

Wildlife Program – Bi-weekly Report

May 1 to May 15, 2019

DIVERSITY DIVISION

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) **Managing Wildlife Populations**

Northern Leopard Frog Recovery: In early May, Biologists Hallock and Rowan continued to search for eggs masses. No leopard frog males were heard calling, older leopard frog egg masses were hatching and no new egg masses were found. These observations suggested that the breeding season was over. Subsequent spring fieldwork will focus on aquatic funnel trapping to capture tadpoles. Biologist Grabowsky will lead this effort with support from regional staff members.

Back in the office, Biologist Hallock focused on other aspects of the reintroduction and recovery work including correspondence with partners and initial discussions about upcoming habitat work at Columbia Basin Wildlife Area. Overgrowth of tall emergent vegetation creates large areas of unsuitable habitat for the leopard frogs. This year and next, recovery actions will include management of this vegetation on the north shoreline of 31 targeted ponds to improve an estimated 100 shoreline acres of potential leopard frog breeding habitat. This effort will be led by regional staff members with consultation from the larger recovery team to make sure that vegetation treatment options do not put the leopard frogs at risk. This project is funded by a Competitive State Wildlife Grant (C-SWG) that was awarded for northern leopard frog conservation and recovery in Washington, Idaho, and Canada.



Northern leopard frogs in Washington come in two color variations with either a brown background (brown morph) or a green background (green morph). These colors are genetically determined by a dominant (green morph) and recessive gene (brown morph) -

Photos by L. Hallock.

Red Knot Conservation: Natural Resource Scientist Buchanan organized and led several visits to Grays Harbor to scan for leg flags on migrating red knots. This effort emphasized evaluation of a protocol to scan for flags on knots present at high tide roost sites. Data will be shared with a partner at U.S. Geological Survey for assessment.

Short-eared Owl Surveys: Natural Resource Scientist Buchanan continued his role as Washington coordinator of the Western *Asio flammeus* Landscape Survey (WAfLS). The survey season concluded in the first week of May and the emphasis now is to facilitate online data entry by volunteers. This project is in its second year and has involved hundreds of volunteers across eight western states.

Tufted Puffin Recovery Plan: Biologist Stinson made revisions to the to the tufted puffin status review and recovery plan, based on public comments submitted during the 90-day comment period, and internal review. Stinson also contributed to comments about the potential for impacts to foraging puffins from underwater explosions described in the Navy's Northwest Training and Testing supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Status reviews: Biologist Stinson continued work on the draft status report of the Oregon vesper sparrow, another declining west-side prairie species, recently petitioned for Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing by a conservation organization.

Snowy Plover Surveys: Biologist Stinson assisted Region 6 personnel (A. Novack, C. Sundstrom, W. Michaelis, and L. Bauernschmidt) and USFWS (W. Ritchie, A. Kotaich) for the first round of the breeding window survey on Midway (Grayland) Beach. A good number of plovers, including color-banded individuals, and males minding chicks were present.

Bog Beetle training: Biologist Chris Sato hosted a training session for WDFW district and habitat biologists on surveying for Beller's ground beetle and Hatch's click beetle. Both species are state candidates. They are *Sphagnum* bog obligates and, until last year's surveys, were considered rare. 2018 survey results and early 2019 efforts point to the likelihood that these species are locally abundant and constrained only by habitat availability. Coleoptera expert James LaBonte began the training



Mating Beller's ground beetles

with a discussion on bog beetle ecology and conservation status, followed by a visit to Kings Lake Bog Natural Area Preserve just north of Snoqualmie. Biologists Milner, Anderson, C. Moore, Hamer, Leigh and Henry were present. Although Kings Lake Bog is a type locality for both Beller's and Hatch's, and both species were found here last year, we did not detect either one on this visit. The rainy conditions probably limited beetle activity; however, the site visit provided a great opportunity for folks to familiarize themselves with ideal bog beetle habitat and develop a search image for tiny things. Bog laurel was in full bloom, and a good time was had by all.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Nothing for this reporting period.

