

Wildlife Program

Week of October 10 – October 16, 2016

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Profanity Peak Wolf Pack: Lethal removal activities continued throughout the week in District 1. WDFW coordinated with the Ferry County Sheriff's Department, range riders, and producers.

Smackout Rumors: Supervisor McCanna tracked down rumors of possible additional depredation events in the Smackout wolf territory. After speaking to the producer and son, no additional depredation events have taken place, although range riding activities have increased significantly.

Conference Calls: Supervisor McCanna participated on two conference calls this week regarding three different wolf packs in District 1.

Stevens County Depredation Investigation and Reports: Natural Resource Worker Weatherman, Wildlife Enforcement Officer Parkert, and a Stevens County Sheriff's Officer investigated a dead calf discovered on a private grazing allotment east of Colville. The 700-pound Angus calf had been dead for approximately one month. The entire area was examined, but there was no evidence present to determine a cause of death. It was ruled as an Unknown Cause of Death. Natural Resource Worker Weatherman spent much of the week completing depredation investigation reports.

Stevens County Livestock Producer Meetings and Equipment Retrieval: Natural Resource Worker Weatherman and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett met with a local cattle producer east of Colville who is interested in the WDFW Range Rider/Cost-Share Program. Bennett met with additional livestock producers to discuss current grazing plans for the rest of the season. Information on the WDFW Conflict Program, possible changes to the program, and next steps for the producers was discussed. Natural Resource Worker Weatherman picked up equipment (fox lights) loaned out in an earlier wolf/domestic dog confrontation over the summer.

Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement Payments: Natural Resource Worker Weatherman obtained signatures and invoices from cost-share range riders from eastern Ferry County.

Profanity Peak Wolf Pack Conference Call: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett, Natural Resource Worker Weatherman, and other WDFW staff members discussed current and potential future steps for the Profanity Peak wolf pack. The most recent depredation investigations, cattle movements, and lethal removal operations were discussed.

Spokane County Trail Camera Retrieval: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett picked up a trail camera from a landowner with concerns of wolf activity near cattle. Several photos of turkey, elk, deer, and a coyote were captured. The camera was removed.

Stevens County Livestock Loss Claim: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett met with a producer to complete a WDFW livestock claim for the confirmed loss of a Holstein heifer to gray wolves earlier this summer. A notarized claim application and a decision from the Farmer Services Agency on payment are needed to process the claim.

Wolf Sightings Asotin: Natural Resource Technician Wade took a report of wolf sightings in Asotin County. The reporting party stated that he and his hunting partner observed a large gray wolf for over five minutes on the Peola road between Peola and Clarkston. Wade entered the sightings on WDFW's wolf sighting reporting webpage.

Wolf Sighting Garfield County: Natural Resource Technician Wade took a report of wolves sighted over a four day period six miles south of Pomeroy in the Pataha Flat area of Garfield County. The first sighting was of nine wolves hunting deer. The reporting party stated he observed four wolves actively pushing deer to five wolves bedded in ambush positions. The reporting party stated the colors varied from black to gray, and one individual was reddish brown in color. The reporting party also stated that from the behavior he observed, he thinks the large black wolf was the alpha male. The second time he observed the wolves, four were present and he was approximately 50 yards from them. He stated that they did not appear to be afraid of him. The local cattlemen are in the process of moving cows out of the area to avoid conflict.

Cattleman Contact: Natural Resource Technician Wade spoke with one of the cattlemen moving his cattle out of his U.S. Forest Service (USFS) grazing allotment to private grazing pasture for the winter.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Restoration: On Wednesday, Finch and Bauer harrowed a 70-acre portion of an old Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) field in the eastern portion of Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area. This portion of the field will be planted to shrub-steppe grassland meadow in fall 2018 for the benefit of sharp-tailed and sage grouse. It will use U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) funding. Finch and Bauer worked in tandem on all harrowing this week. This was accomplished using Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area's tractor and harrow, a tractor borrowed from the Wells Wildlife Area, and a harrow rented from a local farmer.



Swanson Lakes restoration work – Photo by Private Lands Biologist Todd Baarstad

REGION 2

No report submitted this week.

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Buser, Assistant Manager Kaelber, and Natural Resource Worker Marchand collectively worked on pumping water into the Phase 1 wetland at Windmill Ranch in preparation for the opening of waterfowl season.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Babik and Natural Resource Technician Leuck met with three master hunters to get them started on installing a boundary fence on the Spiritwind acquisition. Natural Resource Technician Leuck supervised the boundary fence construction and, with the aid of several master hunters, repaired a weak section of the elk fence. This section of fence is a problem area where elk continue to push the fence line. Leuck and volunteers installed new wooden posts and bracing where many of the fence posts had rotted off at the ground or were only held up by rock jacks.



Master Hunters installing the Spiritwind boundary fence



Spiritwind boundary fence complete

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Forester Mackey attended a meeting with foresters and habitat biologists organized by Forest Management Team Lead Tveten and Habitat Biologist Nauer. The goal was to continue building working relationships and increase communication on forest management projects between programs.

Forestry Tour: Forester Mackey attended a forestry tour of Yakama Nation lands organized by Forester Pfeifle and guided by Yakama Administrative Forester Steve Andringa. It was an excellent opportunity to learn about the evolution of tribal forest management.



Foresters Pfeifle, Bass, Ashiglar, Forest Management Team Lead Tveten, and Yakama Nation Administrative Forester Andringa discussing the Tribal Forestry Program on a tour of the Yakama Reservation



Obscured view of Mt. Adams from Signal Peak Lookout on the Yakama Reservation. In the background is the Klickitat River, and beyond that to the west is the area burned in the 2015 Cougar Creek Fire.

Wildlife Management

Kennewick High School Career Day: District Biologist Fidorra, Wildlife Area Managers Buser and Kaelber, and Hatchery Manager Erickson conducted outreach at a booth for the Kennewick High School Career Day this week. Staff members took shifts meeting with students in various places in their career planning and discussed opportunities for various careers with WDFW. Two fresh salmon were on display and one student remarked that WDFW won the award for “coolest table.”



Wildlife Area staff members Kaelber and Buser discuss careers with a high school student at the “coolest” booth on Career Day



Conference Call: District Wildlife Biologist Fidorra and Habitat Biologist Ritter joined a conference call with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Safari Club International (SCI) to discuss SCI's concerns about potential impacts to pronghorn from a DNR irrigation project. A local follow-up discussion was suggested.

Field Tour: District Biologist Fidorra visited the Whitcomb and Paterson National Wildlife Refuge units and spoke with a few hunters about the location. Fidorra was scouting routes for a potential GMU 373 deer survey he hopes to start this fall, as well as looking for pronghorn in the region of a DNR irrigation project. No pronghorn were observed.

