawns are currently being monitored in the Satsop cluster, while the Mason cluster has seven does and three fawns.

Per the study design, the doe collars in the Mason unit are scheduled to drop off soon after a two-year deployment. Eight new collars will be deployed in March on different does. Biologist Murphie reports that three does were collared during net-gunning operations and one doe was collared via ground darting, so far. Additional ground darting efforts have been unsuccessful, but continue.

Black-tailed Deer Study: Biologist McMillan responded to a Separation Alert on Friday, March 11th. On her way out to the site she was blocked by motorcyclists who had gotten their truck stuck in front of the locked gate. She assisted them with getting their truck unstuck. Biologist McMillan arrived at the study site and the signal from the fawn collar 6173 was determined to be on the fast pulse. The mortality was found. The carcass of the deer was buried, with the left front and some organs consumed, plus left ear chewed off:



2015 Fawn 6173, from Doe 10700: Mortality first detected as a Separation Alert on March 11th.

Biologist Ament met with District Biologist McMillan on March 11th to provide her with the deer project gear. She also spent time on March 9th organizing most all used and unused fawn collars from last season. She was very grateful that Program Manager Calkins was willing to deliver the box of collars to Researcher Rice in Olympia.

Another Power Line Strike of Trumpeter Swan: Biologist Ament received a call on March 5, 2016 from an Audubon member Bob Boekelheide. He and Bob Phreaner, a swan monitoring volunteer, were out birding and found another dead trumpeter swan east of Sequim. Boekelheide reported the following:

Bob Phreaner and I discovered a dead adult swan in a field along Schmuck Rd about noon today (3/5/16). It was lying about 35-40 feet west of the road surface, about 90-100 feet south of the elk fence around the field with the growing crop (cauliflower?). Our guess is that it hit the utility lines, because four lines ran right overhead where the bird was lying. There are a few flight diverters on lines in the area, but possibly more are needed. The bird was lying about 90 feet south of utility pole 3003-618501, to the west of Schmuck Rd. Of the four utility lines, the two middle lines showed hints of white feathers on them, possibly from the bird's contact with the lines. Although it's a distant cell phone photo, look close and you can make out the white smudgy areas on the lines in the last attached photo. So the bird may have been electrocuted by touching two lines, although we don't know for sure. There were no obvious burn marks on the bird. The bird looked like it was a fresh kill, still somewhat warm with eyes open. It was lying in the warm sunshine, so maybe that kept it warm as well. The swan had a fresh wound on the upper left side of its bill about halfway between the nares and the eye (see attached photo). Otherwise it looked in pretty good shape.

While we were there, other swans flew very close to the utility lines, so it looks like a dangerous area. Hopefully you can learn something from the bird's sad demise.

The swan was collected and delivered to Greywolf Vet Hospital. The swan appeared to be quite healthy and normal body weight. Radiographs were taken of the swan. There was no evidence of chronic disease with the swan and there was no obvious evidence to suspect lead poisoning as the cause of death. However, the gizzard was removed and liver samples were taken. These samples were frozen and will be submitted in the future for testing for lead poisoning. The wings and skull of the swan may be used for educational purposes. Biologist Ament notified Clallam County PUD staff immediately after collecting the swan. They had installed diverters on the lines in the vicinity due to the mortality of a swan from a line strike early last month. However, they had a limited number of diverters and the section where the swan was killed only had three diverters. A crew responded on March 8th and added 4 more diverters to the lines between the power pole span where the dead swan was located. See photos below.



Dedicated volunteer Bob Phreaner with swan that died from power line strike



Injury on swan bill from line strike

Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly Survey Transect Flagging: Biologist Ament completed work on replacing missing flags and re-marking flags for Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly (TCB) survey routes located at survey sites west of Port Angeles. She selected days when there was no precipitation at the sites so she was able to re-mark flags easily. Some of the flag stakes were missing or damaged. She had to re-measure 25 meter distances and place new flag stakes on the survey routes. Biologist Ament put some flagging along vegetation to clearly mark the route. She also spent extra time this year clearing limbs and brush from surveys routes. This will hopefully make travel conditions easier for surveys and maybe help minimize the number of ticks that hop from limbs onto unsuspecting bodies passing by counting butterflies. Biologist Ament completed flagging and clearing on a total of seven survey routes. There was only one survey route that was not completed due to steep slopes and lack of suitable weather. Active TCB larvae were being observed at both known TCB survey sites so no further work will be conducted until surveys are initiated.

Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly Habitat Improvement Projects: Biologist Ament spent time on March 2nd meeting with Department of Natural Resources staff members, along with a WCC crew leader and crew member at a Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly (TCB) site located west of Port Angeles. The crew has been employed for the past few weeks to work on clearing new habitat improvement units at two known sites for TCB's. The crew worked the previous week at a different TCB site to finish one unit where trees/brush were cut and piled for future burning. They also placed tree barriers along a road to protect sensitive TCB habitat from any off road vehicle traffic. Biologist Ament reviewed all work completed and provided comments to the crew. She met with the crew at the new site to review another unit that would be cut to create a corridor between balds. The crew only had a few more days dedicated for this project and only had minimal crew members. They did an excellent job of helping to improve habitat conditions at the TCB sites. Another crew from the Center of Lands Management worked at one of the sites on Feb. 25th and 26th. They spent time cutting trees along steep slopes between narrow ridges that drop below an old logging road. On March 10th Biologist Ament provided Biologist Hays with a written summary of all habitat improvement work completed over the past few weeks. See photos below.



(Left) Corridor cut by WCC crew between balds at known TCB site.



(Right) Trees cut by CNLM crew along steep ridge at known TCB site.

Tick Collection and Transfer to

Department of Health: Biologist Ament collected her first tick of the 2016 season while at a Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly (TCB) site on Feb. 20th to work on survey transect flagging. She collected at least one tick or more during all days at TCB sites the past two weeks. She was also given a tick from a member of the CNLM habitat enhancement work crew that was at a known TCB site February 25-26, unfortunately it had bitten one of the work crew. Biologist McMillan visited the site on February 25th and collected 8 ticks, one which had bitten her. Department of Health (DOH) staff members were notified that ticks are already active on the TCB sites. DOH staff members advised that they would like to continue efforts to collect ticks this season. They were actually on the peninsula on March 7th so Biologist McMillan and Biologist Ament arranged to meet with them to provide them with all ticks they had collected. Biologist Ament also gave them some small unknown little "bugs" that she had removed from dead fawns from the Deer Project. DOH was willing to help in providing some identification for the specimens. Biologist McMillan submitted the tick that had bitten her separate from the other 7 ticks that were collected. Her Primary Care Physician will be monitoring, including conducting a lymes pathogen titer later in the season.

Assistance to Oil Spill Team: Biologist Ament was contacted on March 1, 2016 by Don Noviella from the agency Oil Spill Team. Don was calling to report that a 49 foot sailboat grounded at the Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge. Apparently the captain and one passenger were rescued and were treated for hypothermia at the hospital before being released. The U.S. Coast Guard attempted to reach the vessel later that day but were unable to due to rough seas. There was a small craft advisory in effect and a gale warning issued for the evening. There were some concerns about fuel leaking from the vessel. Biologist Ament offered to help gather more information. She drove to a location where she could see the sailboat and shared some communications with refuge staff. The vessel remained in the same location, approximately ¼ mile west of the lighthouse on the south side of the spit and was not discharging any pollutants. She notified Don of what she had observed. On March 11th Don reported that all oil had been taken off the vessel and that the boat was to be retrieved that day. The photo below was provided by the New Dungeness Lighthouse keeper.

The sailboat that became grounded on the Dungeness Spit



Proposed Radio/Cell

Tower: Biologist Ament has been spending time dealing with a proposal for a cell/radio tower at a site in Dungeness near her home office. She contacted Regional staff members early last month for direction and was informed by Program Managers

Calkins and Kloempken that Habitat staff would be the lead and Wildlife would serve in a support role. She provided all communications, including recent e-mails from an attorney and consultant biologist to Habitat staff members. The opposition group was requesting WDFW comments on the consultant report by March 2nd and a letter to the FCC by March 8th to request an environmental assessment be completed for the proposal. Biologist Ament provided some wildlife species use information and comments related to the consultant report. Habitat Program is in discussions on determining if the agency will provide any specific comments related to the radio/cell tower proposal.

Olympic Wildlife Technical Group Meeting: On March 9th Biologists Michaelis, Murphie, McMillan and Ament, Conflict Specialist Blankenship and Regional Program Manager Calkins attended the annual meeting of the Olympic Peninsula Wildlife Technical Group held in Port Angeles. The group consists of Tribes, State and Federal Agencies and other partners involved in wildlife management on the Peninsula. A wide variety of presentations and discussions were included ranging from deer and elk surveys to pocket gopher and Fisher status and management. Biologist Ament assisted Point No Point Biologist Tim Cullinan, who coordinated the meeting, by taking notes. She will review the draft notes before providing them to Tim this week.

Oregon spotted frog: Biologist Tirhi continued to conduct spotted frog surveys at traditional breeding locations and potential new sites including a partial survey of TransAlta property (Centralia Mine; no eggs detected) with the assistance of volunteer Chris Holcomb. Volunteer Bonnie Blessing discovered another new oviposition site associated with the Black River this past week. Biologist Tirhi verified the site with pictures and the collection of three egg vouchers for genetic confirmation. This new location marks the fourth spotted frog oviposition site discovered by trained volunteers, which demonstrates the importance of the Volunteer Amphibian Monitoring Program led by Tirhi, City of Olympia Stream Team, NW Trek, and Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium.