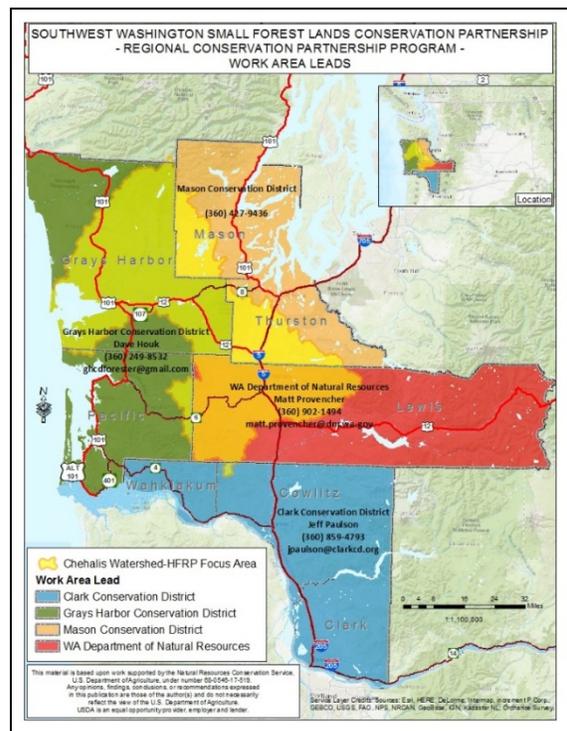
3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Nothing for this reporting period.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Regional Partnership Brings Assistance to Southwest Washington Forest Landowners:

Farm Bill Coordinator Mike Kuttel, Jr. facilitated a meeting of the partners of the Southwest Washington Small Forest Lands Conservation Partnership in Chehalis. This effort is part of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and covers eight counties. The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC), Washington State University Extension (WSU Ext.), WDFW, and eight conservation districts are collaborating with NRCS to deliver the program. The RCPP is voluntary and incentive-based. Funding from NRCS leverages funding from the state agencies to pay four stewardship foresters to provide technical assistance and a WSU Ext. Forester to provide outreach and education. After encountering many challenges that delayed rollout of the partnership (e.g. the 2017 Capital Budget impasse), the partners have completed all agreements and hired staff to provide technical assistance to forest landowners. Financial assistance from NRCS and state programs is available to implement stewardship practices to improve forest health, water quality, and wildlife habitat. Cost share is available through NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). The Family Forest Fish Passage Program (FFFPP) through DNR is available to correct fish passage barriers. Forest conservation easements through the NRCS Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) are also available. This program may provide regulatory predictability to forest landowners who conserve habitat for marbled murrelet, northern spotted owl, or fisher. For more information, please visit our [web app](#).



5) Providing Education and Outreach

AgForestry Leadership Presentations: Environmental Planner Jeff Azerrad, District Wildlife Biologist Eric Holman along with Wildlife Area Manager Daran Hauswald presented to a group of approximately 25 students enrolled in AgForestry's leadership course. Azerrad's presentation focused on WDFW's outreach efforts to find mutual conservation related goals among forest and

farmland owners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and governmental agencies. Holman's material included information on the ways in which WDFW interacts with forestland owners to implement WDFW management and research activities in support of both hunted and diversity species. Hauswald took to the field and visited WDFW managed forestlands highlighting the recent Merrill Lake acquisition and WDFW's forestry activities to promote robust wildlife habitat. The educational undertaking is designed to build skills among those involved in natural resource management especially in rural communities. For more information on AgForestry, or to nominate a prospective student for the course, please see their website at <http://agforestry.org/>

6) **Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Nothing for this reporting period.

7) **Other**

Nothing for this reporting period.

GAME DIVISION

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) **Managing Wildlife Populations**

Washington Beaver Relocation Pilot: We have issued eight permits under the new Washington State beaver relocation pilot. Once mitigation and tolerance options have been exhausted, these permittees are authorized to conduct beaver relocation as an alternative to lethal removal. The first draft of the beaver relocation pilot training manual has been arranged and is currently in review by the Beaver Working Group training sub-committee. This manual will be used for annual training of participants who have been issued permits to relocate beavers in Washington. Trainings will take place this summer and will cover topics including beaver biology, an overview of the pilot, policy, site and situation assessment (working with landowners), live-capture and handling techniques, annual reporting, and the permit application and conditions. The training manual, compiled by Small Game and Furbearer Biologist West, Statewide Human-Wildlife Conflict Specialist Caldwell, and Wildlife Veterinarian Haman, features a comprehensive synopsis of these categories along with additional resources and references.

Treponeme-associated Hoof Disease (TAHD): Hoof Disease Coordinator Garrison completed prevalence estimation summaries for TAHD in Washington. WDFW indexes TAHD prevalence by using mandatory hunter reporting, which allows managers to monitor changes in the disease's dynamics. In the core units of Mount St. Helens (GMUs 520, 524, 524, 550, 556) the estimate has declined every year since 2016 and generally remained stable throughout western Washington (table below). Coordinator Garrison will conduct additional analysis to estimate fine-scale spatial patterns in disease prevalence.