Cougar: District Biologist Fidorra met with a successful hunter to tag and sample a harvested cougar.

Sandhill Crane Status: District Biologist Fidorra reviewed and commented on the Sandhill Crane Status Review.

Grouse Wing Collection: The wing collection barrels were checked and six wing samples were collected.

Colockum Elk Population Estimates: Biologist Moore ran the Colockum's aerial survey data from 2007 to 2015 at the request of Deer and Elk Section Manager Jerry Nelson and Statewide Elk Specialist Brock Hoenes. Hoenes is in the process of updating the Status and Trend Report and the herd's population data table does not have confidence intervals associated with the abundance estimates or with any of the ratio estimates. Moore used RSight to produce the estimates and confidence intervals.

Muckleshoot Indian Tribe (MIT) Mule Deer Study: Biologist Moore worked with MIT Biologist Mike McDaniel to investigate a collared deer mortality in the upper Taneum. The doe sustained extensive injuries in the back and throat areas. The bite to the throat actually severed the trachea and broke a few transverse processes off the vertebrae. The deer was partially plucked and about 75% consumed. The predator actually consumed a portion of the vertebral column and ribs. It was not buried and no scat was found in the area. Overall, we felt it was likely an atypical cougar kill.

For this MIT deer mortality, the photo illustrates hemorrhaging in the mid back and the section of vertebral column and ribs consumed



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

Wildlife Areas

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Babik and Natural Resource Technician Hill went to the northeastern part of the Quilomene searching for a flatbed truck that got stuck on a closed road between Little Brushy and Quilomene Ridge roads. They installed a road map on the reader board at the boundary of Quilomene and the Colockum wildlife areas. Babik worked with the owner of the flatbed to remove it at the owner's expense. A Land Rover was abandoned on the same switch back last year and was removed by the public. Colockum Wildlife Area staff members are planning to hang some "No Unauthorized Motor Vehicle signs" warning the public of the impassible conditions on the closed road.



Road management area map of the Quilomene installed on the boundary kiosk

Flatbed truck stuck in the Quilomene

Wenas Wildlife Area: Wildlife area and access staff members attended the Lands Division Workshop in Yakima. Wildlife area staff members provided field tours of the Sheep Company area and discussed the target shooting issue and shrub-steppe restoration efforts.

Sign Installation: Natural Resource Worker Freitas posted "get along" signs at the Umtanum Creek and Umtanum Falls trailhead kiosks, advising hikers that hunting is allowed on the wildlife area and reminding all users to respect each other.

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

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman hosted a field trip from St. Paul Cathedral School in Yakima. The fifth grade students learned a little history on the wildlife area and toured the visitor's center. The students came prepared with a lot of good questions.

Wildlife Management

DPCA: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand met with several landowners from the Kahlotus area to discuss new Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements and associated nonlethal strategies that will be implemented to minimize deer damage to their winter wheat crops.

Aggressive Deer: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received an aggressive deer complaint in Pasco from Wildcomm. After talking with the reporting party, it was found to be in the town of Asotin, not Pasco, so information was collected and passed on to local conflict staff members in the area.

Deer Complaint: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received a deer complaint from a landowner in the Burbank area near the USFWS Peninsula Unit. Several deer have become a nuisance to the garden and have damaged a few fruit trees in the yard. A few nonlethal techniques, such as aversive sprays and pyrotechnics, were discussed, as well as the upcoming general deer season as a way to remove a few of the deer.

Rattlesnake Mountain Fencing: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued to monitor a new deer and elk exclusionary fence and temporary electrified fladry fencing on Rattlesnake Mountain.

Coyotes: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received and provided technical advice to a homeowner in the Kennewick area who is having problems with coyotes. Reference to WDFW's Living with Wildlife resource materials was given.

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

Wildlife Areas

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris and Assistant Manager Taylor had an onsite pre-work meeting with CAMP and Habitat Biologist Bartrand on Monday prior to CAMP beginning repairs on the Mellotte Bridge. CAMP completed the work Wednesday, October 12, giving general deer season hunters plenty of time to get camps set up before the season started. Our thanks to Maintenance Mechanic Haverfield and his assistant for completing the work before

general deer season and to Construction Project Coordinator Davidson for keeping the project on track.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman coordinated with USFS on trespass grazing on the Rock Creek Unit. Huffman contacted the Ashbaugh's, who own the cows. They found three cows on the unit earlier in the week and moved them back onto DNR land. Forester Mackey spent some time looking for cows in the area and none were located. Colder weather and rain may have caused the cows to move back towards home on their own. Over ten cows, some with newborn calves, were observed the week before.

Manager Huffman coordinated with USFS to repair the 1702-550 road, which was reopened in the Rock Creek Fire. The road has been washed out for several years and provides legal access to WDFW land. Plans to install a ford that would allow vehicle access while removing the passage barrier created by the fire were canceled at the last minute. It was determined the ford design was not feasible due to the amount of fill and would still likely result in a partial passage barrier. USFS crews removed fill to allow the creek to flow as it had before the fire, which blocks vehicle access. A longer term solution will be addressed over the winter. WDFW has a need to access the area for management and has several miles of RMAP roads in the area past the closure.

Colockum Wildlife Area: Manager Lopushinsky continued to communicate with CAMP on the RMAP work needing to be done on the Brewton and Crossover roads. CAMP has put the work out to bid a second time, with the bid opening scheduled for the end of the week. On Friday, we heard there was one successful bidder.

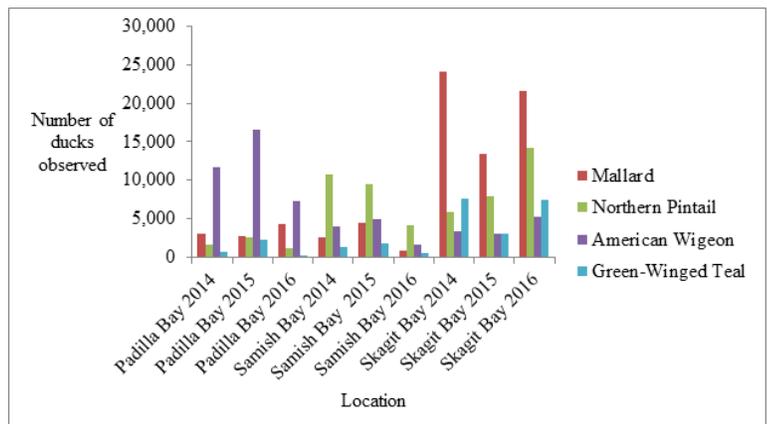
REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Waterfowl Flights: Biologist DeBruyn flew the first dabbling duck survey in the North Puget Sound region. This pre-hunting season flight is conducted to capture conditions before hunting pressure begins. Traditionally, this is a numerically low count, as many northern ducks have not arrived. Strong numbers of mallards in Skagit Bay suggest good local production. Weaker than usual numbers of wigeon in Padilla Bay and pintails in Samish Bay indicate those species have yet to arrive in full force.