New Oregon Spotted Frog egg deposition (oviposition)

Streaked Horned Lark: Biologist Tirhi co-lead and presented at the March 2016 joint WA/OR Airport and Federal Lands Streaked Horned Lark Working Group meeting, held at the Portland International Airport. A separate WA working group was initiated by Tirhi in 2014 as a means to bring lark breeding area site managers together for the south Puget Sound in order to work collaboratively on lark management. Oregon partners expressed an interest in a joint meeting for 2016. At this 2016 meeting, the larger WA/OR body expressed an interest in maintaining joint meetings into the future. Tirhi was supportive provided a coordinator(s) could be located for future meetings. The 2016 meeting was attended by 44 people representing several airports, jurisdictions, and state and federal agencies. Agenda items included WA survey results and overall population trends, Federal Aviation Administration WA and OR airports survey overview, and out-brief by several airports, presentation of pilot projects taking place at Joint Base Lewis McChord and Sanderson Field, and then a continuation of building Best Management Practices.



Streaked Horned Lark

Elk Hoof Disease: Biologist Tirhi was assisted by Conflict Specialist Blankenship, Officer Haw, Sargent Fairbanks, Refuge Biologist Bailey, and Officers Turner and Russell of the Thurston County SWAT team in the harvest of three cow elk on the Black River Unit of the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge with probable cases of *Treponema* associated hoof disease. Vouchers were collected at the request of WDFW veterinarian Mansfield in order to verify the disease within Thurston County limits. At the time this event was planned, no cases of hoof disease had been confirmed north of Lewis County. Officers Turner and Russell were our sharpshooters with Blankenship as the backup. The harvest went exceptionally well with efficient kill shots for each of the three cow elk suspected of having hoof disease (by virtue of their limping) including the worst case cow who had been reported for days by volunteer monitors as having difficulty keeping up with the remainder of the herd due to poor condition hooves. Tirhi and team removed the hooves of all three elk; two of the elk were later donated to the Nisqually Indian Tribe and the Union Gospel Food Bank (the worst case was not donated). Tirhi sent the hooves within 24 hours to the Colorado State University laboratory, per protocol, for inspection and confirmation of *Treponema*. The public can get more information on this disease at the WDFW website http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/hoof_disease/



(Above) Elk hoof collected with suspected treponeme associated hoof disease, Thurston County, WA.



(Left) Biologist Tirhi processing harvested elk as part of hoof disease investigation, Thurston County, WA.



(Right) Elk hoof collection team, Thurston County, WA (March 2016)

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

Mt St. Helens Elk Flights: Biologists Novack and Michaelis assisted Region 5 staff members Eric Holman and Nicholle Stephens during an elk survey flight in portions of Margaret and the Coweeman Game Management Units. Biologist Michaelis additionally sighted a pair of peregrine falcons in the vicinity of an area suitable for nesting falcons. The sighting may lead to a new falcon nest location for the Region.

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

Spring Bear Hunt Coordination: Biologist Novack answered questions about spring bear season and transmitted the address list of Copalis Spring Bear Hunters to Rayonier Timber Company. He found aerial survey maps of the area that reveal bear damage sites and, is working with HQ to have links to those maps incorporated into the website.

Historical Monument: Manager Belson coordinated with local stonecutter Keith Phillips of Tenino and the Thurston County Historic Commission to put the finishing touches on a stone monument at the Scatter Creek Wildlife Area Unit. The monument is a rebuild of the original structure that was erected at the historic Miller-Brewer House for the 1989 Washington Centennial. Mr. Phillips worked on the monument for over two years and included interpretive plaques to describe the site's pioneer history, unique architecture, and current status as public land. It will soon be accompanied by a more detailed interpretive display currently being designed by the county in collaboration with WDFW.



Bear Timber Damage Meeting in Olympia: Conflict Specialists Blankenship and Harris attended a meeting regarding concerns on bear damage to small private timberland owners. WDFW Wildlife Conflict Staff members attended to answer questions and concerns about the bear timber damage program and provide information on tools and techniques to prevent damage on private timberlands from bear.

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

Surplus Item Removal: Biologist Ament met with District Biologist McMillan and Fish Program staff member at structures located at agency owned property along Morse Creek on March 8, 2016. The buildings are to be demolished soon so selected items of value were removed.

Hiring Process: Biologist Novack and Sundstrom, together with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biologist William Ritchie, conducted interviews for the Scientific Technician 2 position for monitoring snowy plovers. Three candidates were interviewed. One candidate was clearly the preferred option by all three panelists. Biologist Novack submitted all paperwork required to make the position offer. A second candidate will provide a great alternative should the preferred candidate not accept the position.

Wildlife Program Improvement: Biologist Novack participated on a conference call with the Wildlife Program listening session workgroup and provided edits to the group letter.