

Wildlife Program

Week of October 24 – October 30, 2016

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Depredation Investigation Review: Supervisor McCanna, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett, Private Lands Biologist Earl, and Natural Resource Technician Weatherman met to review several depredation investigations from this summer in District 1. This was a learning opportunity to review injuries and patterns of attacks in different terrains.

Depredation Investigation Reports: Natural Resource Worker Weatherman completed final depredation reports for 2016.

Equipment to District Three: Natural Resource Worker Weatherman delivered equipment (4-wheeler) to St. John.

End of Season Meeting with Supervisor: Natural Resource Worker Weatherman and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett met to discuss this year's activities, projects to complete in the winter, and plans for 2017.

Producer Meetings in Stevens County: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett and Natural Resource Worker Weatherman met with three producers to discuss Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements for Livestock. Each producer has cattle within home ranges of the Huckleberry and Stranger wolf packs.

Wolf Damage Claim: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett met with a producer who lost a cow from wolves earlier this summer. Information on the claims process and next steps were covered. Additional follow-up is needed.

Depredation Investigation Report Review: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett, Natural Resource Worker Weatherman, Wildlife Conflict Specialist/Private Lands Biologist Earl, and Supervisor McCanna met to discuss a depredation investigation that occurred in the Smackout wolf pack territory. Photos, collar data, and scene information were discussed.

Predator Fencing Project and Master Hunter Volunteers Field Meeting: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett met with several volunteers at two locations to look at the fencing projects that need completion. The project plans were shared and a path forward to completion was created.

New Oregon Collared Wolf: Another collared wolf from Oregon (OR-35) is currently visiting the Blue Mountains. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has been forwarding GPS locations to the conflict staff.

Grande Ronde Incident: Biologist Earl was informed of a possible livestock attack this week. Earl was able to contact the ranch hand moving the cattle. Upon further investigation, the injuries were stated to be from a fence and not wolf related.

Wolf Sighting: A hunter reported seeing a grey and white colored wolf cross the road near Peola.

Investigation Training: Biologist Earl attended a meeting in St. John to review photos and necropsies conducted by Conflict Staff in Region 1 this year to further develop consistencies in WDFW investigations.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE): Mike Kuttel, Jr. coordinated with private lands biologists to gather information about technical service provided for the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) program. SAFE is an initiative of the Conservation Reserve Program developed to create quality wildlife habitat on private agricultural lands. Kuttel will use the information provided by the private lands biologists to complete a quarterly report and a final report for fiscal year 2016.

Land Management: Wildlife Diversity Division Manager Penny Becker, Section Manager Cynthia Wilkerson, and Restoration Ecologist Dave Hays attended the Lands Division winter meeting in Yakima (October 11-13). The meeting included sessions on collaborating with recreation stakeholders, as well as a presentation and film, “The Era of Fires,” by Paul Hessburg. The film discussed the need for prescribed fire in eastern Washington. In addition, the meeting featured a session led by Wildlife Diversity Division (see Goal 3 below) on how the Lands and Wildlife Diversity divisions can work better together, and field trips to view forest restoration work on Oak Creek Wildlife Area.

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

Lands Division Collaboration: Section Manager Cynthia Wilkerson and Restoration Ecologist Dave Hays conducted a total of three workshop sessions at the Lands Division winter meeting in Yakima (October 12-13) on “Collaborating with the Diversity Division.” There was good participation in all three sessions and we will be following up on several excellent suggestions and identifications of ways that we could work more effectively on lands management on our wildlife areas.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area – Bighorn Sheep: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Dingman located bighorn sheep and submitted the locations using the Survey123 app.

W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area – Floodplain Management Plan (FMP): Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Dingman participated in the two FMP public informational meetings in Richland (eight people attended) and Dayton (six people attended) this week. She also participated in the FMP monthly meeting in Dayton. The 60% designs for Rainbow Lake were the focus of the monthly meeting. We are still working on getting the necessary permits. Dingman typed up the comments/questions from the public meetings and answered the questions. Once the FMP group approves the answers, the document will be posted on the FMP website and emailed out to the interested parties. She posted the updated Rainbow Lake reconfiguration poster on the FMP website.

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

Black Lake Access Site Pile Burn: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Palmer and Natural Resource Technician Christensen assisted Access Manager Dan Dziekan with burning a forest debris pile that had accumulated on the parking area of the access site at Black Lake. The pile first appeared in the fall of 2015, presumably from clean-up efforts following a severe wind storm in the surrounding area. However, the pile kept growing throughout 2016, so the team acquired a burn permit from the Department of Natural Resources in order to get rid of it and curtail further accumulation. The team used a tractor and hand work to push and throw the pile together to achieve complete clean up. Palmer and Christensen checked on the pile the following morning and threw it together for maximum consumption. The left photo below shows the pile just after ignition, and the right photo shows the pile nearly consumed.



REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Wolverine Survey: Biologists Fitkin and Heinlen, Science Technician Erlenbach, USFS staff members, and volunteers Bob Fischer and Apryle Craig deployed the back country sites for the interagency 4-State Wolverine Survey project. Additional sites in snowmobile accessible areas will be deployed later this winter. This effort seeks to define the current baseline distribution of wolverines across the four-state (Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming) project area and contributes to the long term conservation and management of the wolverine in the lower 48 states.

Biologist Fitkin soaking in Pasayten Wilderness views

– Photo from WDFW



Multi-Carnivore Survey:

Biologist Fitkin pulled the last of the summer cameras deployed as part of a WSU project to develop a lynx occupancy model for the Okanogan Lynx Management Zone. These sites are also being used on a WDFW project to help refine methodology designed to survey for multiple carnivores simultaneously, with an emphasis on lynx and wolverine. Despite a slow start, the effort ended with a flurry of lynx detections on eight of the last 11 cameras retrieved.