Number of ducks observed by WDFW personnel during an October 2016 dabbling duck survey flight in the North Puget Sound region



High Path Avian Influenza Sampling (HPAI): Biologist DeBruyn and volunteer Alyssa Thompson checked hunter's ducks at the Skagit Wildlife Area and swabbed them to check for HPAI. Stormy conditions and good duck numbers led to many happy hunters and a plethora of harvested ducks to check. The samples will be sent to Washington State University for analysis. Partial funding for this effort comes from a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture.

White-nose Syndrome Monitoring, Bat Health, and Bat Conservation: Biologists Anderson and Tobin finalized initial implementation of surveillance efforts regarding fall/winter/early spring bat activity via passive acoustic work.

Biologists at WDFW involved in these pilot surveillance efforts were notified about a piece covering ongoing work of WDFW and partners via the White-nose Syndrome blog, written by USFWS. Anderson wants to extend thanks to all partners and internal staff members who have worked overtime to get things up and running with staff and equipment limitations – great job all!

<https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/blog/white-nose-syndrome-marches-westward-scientists-and-others-work-save-bats>

Please report bat roosts and sick or dead bats at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/wns/>. PLEASE SPREAD WORD OF THIS WEBSITE AND THE NEED TO REPORT ROOSTS AND DEAD OR SICK BATS IN WASHINGTON.

See monitoring tool in above photo. Setting up short-term, repeated sites, as well as long-term sites in pilot efforts of bat swarming and hibernacula movements across the landscape. Peak in background was also hiked to mid-snowline in orientation needs – Photo by Biologist Anderson



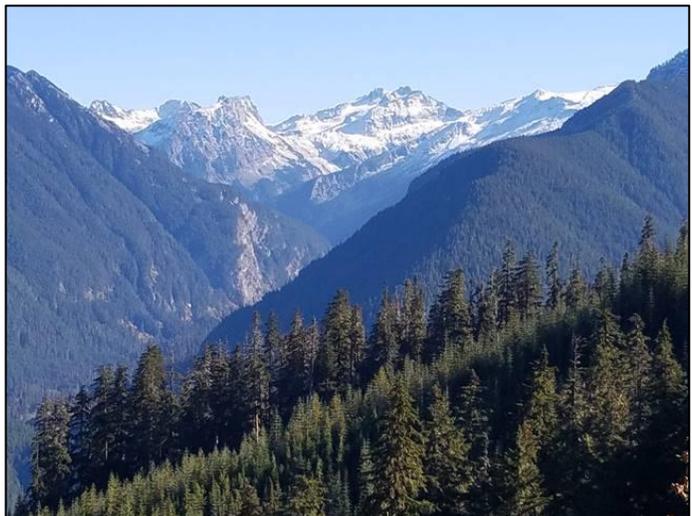
Region 4 Citizen Landscape Amphibian Monitoring Seasonal Close: Biologist Anderson and Citizen Science Coordination Biologist Connally launched a planning effort and next steps in communication with Woodland Park Zoo in streamlining crowdsourced data. They are also promoting a “first tier screening” type process and ease of data pull for screening. Efforts of examining this continue, with a desire for a pilot as planning lines up.

Citizen efforts to document long-term use of Stillwater breeding amphibians across time. Here we have developing northern red-legged frog embryos. Anecdotally and in descriptive examination of this data over a handful of years, it may be that this species is being lost from suburban areas. More work is needed, but it is quite plausible based on the information collected both internally and externally amongst volunteers and professionals –
Photo by Biologist Anderson



Mountain Goats: District 13 took advantage of the last nice day of fall to follow-up on earlier aerial surveys and search for potential staging areas for mountain goat translocations that may take place in the next few years. Close access of staging areas to suitable goat habitat is problematic in the places surrounding the central Cascade range, and only a limited few were located on the north end. Several additional possible locations were located and relayed to the special species manager.

Reasonable flight transfer distances from staging areas to suitable mountain goat habitat can be problematic in the central cascades



Black-tailed Deer Statistical Population Monitoring Update and Buck Monitoring Planning Meeting: District 13 joined WDFW biologists and managers from western Washington to discuss the latest results from Research Biologist Rice’s work and consider proposed monitoring plans for deer in our regions.

Sharp-tailed Snake Paper: District 13 reviewed location information and measurements taken from snakes found last spring on the San Juan Islands with partners. This information was incorporated into the paper partners are working on that summarizes information known for the islands at this time.

Wolverine Study: Biologist DeBruyn continued to scout high elevation locations for a wolverine camera bait site. This is part of a multi-state effort to map wolverine distribution in lieu of an endangered listing.

Wildlife Areas

Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw turned in a grant application to Puget Sound Partnership for the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) Large Capital Project funding opportunity. Additionally, an archaeologist began survey work on the site, which is needed for permit applications.

Private Lands/Access Management

The Nature Conservancy Coordination: Supervisory Biologist Caldwell coordinated with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) on status and trends of northwest Washington and statewide data pertaining to wildlife species. Supervisor Caldwell provided links to WDFW Status and Trends reports and also provided hard copies for reference.

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

Wildlife Management

Hunting Questions: Staff members fielded numerous questions regarding where to go hunt deer, ducks, and grouse. Most deer hunting calls came in on Thursday and even Friday, although the weather forecast was rather dubious for the coming weekend.



Salvaged Road Killed Elk: Officer Stout responded to an injured elk call where a subject wanted to salvage the elk. Officer Stout arrived, located the elk and established it had been hit by a car, after seeing it had two broken rear legs. Officer Stout dispatched the elk, and Officer Vincent filled out roadkill salvage forms for the subject requesting the salvage. The reporting party was very grateful.

Salvaged road killed elk

Wildlife Areas

Hamilton Landing Boat Launch Design Grant: Projects Coordinator Brokaw worked with Capital Asset Management Program (CAMP) Engineer John Hansen and City of Stanwood staff members to develop grant application materials for a boat launch and parking facilities at the Hamilton landing site on the lower Stillaguamish River near Leque Island.

Pheasant Hunting Season: Manager Kessler monitored the pheasants in the pheasant pens at the Lake Terrell headquarters. He received 375 pheasants for this week's releases. Kessler and volunteers performed the releases Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday evenings. Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with staff and volunteers to continue managing the pheasant program for the 2016 general pheasant season.