Table 1. Regional

	2016			2017			2018		
	N	Estimate ^b	95% CI	N	Estimate ^b	95% CI	N	Estimate ^b	95% CI
W. Washington	2494	0.15	0.14-0.16	2247	0.11	0.10-0.12	2728	0.11	0.10-0.12
E. Washington ^a	-	-	-	-	-	-	1939	0.01	0.01-0.01
Mount St Helens	958	0.23	0.20-0.26	688	0.17	0.15-0.20	758	0.18	0.16-0.21
MSH Core	447	0.40	0.36-0.45	290	0.32	0.27-0.38	324	0.27	0.22-0.32
North Cascades	25	0.08	0.02-0.25	27	0.11	0.04-0.28	51	0.18	0.10-0.30
North Rainier	323	0.03	0.01-0.05	305	0.04	0.03-0.07	426	0.07	0.05-0.09
Olympic	177	0.06	0.04-0.11	173	0.04	0.02-0.08	276	0.05	0.03-0.08
South Rainier	193	0.11	0.08-0.17	203	0.12	0.08-0.17	209	0.11	0.08-0.17
Willapa Hills	798	0.14	0.11-0.16	823	0.10	0.08-0.12	985	0.09	0.07-0.11

^aEastern Washington hunters were not included in 2016 and 2017 hoof disease reporting

^bWDFW does not confirm the disease status of hunter reports/harvest, and estimates are uncorrected for false negative rates.

Black-tailed Deer Research: Hoof Disease Coordinator Garrison assisted District 10 staff members with attempting to dart male black-tailed deer in the Mount St Helens area. The goal of this research is to develop monitoring tools for black-tailed deer and ultimately inform management of this important game species. Unfortunately, biologists did not have an opportunity to dart and collar any deer during these initial outings, but they saw plenty of deer and remain optimistic about their chances.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Nothing to report this period.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Managing Conflict with Humans and Beavers in Urban and Rural Communities: Statewide Human-Wildlife Conflict Specialist Caldwell co-presented on beaver management strategies with Small Game and Furbearer Biologist West to the Department of Ecology. Topics highlighted beaver ecology, mitigation strategies in urban and rural communities, and reviewed alternative options to managing beaver such as relocation.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Nothing to report this period.

5) Providing Education and Outreach

In early May, Hoof Disease Coordinator Garrison presented an overview of treponeme-associated hoof disease (TAHD) to a Leadership Thurston County class. The class is comprised of local community leaders with the objective to build local knowledge, relationships, and leadership skills. The presentation was well attended and Garrison received many thoughtful questions.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Beaver Working Group Meetings: Several members of the state's Beaver Working Group volunteered to form a sub-committee that will advise in training development. The sub-committee's second meeting was held and provided updates on the training program. The training's logistics (schedule, timing, and location) were discussed. A full Beaver Working Group meeting is also scheduled to meet in Olympia. We are extremely grateful for the engagement of our collaborative partners.

7) Other

Nothing to report this period.

HUNTER EDUCATION

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Nothing to report this period.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Nothing to report this period.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Region 6 Hunter Education Coordinator Montgomery continues to assist Dr. Harris with the Mountain Goat Translocation Project recruiting drivers.

Region 3 Hunter Education Coordinator Garcia sent out volunteer notification for several fencing repair and removal projects in the Kittitas and Yakima areas

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Nothing to report this period.

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Region 5 Hunter Education Coordinator Elliott, with the assistance of Region 6 Coordinator Montgomery, conducted the 2019 in-service training for hunter education instructors at the regional WDFW office in Ridgefield. Forty-five instructors attended. Presentations included WDFW lands history and management, statewide wolf management, WDFW law enforcement hunting incident investigation processes, Region 3 and Region 4 efforts, and instructor service awards. Instructor feedback showed that the topics were appreciated and valuable, though wolf management predictably sparked some strong opinions and controversy.

Region 6 Hunter Education Coordinator Montgomery held a pre service training in Montesano for six new instructors, three male and three female! The new instructors did really well and will be a great addition to our existing teaching teams.

Region 6 Hunter Education Coordinator Montgomery continues working with non-governmental organizations for events at National Hunt and Fish Day.

Region 4 Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey conducted an in-service training at the Region 4 office for hunter education instructors. Many good topics were presented and questions answered. Dazey also visited and previewed a new venue in Blaine Birch Bay. Whatcom County is currently under served and it is hoped that we will be able to build a team at this new venue that will increase the student capacity in Whatcom County. The venue has two classrooms that will accommodate up to 70 students total. The venue operator is also very interested in including women oriented classes at the site.