Lynx photos from the Harts Pass area – Photos from WSU/WDFW remote cameras

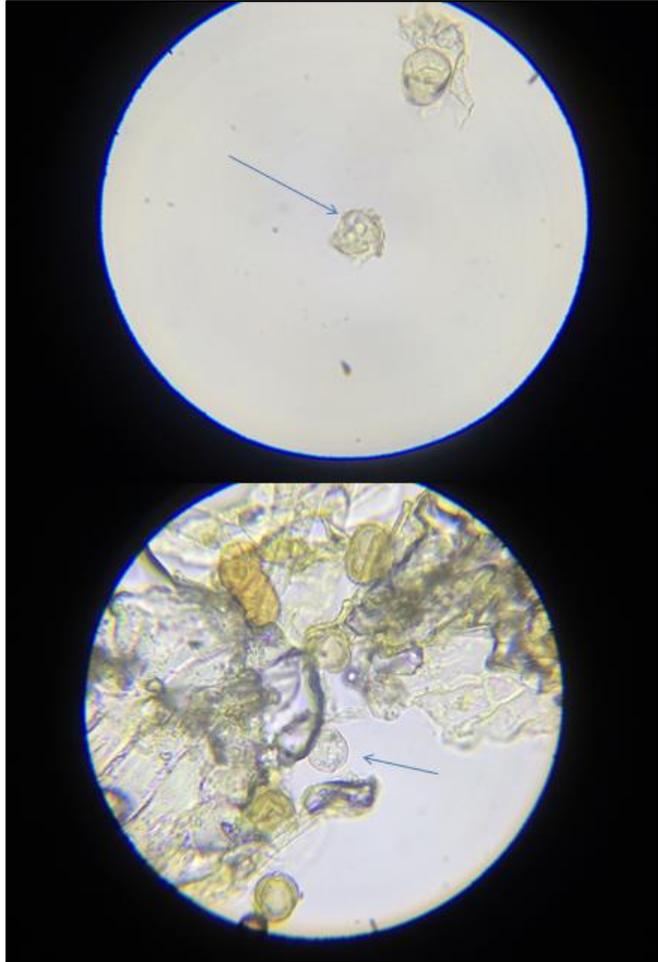
Pygmy Rabbit Disease Monitoring: Biologists Gallie and Gibbs, along with Veterinarian Haman, discussed additional protocols needed for disease monitoring, specifically coccidian (parasitic protozoan), which has been responsible for many mortalities the last couple of years. Regular monitoring of fecal samples will allow us to track its presence within the enclosure population, guide treatment applications, and help correlate other possible factors that contribute to outbreaks (rabbit density, drought stress?). Samples were collected from captured rabbits in all the enclosures in September and are now being analyzed by Biologist Gibbs. So far, samples from three of the four enclosures show few if any coccidia oocysts. Two samples that did turn up positive were both from the Beezley enclosure, where the outbreak has persisted. The number detected was not overly concerning.

Coccidia oocysts (blue arrows) under digital microscope – Pictures and graphic by Biologist Gibbs

Wildlife Areas

Columbia Basin Supplemental Feed

Route: Assistant Manager Bechtold supervised a WCC crew from October 6-13. The primary purpose of the crew was to assist in a native shrub planting project in the North and South Flood Flats. During this period, the crew planted approximately 5,000 shrubs and laid five miles of weed mulch, some by hand and some using a mechanical transplanter and mulch rolling machine. Also helping with the project were Assistant Manager Cole, Private Lands Biologists Dougherty and Comstock, Private Lands Manager Cotton, Assistant District Biologist Rowan, Technicians Steele, Quayle, and McPherson, and Worker Trump. Private Lands Technician Steele spent a significant amount of time assisting with site preparation and the initial planting efforts on this project. The success of this project will be owed in large part to his efforts and wildlife area staff members are extremely grateful for his time.





Row after row of shrubs and mulch –
Photo by Nick Bechtold

Following the departure of the WCC crew, Assistant Manager Bechtold, Private Lands Biologist Dougherty, Assistant District Biologist Rowan, Technicians McPherson and Steele, Access Manager Graves, and Worker Trump spent a day planting roughly 1,000 shrubs in the North and South Flood Flats and the Spud Field. Assistant Manager Bechtold disked and

packed the unplanted portions of the Flood Flat fields to prepare them for seeding. Assistant Manager Bechtold mowed approximately 20 acres of the Road 19 field in preparation for an herbicide treatment.

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

Wildlife Management

Columbia Basin Wetland Enhancement: Biologist Rowan met with Biologists Eidson, Cole, and Dougherty, Waterfowl Specialist Wilson, Lands Operation Manager Finger, and Ducks Unlimited to discuss current duck stamp and print projects and future funding necessities. Rowan worked on a NAWCA funding application, which would provide money to rectify water acquisition and retention problems in wetlands within the Winchester Game Reserve and Regulated Access Area. Rowan also worked on completing the SEPA checklist and Joint Aquatic Resources Permit application for the Frenchman Hills Regulated Access Area wetland project. Rowan began the Hydraulic Permit Approval application, and spoke with various other agencies about their permit requirements. The projects being funded are improving wetlands valuable to waterfowl, other wildlife, and hunters within the Ephrata District.

Winthrop Deer Check Station: Biologists Fitkin and Heinlen ran the Winthrop Deer Check Station for both weekends of the modern firearm season and checked 175 hunters with 45 deer (40 bucks, with 28% more than 4 ½ years old). These numbers suggest below average participation, but success rates for bucks (23%) and total deer (26%) were right at average for the seven years we've been running the check station at the Red Barn location. In addition to the deer, we also checked one cougar and two black bears, including one methuselah bruin probably 25+ years old that was likely radio-collared by Biologist Fitkin over 20 years ago as part of a research project at the time.



Very old black bear with old ear tag – Photo by Scott Fitkin



The results of a successful Methow hunting opener – Photo by Scott Fitkin

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

Wildlife Management

Ecology of the Okanogan – Okanogan High School: Manager Haug met with Okanogan High School's advanced biology teacher Kathleen Ferguson and the Conservation District's Kristen Cook at Driscoll Island as part of their Ecology of the Okanogan class. Manager Haug discussed the history and current management of the island. The group later collected invertebrates from the Okanogan River and took a variety of measurements to determine water quality. Manager Haug later spoke to the students regarding careers in the natural resources sciences and fielded questions related to being manager of the wildlife area.