Tennant Lake Waterfowl Blinds: Manager Kessler worked with volunteers to complete repair work on the three waterfowl hunting blinds on Tennant Lake. New roofs, floors, and doors were installed, making all three blinds ready for opening day of waterfowl season. Kessler used the John Deere tractor to remove a beaver dam at the boat launch, and he manually removed a dam in the channel out to the lake. He also coordinated with the Hovander Park manager on closing the Tennant Lake boardwalk for the hunting season. One hunter reported his party all getting their limits very quickly on opening day.

Disabled Hunter Waterfowl Blind: Manager Kessler prepared the disabled hunter waterfowl blind for use. A new door was installed and the road to the blind was cleared of downed trees. The blind was reserved by a disabled hunter who used it opening day.

Skagit Waterfowl Season Preparations: Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Natural Resources Technician Cosgrove placed survey boxes and maps at the Headquarters boat launch and at the upper and backside landings on the Island Unit. Wildlife area staff members are interested in hunter use, waterfowl use on the Island Unit, and Skagit Bay Estuary areas. Meis posted reserve signs and buoys on the eastern side of the newly created breach of the restoration project area at the Fir Island Farms Unit. Natural Resources Technician Cosgrove made final preparations for the beginning of waterfowl hunting season, including posting additional Safety Zone signs at the Headquarters Unit, and Game Reserve and Closed Area signs at the Fir Island Farms Game Reserve Unit. Manager Rotton and Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove performed car counts on opening day to monitor hunter use of the sites.

Private Lands/Access Management

Washington Waterfowl Association Meeting: Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Supervisory Biologist Caldwell attended the northwest chapter meeting of the Washington Waterfowl Association. Private Lands staff members presented information on waterfowl quality hunt site information, regulations, and Wild Future. Waterfowl Association members were happy to see Migratory Bird Enhancement funding being put to good use and that there were so many high quality sites available for hunting in 2016/17.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Private Lands Biologist Wingard completed the contracts for the 2016 waterfowl quality hunt units in the region. Biologist Wingard continued preparing the Region 4 Private Lands Access site webpages for public view. These sites will go online as they become available to hunt. Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo and Biologist Wingard met with multiple landowners and completed their access agreements for the upcoming season. Otto and Deyo built waterfowl quality hunt program sites by installing parking posts, signs, and blinds. Thirty-two waterfowl quality hunt program sites were open for the October 15 opener. More sites will be opened as they are available.



Waterfowl enjoying a waterfowl quality hunt program site

Trillium Woods Deer Hunt: Private Lands Biologist Wingard prepared contracts for the Trillium Woods deer hunt. This hunt provides one of the few public big game hunting opportunities on Whidbey Island. Biologist Wingard will schedule landowner meetings for this opportunity in the coming week.

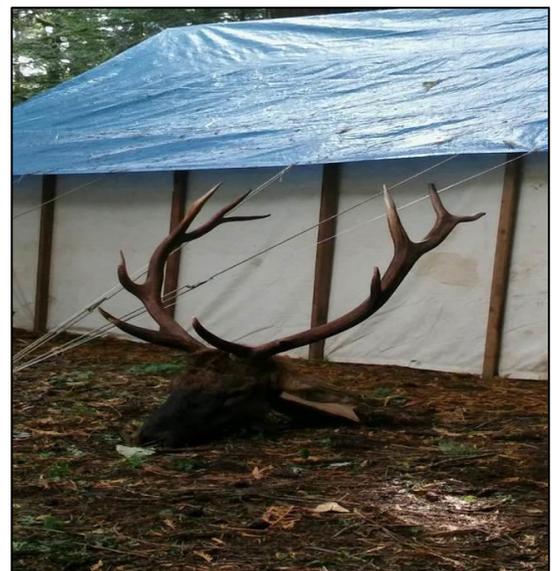
GOAL 3: PROMOTE A HEALTHY ECONOMY, PROTECT COMMUNITY CHARACTER,

MAINTAIN AN OVERALL HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, AND DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wildlife Management

Ungulate Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman monitored damage hunt activity and updated the permits system with current data. Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal removed temporary elk fencing in Day Creek in preparation for anticipated flooding events. Repairs were made to other sections of fence that are not prone to flooding. Witman also monitored elk activity on private property in the Acme area of Whatcom County. An elk herd of approximately 40 animals was located on private property. Witman followed up and checked fences in Day Creek and Hamilton after recent high wind events. All fences were found to be in working order. A high number of elk were visible in the valley floor during the high wind events as elk moved into open fields.

Black Bear Conflict Coordination, Outreach, and Education: Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell responded to two black bear conflict issues. One was near Arlington, and the other was near Monroe. Each situation was addressed by providing the private landowner with WDFW’s, Living with Wildlife (black bear) information, including two separate nonlethal fencing and supplemental materials designs/templates for deterring unwanted bear depredation and presence. Supervisor Caldwell also coordinated with WDFW Law Enforcement on landowner contact information, conflict issues, follow up procedures, and complaint tracking.



Pictured here is a bull elk that was harvested by a designated rifle hunter in Elk Area 4941

Mountain Goats: District 14 continues to check in mountain goats harvested from the Mt. Baker area. Staff members record data related to age, sex, antler size and circumference, and disease monitoring.

Bighorn Sheep: Region 4 district staff members took advantage of a training opportunity offered by Officer Lee to learn the technique of pinning a bighorn sheep. Successful hunters are required to present their sheep to the Department within 10 days to have the horns pinned. Pinning is a method to identify legally obtained bighorn sheep.

Habitat Conservation and Municipal Planning: Biologist Anderson handled requests from Habitat Program for assistance in landscape planning and land-use proposals. Anderson discussed this with habitat staff members and furthering transition. Requests come in weekly.

Take Authorization: Anderson provided authorization for a number of osprey nest removal needs and conflict situations.

Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Units: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm posted seasonal waterfowl hunting signage at all of the Snoqualmie Units in preparation for the season opener.

Skagit Headquarters: Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove continued cleaning and winterizing equipment used on the Island Unit for agricultural and moist-soil manipulations and mowing. Manager Rotton contacted various county officials to discuss options for potential flooding response with the oncoming storm. Additional rock was added to the tidegate site where the March 10 storm overtopped and eroded the dike.



Additional rock was added to the tidegate site of the Wiley Slough Restoration Project where the March 10 storm overtopped and eroded the dike

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo coordinated with Private Lands Biologist Wingard to identify which waterfowl quality hunt program sites would be open to public hunting for the waterfowl season opener on October 15. Biologist Wingard and Supervisory Biologist Caldwell coordinated with enforcement and Regional Office staff members to ensure everyone knew which sites would be offered this year, what the sites' access modes would be, which days the sites would be open, and when the sites would become available. Supervisory Biologist Caldwell coordinated with Private Land Access Program staff members on securing and providing elevated site management measures for upcoming weather storms.