Region 1 conducted our annual in-service training session for hunter education instructors on May 11. Forty-five instructors attended. Topics covered included WDFW lands program, wolf management, accident investigations, and others. Presentations were excellent and well received by instructors. We are confident topics provided more insight for hunter education instructors to field student question and give both factual and beneficial information about department programs. Program Manager Dave Whipple attended the session and attendees were extremely happy to have an opportunity to interact with Dave.

Region 3 Hunter Education Coordinator Garcia assisted the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) and FHF with a two-day, women in the outdoors and youth turkey workshop at Camp Cowles near Diamond Lake. There were 10 participants to include seven adults and three youth. The workshop consisted of one full day of classroom and shooting range instruction on how to turkey hunt, followed by a mentored hunt. The participants and the volunteer mentors all rated the event very highly.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Region 4 Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey visited two hunter education teams to evaluate and to recognize instructors in those teams who had earned service time recognition. One team in Granite Falls is being led by a relatively new chief instructor and is doing a good job. The other team that teaches in Renton has been together for a long time. They have developed a few innovative teaching techniques and always put on a good class.

Region 4 Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey assisted the Region 6 coordinator in a visit to the team that teaches at University Place to answer questions about the on-line course and the online field skills evaluation. Trends and data were shared about the program and many questions posed by the team were answered.

7) Other

Nothing to report this period.

LANDS DIVISION

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Red Knot Survey: Les Holcomb and Russ Nunez spent several days taking individuals such as Joe Buchanan, Lori Salzer, Warren Michaelis, Taylor Cotton, Eric Gardner and Glynnis Nakai (USFWS Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge Complex) into Grays Harbor to survey for red knots and reading leg tags during their northern migration. The Willapa airboat had a steering rod break and the boat was left in the field to be fixed the following day.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Nothing to report this period.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Nothing to report this period.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

The 2019 Spring Prescribe Burn Season: The prescribed burn teams have been burning on WDFW lands since April 22 on the Sinlahekin, Sherman Creek and L.T. Murray wildlife areas. To date over 750 acres have been burned.



Prescribed fire on Sherman Creek Wildlife Area showing before on right, during in the background and after on the left

Prescribed Burning Training: The two-week Cascadia Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TREX) has been completed. The training helped teach students of fire how to reduce future risk of wildfires and restore the forest. The training also provided opportunities for students to learn planning, implementation, monitoring and fire behavior. Students participated from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Colorado, Montana, California, Maine, and British Columbia. The training took place on WDFW, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, and private ownership in central Washington.



TREX students after a long hard day of prescribed burning

Congressional Staff Visit Prescribed Burn: On May 9, congressional staff members visited a prescribed burn unit in central Washington to discuss prescribed fire and its benefits towards the environment and public safety. Congressional staff members were able to see firsthand the effects of a prescribed burn. To assist with information sharing, fire professionals from U.S. Forest Service (USFS), WDFW and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) were on hand to explain objectives, process, limitations, and budgetary factors involved in prescribed burning.

Blue Mountains Wildlife Area Complex: Range Ecologist Burnham, Wildlife Area Manager Dice, and Regional Program Manager Robinette met with personnel from Department of Ecology, including Chad Atkin. Ecology personnel were following up on an inquiry they had received about an apparently erroneous report concerning WDFW grazing permits on the Asotin Creek Wildlife Area. We discussed all of the permits on the complex, the distribution of surface waters and steelhead, and protective measures in the permits. We made tentative arrangements to meet in the field later this summer to observe general conditions and monitoring procedures.

Columbia Basin Wildlife Area: Range Ecologist Burnham joined Land Operations Manager Finger and Wildlife Area Manager Eidson on a field tour with an individual who is proposing a CRM-type grazing operation that would involve a portion of the wildlife area that has not been under recent permit. The group made arrangements to begin the next steps of determining whether this would be an appropriate/beneficial management action.

Forb Plugs Monitored: Vegetation Ecologist Merg made another monitoring visit to the forb plug trial on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. Only nine of the 307 marked individuals have died. Most of the rest appear to be thriving, with some in flower and receiving visits from pollinators. This result is promising so far. If we can maintain this success, plugs may provide an alternative to seed, from which we have struggled to establish stands of the forbs that provide crucial value to wildlife.