Okanogan High School students entering Okanogan River to begin collecting data and students separating and identifying invertebrates from the river

Washington Waterfowl Association: Biologist Finger met with Jim Cortinez, President of the Washington Waterfowl Association, for a brief meet-and-greet and to discuss management challenges associated with waterfowl hunting opportunities in the Columbia Basin. Finger provided a summary of his knowledge of waterfowl distribution and patterns of use based on observations during winter aerial surveys conducted during November and January (midwinter inventory). Much of the discussion was centered on the influence of “corn clubs” on the distribution and abundance of mallards throughout publicly available hunting areas. Corn clubs are a source of frustration to many hunters because they function like reserves by drawing large numbers of mallards to an abundant food source with very limited hunting pressure. Corn clubs are far too expensive for the average hunter to participate and thus the opportunity to harvest birds favors those with deep pockets. On the flip-side, corn clubs provide energetic resources that potentially allow mallards to withstand winter conditions and remain at northern latitudes longer.

Wildlife Areas

Beebe Springs Unit: Manager Fox met again with Paul Willard of the Lake Chelan Trail Alliance to schedule trail maintenance on the Chelan Bob and Cultus Jim Trails. These trails, located on the east side of Highway 97, cover rather steep terrain connecting the main Beebe Springs area to another trailhead on Highway 150. Volunteers from the Lake Chelan Trail Alliance have started short efforts in the evenings after work and will have an upcoming Saturday effort. The group plans to trim back brush, hack off dead blackberry (killed by Natural Resource Technicians Vallance and Galvin), and work on a few small erosion issues on the trail. Natural Resource Technicians Vallance and Zabreznik both spent time applying herbicide to blackberries reemerging in the burned areas along Toad and Chinook creeks. Fall is an excellent time to get good control on this hated plant. Manager Fox is still working with Kat Kelly,

WDFW Archaeologist, on cultural resources review for the replacement of a fire-destroyed shed and upcoming interpretive sign installation at Beebe Springs.

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Colockum staff closed and locked the gate at West Bar and posted road closure signs at the end of the West Bar Road where it meets the Columbia River.

Signs posted at West Bar notifying the public of the seasonal road closure in effect

Grass Seeding: Manager Lopushinsky seeded native grass seed in the headquarters fields in an attempt to bolster the seeding done in these fields in 2014.



L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Babik met with Yakama Nation and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) biologists to discuss restoration plans along Taneum Creek adjacent to the Heart K property. USBR and WDFW will finish installing elk exclosures in spring 2017 to protect cottonwood recruitment. Discussions will continue on ways to reconnect the floodplain with Taneum Creek.

Taneum Creek along the Heart K property

Taneum Thinning Project: Manager Babik toured the Yakama Nation's Taneum thinning project with Habitat Biologist Nicolai to look at the prescription and discuss next steps of burning slash piles. Babik made recommendations for more downed wood between critter piles to provide cover for small mammals on the forest floor. Babik and Nicolai educated a hunting party near the thinning work and explained the rationale for removing the Yahne Bridge years prior. The hunters parted with a better understanding of restoration work.





Yakama Nation biologist standing next to a “critter pile” in a previously thinned forest

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman met on site at Snow Mountain Ranch with the Cowiche Canyon Conservancy and volunteers for a milkweed planting project. The goal of the project was to experiment with different methods of planting milkweed seed before a larger project starts in 2017.

Grouse Wing Collection: Manager Huffman collected grouse wings from the barrel at Oak Creek Road and delivered them to District Biologist Bernatowicz.

Posting Signs: Manager Huffman posted signs on the upper side for the rifle elk season public entry closure. It was a very wet day. Forest Mackey finished posting the closure along U.S. Highway 12 from Oak Creek Road to the junction.



No trespassing sign posted for the Oak Creek rifle elk season closure area



Old sign from range surveys probably conducted in 1955 near the closure boundary

Oak Creek RMAP Report: Forester Mackey finalized the 2016 Oak Creek RMAP report and submitted it to DNR. A big thanks to the Yakima construction shop and CAMP for helping get all of our remaining fish barriers removed this year. We are now in routine maintenance mode on the wildlife area.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Wildlife area staff members spent a fair amount of time on wetland management this week. Natural Resource Technician Medina and Natural Resource Worker Becker cleaned out the culverts at the north end of Giffen Lake and the Brady wetland with the JD backhoe. They fabricated a new grate for the culvert in the Brady wetland. Natural Resource Worker Becker checked water levels in the Johnson Wetland, Hay Stack Ponds, and the Rice Paddies, and serviced the pumps at Giffen Lake and the Snipes Reserve throughout the

week. Assistant Manager Kaelber cleaned out the culverts at the Phase 1 wetland at Windmill Ranch and the Stick wetland at the Bailie Youth Ranch.

Wildlife Management

Tiger Salamanders: District Wildlife Biologist Fidorra received several sighting reports of tiger salamanders in Franklin County. Many animals were moving across roads during rain events. Fidorra cataloged the sightings to be sent to WSDM, which had only a handful of old entries from the area.



Tiger salamander found near Connell

eBird: District Biologist Fidorra presented to the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society about eBird. The eBird database is a global citizen science project created by Cornell Lab of Ornithology that documents bird sightings. WDFW accesses eBird data for species distribution information. The goal was to foster increased interest in the project locally, and a follow-up workshop may be planned.

Wildlife Student Projects: District Biologist Fidorra coordinated with two grade school teachers who were looking for wildlife presentations. Fidorra agreed to meet with students to discuss specific projects related to bats and shrubsteppe species next month.

Injured White Pelican: District Biologist Fidorra and Sgt. Fulton responded to a report of an injured white pelican in Finley. U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) made the report and claimed the animal had been present for several weeks. The animal was located and captured after a short chase and transferred to a rehabilitation center. The animal was found to have been shot and will likely not recover.

White pelican x-ray showing rifle bullet (bright white oval) in abdomen



Pelican Survey Data: District Biologist Fidorra received the 2016 pelican survey data from Bird Research Northwest and submitted it with a complete history of pelican colony data to WSDM Manager Blatz as deliverables for the SWG grant program.

Ferruginous Hawk: District Biologist Fidorra contacted Olympia and researched past recovery plans in order to assist on the creation of a Ferruginous Hawk Action Plan.

Problem Flickers: District Biologist Fidorra worked with an apartment manager who was having issues with flickers digging into their units. The reporting party had a very poor experience enlisting help from a wildlife control operator (WCO) last season. Fidorra provided the reporting with suggestions and submitted the details of the WCO and reporting party to the Conflict Section.

Ferruginous Hawk Next Platforms: District Biologist Fidorra researched and provided information on ferruginous hawk nest platforms to a landowner who was interested in placing some on his property in Franklin County after a pair attempted to nest in his shed for a second year in a row, unsuccessfully.