Hunter/Landowner Questions: Supervisory Biologist Caldwell fielded numerous phone calls throughout the week regarding lands enrollment, Waterfowl hunting site placement, rules, and regulations, hunting recommendations, and more. Biologist Caldwell provided everyone with an electronic site listing, advised people where and how to use WDFW's GoHunt website, and discussed waterfowl abundance in Region 4. People stated they were happy with this information and will follow up soon with question if they have any.

GMU 418 Elk Hunt: Private Lands Biologists Wingard fielded several calls from Game Management Unit (GMU) 418 special elk permit holders. Biologist Wingard offered ideas about where to focus their effort. Biologist Wingard met with multiple Nooksack modern firearm special elk permit holders to distribute keys and tips. Biologist Wingard toured portions of GMU 418 for special permit elk hunters. Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo met with a successful 418 special elk permit holder to collect teeth and a gate key.

A successful Nooksack special elk modern firearm permit holder

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education Instructor Support:

Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey sent out one new instructor applicant packet. Dazey answered questions from a new instructor about class sizes and lead time to post a class. Coordinator Dazey sent out the inactive instructor notices to those instructors who, according to our records, have not taught a class in 2016.



Volunteer Coordination: Volunteer Coordinator Dazey assisted to secure volunteers for pheasant release, gate duty in GMU 418, and cleaning out a wildlife corridor in the Everett area.

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

Wildlife Management

Aircraft Safety: District 13 used a recent aircraft incident as a catalyst to review flight safety training and needs with the waterfowl survey specialist.

Lands Division - All-Hands Meeting: Region 4 Lands Division staff members attended a three day all-hands meeting in Yakima. Staff members updated each other on their activities and attended field visits on Yakima-area lands.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Western Pond Turtle Release: Biologist Bergh released six western pond turtles back into the wild after they had spent the past five months at the Oregon Zoo. These turtles, along with 14 others, were collected in ponds in May and brought to the Oregon Zoo, where they were cared for and fed in an effort to grow them large enough to escape predation by non-native bullfrogs. Six of the turtles had grown large enough to be released into ponds before winter, while 14 will remain at the zoo, continue to grow over the winter, and be released in the spring.



Newly released young western pond turtle

Fisher Monitoring Flight: Biologists Lewis and Stephens and WDFW pilot Kimbrel conducted a monitoring flight using radio telemetry to locate fishers reintroduced into the South Cascades this past winter. From December 2015-February 2016, 23 fishers were released at the Cispus Center near Randle. To date, five fisher mortalities have been documented, which means there are potentially 18 fishers alive from last winter's releases. During this most recent monitoring flight, 11 of 18 fishers were located. More fishers will be released into Mount Rainier National Park this coming winter. More information and updates about the project can be found at http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/fisher/updates_cascade.html.



Fisher monitoring flight

Black-tailed Deer Research Project:

Biologist Holman followed-up on a mortality signal from one of the black-tailed does in the Coweeman cluster. Currently in the Coweeman cluster, six out of 10 adult does captured in February of 2016 remain alive. The mortality was triggered because the doe was killed and partially consumed by a cougar.



Celebration of Pending USFWS Downlisting of Columbian White-tailed Deer:

Listing and Recovery Section Manager Anderson, as well as Biologists Holman and Stephens, attended a celebration in honor of the pending USFWS decision to downlist the Columbia River population segment of Columbian White-tailed Deer from Endangered to Threatened. Those interested in reviewing the federal proposal should visit the following link:

https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/10/08/2015-25260/endangered-and-threatened-wildlife-and-plants-reclassifying-the-columbian-white-tailed-deer-from?utm_campaign=subscription+mailing+list&utm_medium=email&utm_source=federalregister.gov

The celebration of the downlisting was held in Ridgefield, near the site of the most recent Columbian white-tailed deer reintroductions. The gathering was well attended by representatives from USFWS, the Cowlitz Tribe, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Clark County, and regional political leaders, including the Mayor of the City of Ridgefield, volunteers and local news media, and the Department. Section Manager Anderson spoke in celebration of the Columbian white-tailed deer, their recent range expansions, and the importance of cooperative partnerships among stakeholders in efforts to recover imperiled species. For more information on Columbian white-tailed deer, visit the USFWS website at https://www.fws.gov/refuge/julia_butler_hansen/wildlife_and_habitat/mammals/columbian_white_tailed_deer.html.

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

Klickitat Wildlife Area Deer Modern Firearm Season Opening Weekend

Simcoe Mountains Unit: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven worked with staff from the Central and East Klickitat Conservation Districts on Saturday. A dozen vehicles were parked at the entrance to the property, with two camps set up. It rained most of the time. Van Leuven visited with hunters as they returned to their vehicles. Of the nineteen hunters, seven were from Goldendale and the remaining hunters were from Sunnyside, Washougal, Yakima, Vancouver, and Saint Helens. Although a few shots were heard, no deer are known to have been harvested. The Box Springs Road is starting to get muddy and visitors should anticipate slippery spots on the road in.

Soda Springs Unit: Van Leuven conducted a hunter success survey on the Soda Springs Unit on Sunday. Of 49 hunters contacted, only one had harvested a deer, which was a 4-point buck. Rainy weather seems to have limited both deer activity and hunter turnout. From October 13-16, over two inches of rain has been recorded at the wildlife area office. The number of camps was roughly half the usual for opening weekend. Several hunters spent most of their time watching football on TV, watching wild turkeys, or otherwise relaxing in camp, waiting for drier weather. A couple of people reported seeing good numbers of deer, mostly does. Some of the roads on this unit are getting soft and visitors are urged to use good judgment in determining how far to drive on unimproved roads.

Private Lands

Hunt by Written Permission: Biologist Meyer talked with a landowner about registering his property as a new Hunt by Written Permission access area in Clark County.

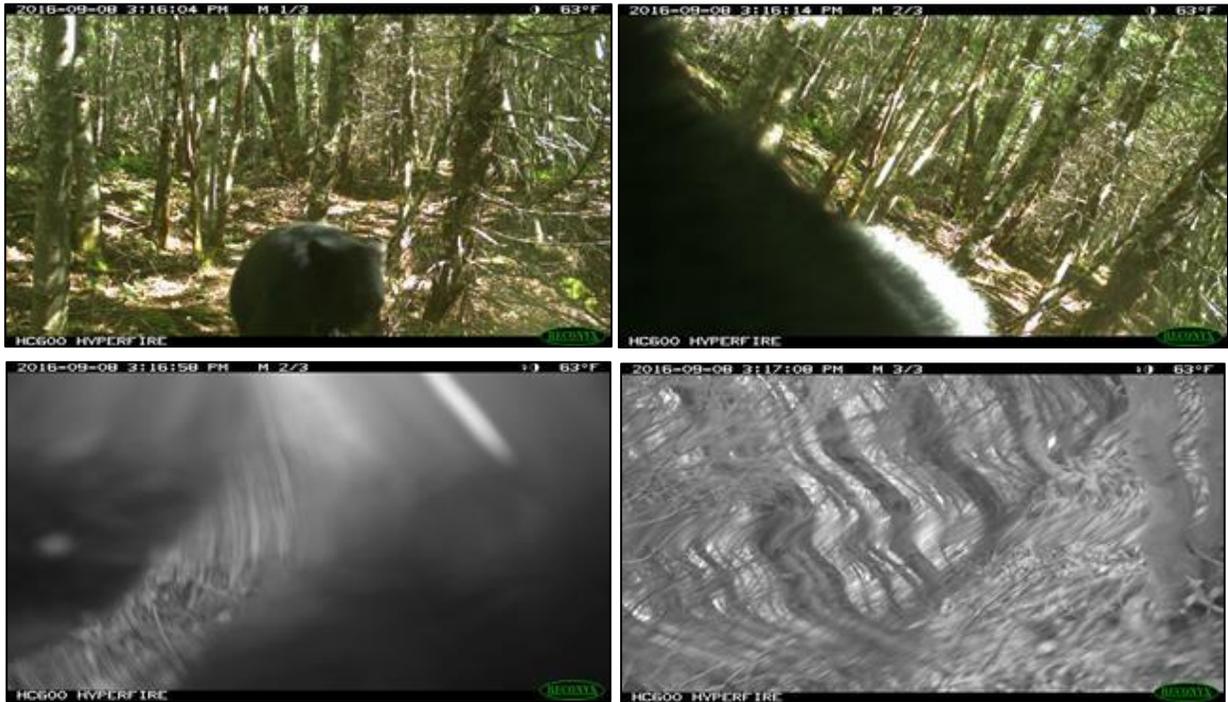
GOAL 3: USE SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES, DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wildlife Conflict

Deer: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin met a small timber forester interested in creating more hunting opportunity on his forestland to deter damage from deer. In addition, Conklin met a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farmer in Lewis County who is incurring large losses due to deer damage. Fencing options and hunting opportunities were discussed.

Elk: Biologist Meyer spoke with a landowner about elk damage on a property in Glenwood. Meyer and Conflict Specialist Conklin will meet with the landowner this week to determine the level of damage and negotiate a DPCA_C agreement.

Bear: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin went to retrieve a camera from the field to find a bear had decided to change the angle a tad.



REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

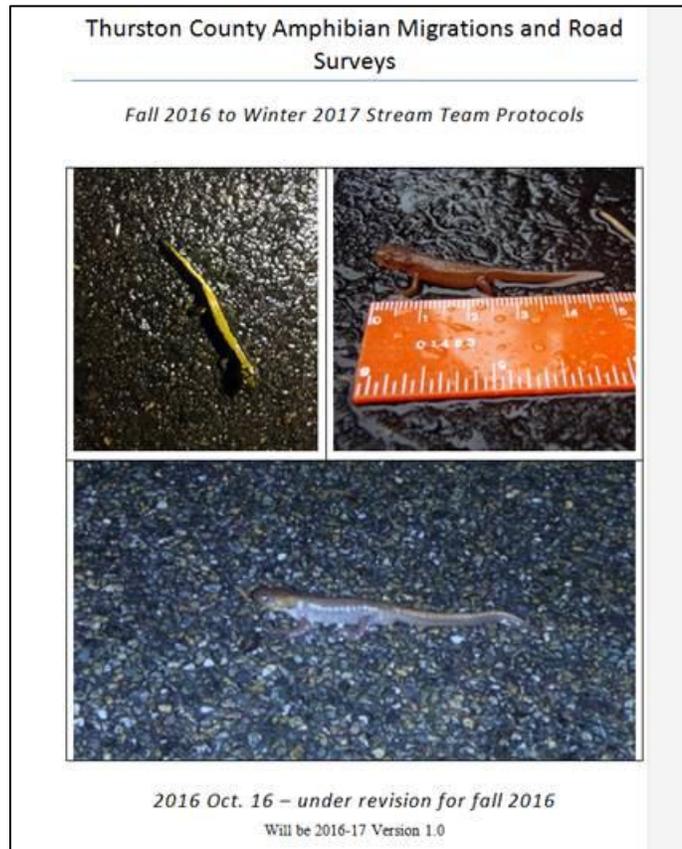
Wildlife Management

Amphibian Road Mortality, Citizen Science Program, Thurston County: Biologist Tirhi, along with members of the road mortality working group, provided training to citizen scientists for the 2016-2017 (fall and spring) survey period. Tirhi covered the need for the monitoring program and species most likely to be encountered. The purpose of this program is to use trained citizen scientists following established protocols to collect data on amphibian road mortality on several Thurston County road networks believed to be hotspots for mortality. Thurston County Public Works and City of Olympia are members of the project. The ultimate goal is to use the data to affect mitigation at hotspots to reduce impacts to amphibians. Another goal is to locate likely hotspots before new road networks are placed.

Protocol guidebook provided to citizen scientists participating in data collection

Snowy Plover: Biologist Sundstrom finalized the Adult Breeding Window survey data for Washington State with USFWS Biologist Ritchie. This data is provided to USFWS and covers surveys conducted throughout coastal Washington where plovers are or might be found. This year's survey week, as set by USFWS, was May 15-21. There were a total of 101 snowy plovers observed at five separate locations (54 males, 42 females, and five undetermined sex). There is the possibility of double-counts, especially for unbanded birds, as they move in and out of breeding locations.

Oregon Spotted Frog: Biologists Butler and Tirhi, along with USFWS and Center for Natural Lands Management, AmeriCorps members, and volunteers, worked diligently to remove the remaining reed canary grass within Oregon spotted frog plots at a salmon creek breeding site. Everyone worked hard through the down pouring rain to finish clearing the remaining plots. The Oregon spotted frog is listed as endangered in Washington, with the most significant factor contributing to its decline being habitat loss. The removal of the reed canary grass will open up important Oregon spotted frog breeding areas. This work could not be done without a great team of volunteers helping out. A large thank you goes out to everyone who helped!





Working hard in the rain



Loading up the last of reed canary grass

Black-tailed Deer Mortality and Habitat Use Study: Biologist Butler followed up on a possible fawn mortality at the Vail Tree Farm study site. The fawn’s radio collar signal could not be detected previously and it still could not be heard this week. The doe was visually observed in the field without a fawn. This indicates that there was most likely a fawn mortality rather than a collar failure. In addition, data from the doe’s collar was downloaded.