Pronghorn: District Biologist Fidorra entered pronghorn sightings into the SharePoint database.

Sage Grouse: District Biologist Fidorra prepared and submitted a sage grouse summary for the upcoming grouse working group meeting. Fidorra is continuing to reach out to a few partners who have not yet submitted data from the 2016 lek counts.

Forest Grouse Wing Collection: Biologist Bernatowicz checked barrels and the condition of bags in Yakima County. October has been very wet, but the paper bags have generally stayed dry. Collections picked up a little during seer season. The total collection for the district is 100 wings.

Bighorn Sheep Sampling: Biologist Bernatowicz drafted letters to Clemans permit holders asking the hunters to collect samples for disease monitoring. Trapping/translocation is planned for this winter and if enough samples are submitted, no pre-translocation capture for sampling will be needed. WSU is also looking for samples as part of a research project. Hunters are already responding to the letter and sampling kits are being distributed.

Bighorn Sheep Paper: Biologist Bernatowicz finished a second round of edits/comments on a paper entitled “Management responses to pneumonia outbreaks in 3 Washington State bighorn herds: Lessons learned and questions yet unanswered.” The paper will be published proceeding the Northern Wild Sheep and Goat Council Conference. Section Manager Harris has taken the lead on incorporating reviews from numerous authors.

Deer Study: Biologist Bernatowicz listened for “missing” radio-collared deer while checking grouse barrels. Every fall a number of GPS collars stop reporting, especially in the Wenas Valley. Four of the “missing” 10 have been heard and signals indicate they are alive.

Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge: Biologist Bernatowicz looked at USFWS parcels for hunting opportunity. The refuge was purchased mainly to provide hunting opportunity. Record rains have fallen in October, but opening weekend only four of 22 blinds had water. By last week, the number of blinds with water had increased to 10. The western parcels (Halvorson, Webb, and Petit) have not been managed in the last year. The wetlands are completely choked

with vegetation and dry. Dove season has been open since September 1, but the parking areas were overgrown with weeds and walkthrough gates remained locked. Technically, hunters must park in the designated areas, which was not possible. Biologist Bernatowicz has tried to contact refuge staff members (annual call) to see what can be done to improve hunting opportunity. In



past years, the refuge was focused mostly on managing around the headquarters and units were closed to hunting. Two of the units without water or management are only open for hunting Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday.

The designated parking area on the Petit Unit of the Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge

Grouse Wing Collection: The wing collection barrels were checked and four wing-only samples came in.

District Wolf Reports: WDFW's online site and other online forums were checked for recent wolf activity across District 8. Only a few reports were noted and none of them had any substantial information associated with them.

Colockum Elk Age Estimates: Biologist Moore inventoried and sent off 97 samples to Matson's Laboratory for age analysis. The lab will perform Cementum Analysis on teeth samples collected during the 2014 and 2015 female body condition effort and the 2016 bull capture. The age estimates will be used to complete our database.

Bighorn Sheep Habitat Use Evaluation: Work on the forage evaluation for District 8's bighorn sheep habitat was continued. Time was spent attempting to identify areas of rock and talus using GIS data. Once these areas are identified they will be removed from the forage analysis. The data layers and analysis techniques evaluated were soils mukey, ecological systems data, vector ruggedness measure, benthic terrain modeler, and a model of escape terrain using the combination of slope and vector ruggedness measure. Overall, the most promising data was the soils mukey classification of the Rubble land-Rock outcrop complex, which was 10 to 90 percent slopes. These data worked well at capturing the major areas of rock, but did not identify smaller rock outcropping and talus slopes as well. A combination of data will potentially need to be used.



An ideal example in the Quilomene where the soils classification Rubble land-Rock outcrop complex, 10 to 90 percent slopes (highlighted in blue) identifies an area of rock with very little vegetation included

Yakima Elk Population Estimates:

The aerial survey portion of the population estimates were reviewed and sent off to hopefully be incorporated in next year's Status and Trend Report.

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

Wildlife Areas

Wenas Wildlife Area: Biologist Longoria attended a meeting organized by the hikers interested in the Manastash Ridge Trail planning. The group identified the members they wanted to put forth for the stakeholder's group and Longoria was able to address questions they had about the planning process.

Sheep Company Entrance: Staff members built a new hiker/horse gate to replace the existing gate at the Sheep Company entrance. It just needs a latch and the painting before it's ready to install. This single gate will be much easier than the current gate for the public to open and close, particularly those on horseback.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Babik created educational signage to notify the public of the upcoming thinning work in Taneum. A pre-commercial thinning project is slated to start November 4 and is in an area where hunters are known to travel. Natural Resource Technician Hill put up the signs near Shadow Creek on the Murray Wildlife Area. Hill put the signs up on the boundary of the project in areas where trails and roads lead into it.



New sign to inform hunters in the pre-commercial thinning project near Shadow Creek on the Murray Wildlife Area

Annual Kittitas Field and Stream Club Breakfast: Manager Babik gave a stack of road management maps to the Kittitas Field and Stream Club for their annual hunter’s breakfast at the Wild Horse Wind Farm Visitor’s Center. Babik also restocked the maps at the Ellensburg office. Maps are a hot commodity this hunting season.

Wildlife Management

Hunting Questions: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman responded to 12 hunter calls, nearly all with questions about hunting the Wild Horse Wind facility. Stutzman also compiled and provided information about the reservation system and Wild Horse to Sgt. Grant for dispersal amongst his officers.

PSE Hunter Breakfast: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman attended the hunter breakfast put on by PSE on Friday to provide information and answer questions about the Hunt by Reservation system.

Hunter Monitoring: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman was in the field for parts of two days monitoring hunter use at private lands access sites in Benton and Yakima counties and replacing signs as needed. Stutzman also surveyed the Finley corn stubble sites to determine where the parking areas should be.

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

Wildlife Areas

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technician Hill put new green dot markers with the road names on them in the Whiskey Dick Wildlife Area.

New green dot marker with road name on it



Wildlife Management

Elk Distribution: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand monitored elk distribution and movements in Elk Areas 3721 and 3722. Numerous groups of elk were observed outside of Hanford in the Corral Canyon area.

Elk and Deer Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand followed up on an elk and deer damage complaint to a wine grape vineyard in the Benton City area. Nonlethal methods such as LP gas cannons and active hazing were successful in minimizing damage impacts.

Rattlesnake Mountain: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand met with multiple landowners on Rattlesnake Mountain to discuss general elk season hunting opportunities and coordination.

DPCA: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand prepared new Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements and associated Damage Prevention Permits for three landowners in the Kahlotus area to address deer damage.

Elk Hazing: Conflict Specialist Wetzel worked with landowners, master hunters, and general hunters to move elk away from the Thorp area. Wet conditions hampered access to some elk locations, but elk harvest is increasing in the area.

Elk Herding: Conflict Specialist Wetzel was helped by L.T. Murray staff members Babik and Leuck to herd elk out of the High Ranches area and onto the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area. Eight cow elk moved onto the wildlife area, but the seven bulls residing at that location would not cross into the public land.

Elk Depredation Permits: Conflict Specialist Wetzel received calls again this week asking for elk depredation permits. Fewer permits will be issued since most have already been allocated.

Elk Complaint: A landowner in the Nile area called to complain about elk in the river bottom area, numbering about 100.

Elk Reported: A landowner in Naches called to report elk in his orchard. The elk are retreating during the day to the river bottom area, and number about eight.

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

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman received a phone call from a local rancher about gates on Hatton Road being locked, including the gate in the elk fence. Huffman worked with Lands Agent Hendrix on the easement for the elk fence and talked to landowners in the area about the gates being locked. Huffman was unable to contact the landowner who actually locked the gates. Currently there is no access to the elk fence for maintenance. Huffman drove to the area and confirmed that the gate in the stock fence east of the elk fence was locked.

Damaged Elk Fence: Manager Huffman received an email from the Region 3 office about elk fence down off of Old Naches Road. Huffman contacted the reporting party, who had a section of breakaway fence downed behind his house just east of the sheep feed site. Huffman checked the fence, finding the breakaway section down. The fence was stood back up and wired into place. It is likely that weeds piled up on the fence caused the wind to blow the section down.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Trail Cameras: District 14 set up remote trail cameras in the Ross Lake Area near Hozomeen. The trail cameras are operational over winter to monitor species composition in the areas. This is a long term cooperative project between WDFW and the North Cascades National Park.



Photo taken from Ross Lake

White-nose Syndrome Monitoring, Bat Health, and Bat Conservation: District 12 and Olympia staff members continued surveillance efforts regarding fall/winter/early spring bat activity via passive acoustic work. Anderson is working with Wildlife Admin staff members on an agreement with U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) for use of their equipment to help provide for this work. Anderson participated in ongoing internal staff meetings and planning efforts.

The base of a talus slope and creek where acoustic monitoring has been implemented. If you can't see the recorder, that's good, as that's the point

– Photo by Biologist Anderson



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

Agency-wide Citizen Science Meeting: Biologist Anderson participated in an agency-wide discussion of citizen science hosted by Citizen Science Coordinator Connally. Discussions centered around defining citizen science efforts, standardization, pros/cons, use in the agency, and next steps – among many other facets that need examination and agency-wide work to help boost the excellent groundwork that Connally has laid down for initiation of such efforts.



A high school student spending a day in the field with Biologist Anderson as a volunteer to assist with monitoring efforts, providing “extra eyes” to accomplish a survey. Although not “citizen science,” per say, volunteer assistance and trained survey/reporting in wildlife observations greatly increase the capacity of the agency in providing for duties given staff shortages. These efforts are, however, not an end all, save all solution, depending on the work – Photo by Biologist Anderson

Permits and GMA Assistance: Biologist Anderson provided response to wildlife take permits and some land use assistance to Habitat Program. More work is needed to catch up with these items given the field work being conducted.

Vole Habitat Inventory: District 13 took advantage of breaks in the rain to scout locations that support Townsend’s voles. Assessments were conducted by searching for telltale runways voles construct in marshes and grasslands. Selected sites will be trapped as weather permits to obtain a few specimens to compare to specimens of voles found in the San Juan Archipelago.

Invasive Species: District 13 prepared a briefing paper on recent initiatives performed by regional staff members in tracking and trapping prohibited invasive species in the region.

Wildlife Areas

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with the WDFW Noxious Weed crew to provide herbicide treatment to knotweed growing on the Ebey Slough dike. Knotweed has been spreading along the dike and treatment is necessary to prevent the weed from establishing elsewhere in the unit. Drainage District 1 provided the mechanical treatment (crushing and mowing) earlier this summer to reduce the vegetative biomass to a level suitable for effective spraying.

Corson Preserve: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm completed the annual RMAP progress report form and forwarded it to WDFW Forester Richard Tveten.

Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw met with Ducks Unlimited to review information needed for project permitting. An archaeologist completed a cultural resource review of the site and is preparing a report for permitting. Ducks Unlimited will complete a wetland report and critical areas review this week. Brokaw provided recent aerial photography to help with the wetland report.



Aerial photo of the Leque Island area taken on 9/16/16

Wiley Slough Adaptive Management: Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton, Habitat Planner Friebel, and Program Manager Link met with Engineers Glenn Gerth and Ray Berg to develop a plan to fortify levee infrastructure constructed during the 2009 restoration project. Following the meeting, the group requested funding through two different capital budget avenues.

Spencer Island Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Habitat Planner Theresa Mitchell met with Congressman Rick Larsen, Army Corps of Engineers, and Snohomish County to discuss a conceptual design for further restoration at the Spencer Island Unit. The group did a walking tour of the site.