Downloading black-tailed deer collar data

Western Pond Turtle: Biologist Butler followed up on a report that a western pond turtle was seen on Lake Dolloff in King County. No western pond turtles were observed during the survey, but one painted turtle was spotted basking on a downed log. Painted turtles are primarily found in eastern Washington, and were likely introduced to the Puget Sound region.



Surveying Lake Dolloff

Guest Lecture - Metamorphosis: Profound Social Change through Science and Sustainability Education: Biologist Linders and Project Manager Kelli Bush from the TESC Sustainability in Prisons program presented a joint lecture at Saint Martins’ Robert Harvie Social Justice Lecture series. The presentation was well received by a mixed group of students and faculty, and opportunities for collaboration between the two universities were identified. Opportunities for future collaboration may also exist to between Saint Martins and WDFW.

Taylor’s Checkerspot Research – Golden paintbrush as a Host Plant: Biologist Linders joined other WDFW staff members, including Potter, Pearson, and T and E section lead Anderson, in an interagency discussion on how to move forward with research and management actions involving the federally endangered Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly and federally threatened golden paintbrush, which has potential to be used as a host plant for the butterfly. All agreed there was a need to move forward with a larger scale release of larvae onto golden paintbrush, with more detailed follow-up monitoring that would include a demonstration of oviposition on golden paintbrush in a field setting. The opportunities to conduct such work in the field are limited, but Linders will meet with Peter Dunwiddie from the Center for Natural Lands Management to evaluate on-the-ground conditions at Glacial Heritage Preserve. An abundance (~7,000) of larvae in diapause at captive rearing facilities offers an opportunity to conduct a release in winter 2017 if a suitable field site exists. Conducting this release at Glacial Heritage in addition to the standard planned release would effectively double the number of larvae there in 2017. This has the potential to move the population up to a level that may be more self-sustaining.

Taylor’s Checkerspot Research – Two Taylor’s Checkerspot Studies Proposed at Scatter Creek’s South Unit: WDFW biologists learned of a proposed demography study on the fledgling population of Taylor’s checkerspots at Scatter Creek from colleagues at USFWS. This is in addition to a larval predation study proposed by the Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM) earlier in the year. Biologist Linders convened a meeting of WDFW, USFWS, CNLM, and University of Washington-Seattle to discuss the potential of the proposed research activities to conflict with one another and with ongoing reintroduction and habitat restoration efforts at Scatter Creek. The demography proposal did not detail methods and associated impacts, which hampered discussions relating to the benefits of the work compared to potential impacts. Potential impacts from the larval predation study were better known because Biologist Linders assisted with a similar pilot project at Scatter Creek in 2016. The meeting concluded with a need for more detailed information that could be used to assess impacts.

Taylor’s Checkerspot Habitat Enhancement: Biologist Radford continued to assist Biologists Hays and Cook with foot and smoke patrols while Biologist Randolph participated in setting and controlling prescribed fires at West Rocky prairie, the Scatter Creek North Unit, and JBLM’s Johnson Prairie. Biologist Radford assisted Biologist Cook with sorting and calculating seeding rates for various species of native seeds to be used in prairie restoration projects at West Rocky Prairie and Scatter Creek’s North and South units.

Initiating prescribed fire at West Rocky Prairie – Photo by Lisa Randolph



JBLM Taylor’s Checkerspot Working Group Meeting: Biologist Linders attended a quarterly meeting to discuss conservation and management actions relating to Taylor’s checkerspot on JBLM. Participants also included personnel from JBLM Fish & Wildlife and ITAM programs, USFWS, and CNLM. Agenda items included post-prescribed fire monitoring, results of 2016 butterfly population monitoring, captive rearing update, 2016 fire update, habitat restoration, range clearance procedures update, and Range 74/76 habitat enhancement/ restoration. Linders presented numbers and maps from her annual report illustrating the sharp decline in the number and distribution of checkerspots at Range 76, the population source for all Puget lowland reintroduction efforts and the sole extant site in the region. Linders also expressed concern about the fact that *Plantago*, the only prevalent host plant onsite, was being sprayed along roadways as part of road management efforts. This is the first time these measures have been implemented, although they have come up in conversation before. Over the past decade, Linders has repeatedly requested new habitat be created in nearby areas away from the roads before such actions are taken. This was reiterated at the July meeting. Linders also emphasized concern for the fate of mardon skippers at Range 76, as none were counted in 2016 during standardized counts. They were prevalent on the site as recently as 2008, but declined sharply after a training event in winter 2009. Linders recommended that genetics work be done to establish whether the lowland populations are unique from those at higher elevations in the Cascades, which caught the attention of the USFWS personnel present.

Fisher Camera Trapping Project: Biologist Ament and Port Gamble Wildlife Technician Charin Godbolt spent time together last week on the fisher monitoring project. They conducted the fourth and final check of all stations within Hex 513 on October 13. This hex was monitored during the 2014 season by the District 16 Fisher Team and no fishers were detected. All cameras were secure at each station during the check. There were no detections of fishers at any of the stations. Station 1 was visited by several spotted skunks and a Douglas squirrel. One unusual skunk was a very light color phase. A black bear sow with two yearlings and more spotted skunks were visitors at Station 2. The bears did smash the cubby and left it bait-less near the bait tree. A lone black bear explored Station 3, along with a deer and (of course) another spotted skunk. There were numerous photos taken at this station, but many were triggered from the movement of vegetation. All gear associated with each station and flagging was removed during this final visit.



Spotted skunks at Station 1 (one a very light color phase)



Black bear sow with yearling...no wait...there is another yearling (Station 2)

Dead Bats: Biologist Ament delivered three dead bats to the new White-nose Syndrome and Bat Specialist Abby Tobin on October 12. These bats had previously been collected and were frozen. One came from the front grill on Biologist Ament’s work truck and the other two bats were collected from a yard in Port Angeles. All bats will be tested sometime in the future for white-nose syndrome.

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

Wildlife Management

Willapa Bay Survey: Biologists Michaelis, Novack, and Sundstrom surveyed Willapa Bay from a fixed-wing floatplane. Main objective of these flights are to document concentrations of dabbling ducks in relation to existing eel grass. Numbers appear to be normal for this time of year. A second flight will be attempted before approximately the second week in November in an effort to document the peak migration and/or density of dabbling duck groups. This time of year is extremely difficult to get flights in due to weather conditions and other factors. The data has not been completely compiled, but it appears the peak of the migration has yet to be reached.