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

Wildlife Management

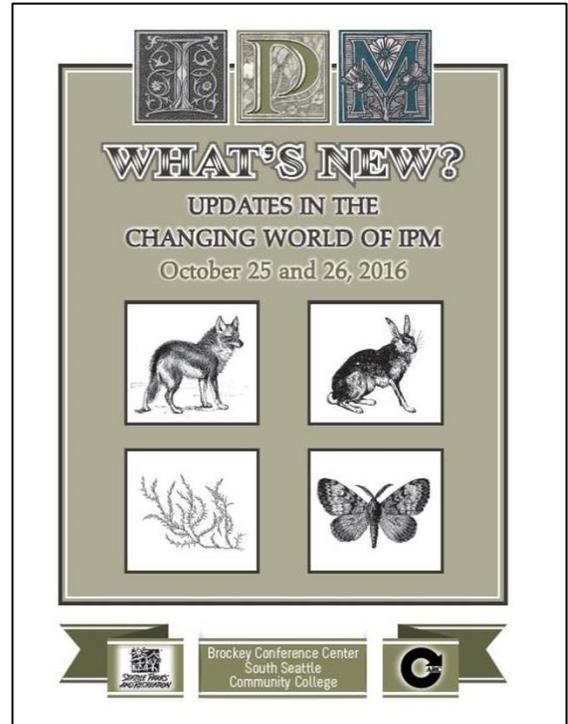


A pie-bald black-tailed deer in GMU 454. Yep, they are out there – Photo courtesy of citizen report



A successful buck taken from Island Center Forest on Vashon Island – Photo submitted from King County

Wildlife Conflict Reduction: Biologist Anderson provided a continuing education class to Seattle Parks' hosted annual Integrated Pest Management WSDA recertification program. Anderson covered wildlife conflict reduction techniques, regulations, and references, and took questions from an audience of about 175 landscape professionals from 17 cities, counties, or private organizations. Anderson was also interviewed by Outside Magazine regarding a similar topic of urban wildlife conflict.



Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman was contacted by an appreciative hunter who was able to harvest an elk on private property in the Acme/Saxon area experiencing elk related damage

Marine Waterfowl Surveys: District 13 discussed training needs, personnel issues, equipment needs, and scheduling with the Marine Waterfowl Survey Specialist for the

upcoming winter survey season. These long-term surveys are used to collect trend data on hunted and non-hunted marine waterfowl species for use in management decisions.

Wildlife Areas

Pheasant Team: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with staff members and volunteers to continue managing the pheasant program for the 2016 general pheasant season. The volunteer effort was very limited due to the annual deer hunt and waterfowl openers. 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.

Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA) BP Planting Project: The Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association held a habitat enhancement planting project on the BP Unit. Manager Kessler coordinated with NSEA to make sure there were no conflicts with the

waterfowl or pheasant hunting onsite. He created and posted warning signs, and monitored the hunting during the project. There were no reported problems.

Tennant Lake Waterfowl Hunting: Manager Kessler coordinated with the park manager for Whatcom County Parks on the boardwalk closure and waterfowl hunting at Tennant Lake. Kessler also checked the beaver dams in the channel.

Hamilton Landing Boat Launch Design Grant: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Capital Asset Management Program (CAMP) Engineer John Hansen completed a site visit to evaluate the feasibility of a boat launch and parking facilities at the Hamilton landing site on the lower Stillaguamish River near Leque Island. Brokaw finished a grant application to request funding for the project.

View looking upstream at Stanwood's Hamilton landing site, which is proposed to be the site of a new boat launch



Island Unit: Four reserve signs were posted on the western side of the Skagit Delta Game Reserve and the buoy located at the mouth of Deep Water Slough was checked. Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove and Natural Resource Specialist Meis installed stop-logs in the two water control structures on the Island Unit to hold water in fields and ponds. Cosgrove monitored water levels, hunter use, and waterfowl use on the Island Unit throughout the week. Sheet water has formed in most fields and ducks have begun to feed on ponded areas of millet and barley. Cosgrove toured the Island Unit with an Enforcement officer. Three hunting parties were checked. Meis and Cosgrove removed four large alders that fell across a dike on the Island Unit during recent wind storms.

Samish Unit: Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove monitored water levels and manipulated water control structures at the Samish Unit to increase sheet water in ponds and fields. Ducks have been feeding in barley in at least two fields. Meis and Cosgrove installed and brushed up a second portable blind at the Samish Unit located on the eastern edge.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

National Hunting and Fishing Day 2017: Coordinator Dazey led the 2017 planning team on a sight visit of the 2017 National Hunting and Fishing Day venue. Following the tour, the planning committee met and established assignments and set some planning deadlines. The venue lays out very well for a truly great day next September.

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 coordinated with a private landowner in the Rockport area of Skagit County to install an “Air Dancer” in an effort to deter elk from agricultural crops. Witman responded with WDFW Enforcement to address a private landowner’s concern about an elk harvested on neighboring property that expired on his property. The landowner wanted his neighbors notified that hunters will no longer be allowed to enter his property to recover any harvested animal. Witman and Officer Vincent made the appropriate notifications to the neighboring landowners.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman checked elk activity in Day Creek and noted conditions on an unharvested corn crop that has experienced elk related damage. Later, Witman responded to a WildComm report of a deer fawn frequenting a property for several days in the Day Creek area. Upon arrival, the fawn had left the area and the landowner was advised not to interfere with the wellbeing of the animal and to call back if the animal appeared in distress. Witman also met with a landowner in the Acme area of Whatcom County who has been experiencing elk-related damage to his crops throughout the year. The landowner was issued a damage permit to address the situation.

Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell coordinated with Wildlife Conflict Specialist/Assistant District Biologist Smith about a deer-related conflict in King County. The conflict has been an ongoing issue since 2015. Caldwell and Smith will work with the landowner next week on future mitigation efforts.

Natural Resource Technician Cogdal assisted a Skagit Valley college student with installing the “Air Dancer.” The student is working on the project with funding assistance from the Stillaguamish Tribe.



Wildlife Areas

Fir Island Farm: Manager Rotton coordinated with IMCO for access and repair of the boom logs in front of the No Name Slough tidegates. Rotton also provided information to IMCO regarding the Wiley Slough pump station clinoid switches for the pump oil reservoir.

Skagit Wildlife Area staff members posted the Fir Island Farm Unit on the western section from the new dike breach adjacent to the Hit and Miss Gun Club property. Five reserve signs and one buoy were posted within this section of the unit. Cosgrove and Meis reset closed area signs and game reserve signs on the new dike line.

Island Unit: Downed trees from the dike top trail were removed on the Island Unit. Staff members placed stop log boards in both tidegate structures on the Island Unit to hold accumulated water. Natural Resources Technician Cosgrove fueled boats and the red Chevrolet stationed on the Island Unit. Cosgrove posted four Game Reserve signs to better demarcate the boundary of the Skagit Estuary Game Reserve.

Johnson DeBay's Slough: Natural Resources Technician Cosgrove posted five "No Entry Beyond This Point" signs on the fence surrounding the game reserve parking area at the Johnson/DeBay's Slough Unit. These replace signs stolen over the summer.

Skagit Headquarters: Natural Resources Specialist Meis posted additional safety zone and boundary signage between the Headquarters Unit and the Wiley Farm along Wiley Slough. Manager Rotton continues to coordinate with pheasant volunteers for the pheasant release this season. Manager Rotton is monitoring pump operations and requested a meeting with CAMP to discuss the final items needed for the transfer of the pump station to Dike and Drainage District #22.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey sent out two new instructor applicant packets. Dazey also activated five new classes. Dazey answered many questions from instructors, including how to deal with firearm restricted students in the class. Coordinator Dazey delivered supplies to a teaching team and assisted them at a brand new venue in Woodinville. The venue will work very well for classes. The venue includes a dedicated field course trail for hunter education. Dazey secured the venue for the upcoming master hunter orientation presentation. The 2016 orientation was so well received that we will be conducting another orientation this coming February.

Volunteer Coordination: Volunteer Coordinator Dazey assisted Coordinator Garcia to publish the second master hunter/volunteer newsletter. The newsletter is designed to make better use of our volunteer pool and to assist wildlife area managers with tapping into that resource by publishing the needs of the wildlife areas. The master hunters can see available opportunities and more volunteer work can be accomplished.

Volunteer Outreach: Coordinator Dazey presented to a club at the Snoqualmie School District. Dazey was able to inform the students of the importance of supporting WDFW both as volunteers and also to ensure they understood the work WDFW does for all wildlife. The students and parents in attendance were very interested in what the department does and the parents asked many follow-up questions on how to become more involved.



Snoqualmie after school club

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

Wildlife Management

Aircraft Safety: District 13 worked on suggestions for increasing the effectiveness and applicability of the training and prepared equipment for upcoming ditching/egress training.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Mandatory Annual Training: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey completed the mandatory annual fire extinguisher training.

REGION 5

No report submitted this week.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Fisher Camera Stations District 15 Wrap Up: This is the final year of a multi-agency, collaborative effort to document fisher presence on the Olympic Peninsula. As one participant in this effort, Biologist Murphie established nine camera/bait stations within three survey blocks located in District 15 during the 2016 survey season. He removed the last set of these camera stations on Saturday, October 30. Biologist Murphie reports that although 2,629 photos were taken, none included a fisher. Several other species were detected, including opossums, spotted skunks, rabbit, bear, Stellar’s jay, cougar, bobcat, turkey vulture, grouse, squirrel, American robin, deer, a black Labrador retriever, a hunter, and a few small, unidentified mammals.

Fisher Check #2 in District 17: Biologist Michaelis conducted the second of three fisher camera checks in areas near the city of Hoquiam. Photos from two stations have been viewed and no fishers were detected. A photo of a weasel was taken. Very few photos of mustelids, with the exception of the spotted and striped skunk, have been taken. This may suggest either the

elusiveness or lack of presence of fisher in portions of industrial timber lands, publically owned lands, and other lands in the southwest Olympic Peninsula.

Orphaned Cougar Kittens: Biologist Murphie assisted Officers Hillman and Davidson and Conflict Specialist Blankenship with the capture of two orphaned cougar kittens near the town of Joyce. The reporting party indicated they had seen the young kittens near their home daily for about three days prior to contacting WDFW. Responding to the call, WDFW easily found the 3-4 month old kittens hiding under a log in a nearby stand of trees. Although evasive, both kittens were readily captured by hand after a short chase. The kittens were in reasonably good health and were later transferred to the Minnesota Zoo for long-term care. A third kitten was found dead at the scene, while the disposition of their mother is unknown.



Officer Davidson carries one of the orphaned cougar kittens out of the woods in Joyce



Two orphaned cougar kittens in a temporary holding box after capture in Joyce

Snowy Plover: Biologist Sundstrom met with WNWR Biologist Ritchie and finalized the 51 snowy plover nest cards from this season. Sundstrom also finalized the nest cards from Midway Beach (40) and Graveyard Spit (27). A previous report of 113 nests did not include undiscovered nests or a single nest located on an island in Willapa Bay. Nest cards for undiscovered nests are created when a brood is located that cannot be attributed to or assigned to any known hatched nest. A grand total of 118 nest cards have been finalized.

Mazama Pocket Gopher: Biologist Butler continued visiting Mazama pocket gopher set-aside areas to assess habitat conditions. Mazama pocket gophers are state and federally listed as threatened, with one their greatest threats being habitat loss. Mazama pocket gophers live in the prairies of the South Puget Sound. They prefer well-drained soils without high clay content. They also prefer relatively open areas with short vegetation and few woody and invasive plants like scotch broom.



Mazama Pocket Gopher: Biologist Butler worked with Biologist Olson and two other Mazama pocket gopher crew members trapping pocket gophers to remove radio collars on a unit of the Scatter Creek Wildlife Area. This was part of a study examining the effects of fire on Mazama pocket gophers. It was a beautiful day out on the prairie and three collared gophers were successfully trapped.



Oregon Spotted Frog Habitat Management – Salmon Creek: Biologist Tirhi met with volunteer Bonnie Blessing to review and revise an ALEA application for funds to continue to pay for volunteer-driven restoration of the Salmon Creek Oregon spotted frog oviposition site. The money received in 2014 was used to pay for volunteer equipment, food, and site supplies for the control of invasive reed canary grass and native plant replacement. Approximately 20 volunteer work parties of various sizes were held in 2015-2016 using the ALEA funds to conduct this important management work for federally and state listed spotted frogs.

Lucky the Calf Elk: Conflict Specialist Blankenship received a report of a calf elk walking down a residential street in Buckley. Homeowners in the area were concerned because the calf elk was acting lethargic and very tame. Homeowners in the area led the calf elk, now named Lucky, into their hay pasture where they provided it food and water over the weekend. Previous

reports indicated the calf was emaciated and lethargic the day before, but looked to be improving as it ate much of the clover in the small pasture.

The calf elk was very tame and habituated to humans at the time of Blankenship's arrival. Blankenship assessed the calf's body condition and behavior and determined that this elk could not be immediately relocated into the wild because it lacked basic behavioral and survival skills that would increase its chances of survival in a natural environment. Arrangements were made



with a wildlife rehabber in Rochester to transport and take the calf elk in for rehabilitation. After a couple of attempts to load the calf elk into a horse trailer by a lead rope, Blankenship ended up immobilizing the calf for transport to Rochester.