Aerial view of Graveyard Spit, Tokeland as the plane begins to descend to start the survey at the east end of the spit near the marina



Dusky Goose Survey #1: Biologists Michaelis, Sundstrom, and Novack attempted to conduct a survey for dusky Canada geese. Weather conditions during the morning progressively

got worse and Biologist Michaelis witnessed two funnel clouds with erratic winds close hand. The survey was cancelled and only collared geese from the Columbia River were observed. Biologist Novack noted a small group of white-fronted geese in Ocean Shores.

Hunt Monitoring: Biologist Sundstrom worked the opener of the general goose season in parts of Pacific and Grays Harbor counties. Despite a storm warning, hunters braved the light winds and pouring rain. Five geese were checked (cacklers, Aleutians, Taverner's), two hunters called in to report, and other waterfowl hunter contacts were made. No hunters were located in Grays Harbor County in the early afternoon.

Deer Opener – Modern Firearm: Biologist Novack worked the modern firearm deer opening day in GMU 648. About 40 hunters were contacted, with two deer checked (both 2-points). The majority of hunters appeared to be back into their cars by 9:00 a.m.

Wildlife Areas

Sign Posting for Hunting: The Wildlife Area Manager position Shane Belson filled is currently still vacant from him moving to be the Statewide Access Area Coordinator. He contacted Biologist Ament early last month and requested some assistance with posting signs at the Lower Dungeness waterfowl hunting site. He laminated and mailed the signs to her home office, which is very near the site. Biologist Ament went out on October 11 and installed all needed signs. She was able to borrow a nice battery powered drill that was great for use on the framed signs at Lower Dungeness. She did a little improvement work for sign placement at that sign board. A man with a pump truck came to clean out the sani-can while she was there. Biologist Ament picked up a little trash and some dog poo from the parking area. She then hiked down and replaced the signs at the end of River's End Road. She also hiked around to all five natural hunting blinds located at this site. The markers were all there except for #3. Luckily, she found the number lying nearby. She had some electrical tape and secured it back on the post. After she finished, she replaced the Discover Pass sign and posted the "dogs on leash" sign at Three Crabs sign board. The other signs there are faded from sun and should be replaced when the board is installed at the new final location.

Special Note: Biologist Ament went by the Lower Dungeness parking area a few times this weekend. There were three vehicles there Saturday afternoon and five vehicles there on Sunday morning. There was a high concentration of mallards and wigeon in the bay when she was there earlier in the week.



New signs installed at boards located at Lower Dungeness and Three Crabs



Driftwood blind #1 near the bay



Mallards and wigeon in the distance

Moon rising from the Lower Dungeness Unit

Private Lands/Access /Conflict

Signage: Biologist Harris and Natural Resource Technician Cain completed signing properties in Jefferson and Mason counties and Cain completed Grays Harbor County. While in Mason County, they spoke to a landowner about signing another access agreement. Unfortunately he is requesting more than the properties are really worth. Talks will continue. They had to clear some brush out of blinds so hunters could use them in Jefferson County. A little more work needs to be done. However, everything was good to go for the opener. Biologist Harris also spoke with numerous hunters with questions on access and where to hunt.





The view from a blind in Jefferson County



Hunt by Reservation sign



Feel Free to Hunt

Injured Owl: Biologist Harris called an individual who reported an injured owl. The individual stated the owl was standing in some overgrown grass. Biologist Harris suspected the owl had likely eaten a large meal recently and was a little too full to fly. He requested the individual check on the owl later in the day. As suspected, the owl moved on after a little digestion.

Bear Damage: Overall this fall, black bear complaints have been very low. Complaints are low due to a combination of good berry crops and public education. However, one call was somewhat unique. A landowner reported he suspected a bear damaged his artesian well multiple times over the summer and fall. Natural Resource Technician Cain met with the landowner. The landowner provided a couple of pieces of poly tubing that definitely have canine tooth puncture marks. The landowner also reported there was bear scat in the area of the well. Overall it is unknown what actually chewed on the pipe. This the first report of wildlife damaging an artesian well in Region 6.



Chewed on pipe?

Elk Damage: Biologist Harris responded to a producer who is supporting too many elk in the Elk Horn Flats area. He noticed the fields were in good condition and looked to have been harvested in the past month. They were not. The producer got one cutting in the spring and the elk helped themselves to the second cutting. Biologist Harris will be developing a DPCA for the producer. The landowner is allowing reasonable hunting access.



No cows, no fences, just elk doing what they do

Deer Mauled by Domestic Dogs: Biologist Harris and Natural Resource Technician Cain responded to a reported deer mauling by dogs in the Wynoochee Valley. WDFW Enforcement and Grays Harbor County Sheriff Deputies were busy on other details. They arrived to find a severely injured fawn and a very upset

landowner who reported the deer was chased into her yard and the dogs caught it and mauled it in her garden. The deer had two open fractures plus multiple puncture wounds and was missing larger chunks of muscle in areas. The deer was euthanized and information was forwarded to enforcement. Both County and WDFW Enforcement are following up on this.

Beavers: Still no attempts by beaver to rebuild the dam at the bridge. However, the beavers did try to move the dam up stream in one of the braids along the road. The stream is braided as it travels through the area. It is suspected that they gave up on the bridge and are working on dams up stream. That is okay, with the exception that they need to move one dam a little more up stream. The forester reported the new dam in early September. Biologist Harris arrived two days later to discover the beavers had started rebuilding. He opened it up and strung some bear hide. The beavers have not yet rebuilt the dam. Hopefully they are busy building up stream.



A month later

Master Hunter Designated Permits: Not exactly cruising through the hunters this year. Things have been off to a somewhat slow start. The elk in several areas are not causing as many problems and in a few cases they are schooling us. Keeping hunters deployed provides a constant reminder to the elk. To date, eleven hunters have been deployed, with five harvesting. Six hunters are currently deployed. However, with the hunting seasons in full swing, most are standing down and not actively hunting. Several are ready to respond if contacted. Only two hunters remain on the “Pass” list. In one case, the contact number provided is to a former business and the other is non-working number.

Master Hunter - Region 6 Designated Elk Permits	
Deployed Currently	6
On Call	0
Pass	2
Waiting	47
Harvested	5
Permits	60
Success Rate	45%

Deployed = hunters currently hunting

On Call = hunters who are on call for staff or a landowner

Pass = hunter who have chosen not to hunt or hunters who have no responded to staff.

Waiting = hunter who have not been contacted

Success Rate = Success of total hunter deployed, on call, or have harvested.

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

Wildlife Management

Wildfire Training: Biologist Randolph attended prescribed fire training at JBLM to increase her exposure to field techniques and time on the ground. Randolph is part of the cooperative inter-organizational prescribed fire team working to implement burning for habitat restoration purposed across a variety of south Puget Sound sites.