Homeowners in the area were very pleased with WDFW's response and look forward to visiting Lucky at the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in the near future.

Conflict Specialist Blankenship and Lucky getting acquainted

Deer with Arrow in Eye: Conflict Specialist Blankenship, with the assistance of enforcement personnel, has been tracking reports of a small black-tailed buck in Sequim near River Road with an arrow in its eye. For the past few weeks, WDFW has been getting reports of this deer from homeowners in the area. Blankenship has attempted to locate this deer on several occasions with no success. Recently, Blankenship located a small buck missing his left eye in the same location where a majority of the reports have been coming in. Blankenship is optimistic this is the deer WDFW has been getting reports on, as the deer matches descriptions and arrow location given by homeowners.

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

Wildlife Management

Citizen Science Working Group: Biologist Tirhi participated in a citizen science brainstorming meeting hosted by Citizen Science Coordinator Connally. Team topics included the creation of citizen science best management practices, volunteer management, data collection and repository, role and purpose of citizen scientists versus volunteers, and the creation of a permanent working group. Tirhi is currently co-leading four citizen science projects.

Waterfowl Hunting – Rapjohn Lake, Pierce County: Biologist Tirhi inspected two hunting blinds on Rapjohn Lake in Pierce County. The blinds were constructed by WDFW and the Washington Waterfowl Association Pierce County Chapter several years ago to increase hunting safety and reduce hunting opposition by landowners bordering the lake. Since the installation of the blinds, Biologist Tirhi has had no complaints by locals. Waterfowl hunting on the lake is only legal from within the blinds, with gunfire aimed towards the lake (and away from uplands and

housing). Tirhi comprised a list of minor repairs needed on the blinds, which she will schedule in November.



Rapjohn Lake hunting blind #1 (inside and outside), including a sign advising hunters to respect the blind to maintain hunting on the lake

Hunter Checks and Interviews: Biologist Michaelis spent a large portion of Saturday collecting hunter information for an upcoming proposal to be submitted to the Washington Recreation and Conservation Office. Good numbers of hunters were contacted in an area along the western and central portions of Game Management Unit (GMU) 648 - Wynoochee. Many other questions were answered, as it relates to private timber company lands. No deer were checked and this was most likely the result of the weather over the prior two days.

Dusky Goose: Biologist Sundstrom worked Saturday of the general goose season in parts of Pacific and Grays Harbor counties. It was bluebird weather in Pacific County, where no active goose hunters were found. A bit of fog layered portions of Grays Harbor for part of the morning, which may have assisted hunter success where six geese were checked before noon (Cacklers, Aleutians, Taverner's).

Dusky Goose Survey #1 – Repeat: Biologists Michaelis conducted a repeat of dusky Canada goose survey #1. A total of 69 dusky (two marked) were observed. Other dark geese were determined and assumed to be resident dark geese. This assumption is determined by the presence of collars and historical site fidelity through recent population estimates derived in cooperation with USFWS. Later in the year, this becomes an important factor to consider, especially if a mark-recapture technique is used to estimate over-wintering dusky numbers.

Many other sub-species, such as Aleutian Canada geese, were observed. The timing of their migration appears to be earlier compared to that of the dusky migration pulse. Their numbers and presence can be high, especially in central/south Pacific County. Agricultural lands are easy areas to make these observations and a large group was observed on property owned by the City of Illwaco.

Grouse Wing Barrels: A total of four grouse wing barrels have been deployed throughout the Olympic Peninsula. The grouse wing barrel near the Mill 5 site has been the most productive so

far. Two other sites are on public lands and may produce more wings once the upcoming elk season comes on.

Private Lands /Conflict

Forestlands: Natural Resource Technician Cain checked private timberlands open to motorized public access in GMU 658. Overall trash was minimal. She did find a landing with significant target trash that she picked up. While in the area, she checked beaver deterrence efforts. No recent activity was discovered. She opened two small dams next to the road. One was located by Biologist Harris the week prior and the other he missed. She installed hide strips on them. She also spoke with a few hunters in the area.



Cleaned up landing

Wildlife Conflict

Suburban Bear: Biologist Harris and Technician Cain responded to a reported bear in Ocean Shores. The reporting party left a long message with Biologist Harris that included the address but no phone number. As this was in the area where he has been expecting a call, they made a site visit. Turns out the reported sighting was two weeks ago. The reporting party claimed the bear was being fed. After more discussion, they determined this was a neighborhood dispute and since there were no recent reports of the bear, no action was taken. The reporting party was advised to remind neighbors to remove food sources in case the bear comes back.

Natural Resource Technician Cain spoke to a reporting party in Long Beach about bear problems. Apples had not been removed from trees and a bear and some coyotes had found them. The reporting party cleaned up the apples and was advised that it may take a few days for the critters to move on.

Landowner Contacts: Natural Resource Technician Cain delivered permits to several producers in Willapa Valley and delivered a DPCA for signature. While in the valley, she checked a high priority area for elk use. She observed a little elk sign, but noted significant deer activity.



Producer's haylage field with no recent elk sign

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

Wildlife Management

Customer Service: Biologist Novack answered multiple customer service questions regarding ongoing hunting seasons, pheasant releases, and hunting pigs in Washington.

Sportmens Show Planning: Biologist Novack attended the first organizational meeting for agency attendance at the Sportmen's shows across Washington early next year. He developed a draft of potential survey questions for black-tailed deer hunters in Washington.

Elk Conflict Issues

1. Conflict Specialist Blankenship participated in a conference call with Director Unsworth, senior Wildlife Program staff members, and Senator Pam Roach and her constituents to discuss elk conflict in Buckley and Enumclaw.
2. Conflict Specialist Blankenship set up a project on CERVIS to gain volunteers to assist with a ground elk survey in Buckley and Enumclaw. Blankenship addressed questions and helped enroll several volunteers.
3. Conflict Specialist Blankenship checked a cow elk harvested by a landowner dealing with crop damage by elk in Mason County. The cow looked very healthy and showed no signs of any hoof deformities.

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

Ongoing Training: Natural Resource Technician Cain spent time on assigned reading. She has been reading a "Living with Bears" handbook by Linda Masterson and "Responding to Human-Bear Conflict and Capture-Handling of Black Bears" by Rich Beausoleil and Carl Lackey.