A Penstemon (Penstemon pruinosus) in flower already after having been planted last fall on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area

Weatherly Forest Restoration Project: Forester Ashiglar worked with Kat Kelly and Nez Perce Tribe archeologists Jen Chadez and Keith Baird to conduct an archeological survey on the Weatherly Forest Restoration Project. The fieldwork portion of the survey is nearly complete.

Ramsey Forest Restoration Thinning Project: Forester Mize met with Lynda Hoffman onsite to review project details, including silvicultural prescriptions, road management, stream buffers and bridge installation over Ramsey Creek. In addition, Forester Mize conducted a pre-work meeting with the harvesting services contractor, Garry Will and his assistant Ryan Stucker. The focus of the meeting was to coordinate details for the delivery of the bridge and review specific items in the contract and road plan. Cutting operations and pre-haul road maintenance started on May 13, and log deliveries are expected to begin by May 16 or 17. In addition, the contractor has requested bridge delivery for May 20, and Forester Mize has reached out to CAMP to coordinate details for delivery. Forester Mize also began establishing photo points throughout the treatment units to conduct pre-harvest and post-harvest photographic assessments.



Photo point 1 pre-harvest picture

Stemilt Forest Restoration Cultural Resources Survey and Harvester Pre-bid Tour: The Stemilt Forest Restoration project outside of Wenatchee is set to commence in June. The project will return the forest to more historical conditions that will enhance browse habitat for elk and deer and snag availability for cavity nesting birds. Water cycling will also be improved and fire risk reduced. Foresters Matt Ruggirello and Rod Pfeifle led a tour of the project area for prospective timber harvesters. Several potential logging contractors attended the tour. Harvesting contractor bids for the sale work are due in late May.

Foresters Ruggirello and Pfeifle, along with new agency archeologist Maurice Major and Colockum Wildlife Area Manager Lopushinsky and Assistant Hagen, accompanied archeologists from Cardno Inc. in conducting a pedestrian survey across the Stemilt project area in search of cultural artifacts. Areas with significant cultural resources have been recorded, and the lead archeologists on the project will be working on the written portion of this cultural resource survey in the coming weeks.



WDFW staff members assisting with the cultural resources survey on the Stemilt Restoration Project. Our assistance helps to keep WDFW contractor's fees lower while actively engaging our personnel in the cultural resources process.

Mount St. Helens Forest Thinning: WDFW staff members Forester Pfeifle, Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Assistant Manager Wildermuth, Forest Lead Tveten and Section Manager Dahmer met with lead U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Pittman Robertson Grant Manager Heather Hollis on a tour of the Mount St Helens Thinning Project to show how grant funds had been used to improve elk habitat and accelerate forest growth.



Thinned (left) versus unthinned (right) forest

5) Providing Education and Outreach

King County Council Panel Presentation: Land Stewardship and Operations Section Manager Dahmer participated on a panel of public and private landowners and county fire response entities presenting fire each entities suppression capacity, pre-wildfire land management, and post-wildfire restoration activities and coordination between entities. The council was very appreciative and will look further into opportunities working together to prepare for and respond to wildfire risk.

Public and Advisory Committee Meetings for Columbia Basin Wildlife Area Planning: Lands Planner Patricia Jatczak and Columbia Basin Wildlife Area Chad Eidson, and Rich Finger hosted the first meeting of the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area Advisory Committee. A good group with diverse interests, including waterfowl, irrigation, farmers, and climbers was convened on May 1.

On May 2, a public meeting was held to introduce the planning process and have an open house to receive input from the public about their use and concerns on the wildlife area. Of big interest at both meetings was recreation, especially on the Quincy Lakes Unit. We decided this would be a good topic to have in a special Wildlife Area Advisory Council meeting that also included more people from the recreating community sometime in the summer.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Joint Legislative Audit Review Committee Presentation: Land Stewardship and Operations Section Manager Dahmer reported the results of a yearlong effort, working in coordination with DNR and State Parks, to identify resources necessary to report stewardship needs of the three agencies to manage public lands. Staff members divided the analysis into three stewardship categories including natural resources, cultural resources, and recreation and infrastructure resources. The goal was to set the foundation for future legislative funding requests for land stewardship.

7) Other

North Puget Spartina Meeting: Weed management personnel attended the North Puget Sound Spartina meeting to discuss the 2019 field season with various state, county, non-profit, and tribal partners. Washington State Department of Agriculture announced that WDFW would not be receiving a contract for survey and eradication work for the new biennium resulting in decrease of \$80,000 to our Spartina budget.

Cultural Resource Training: Forester Ruggirello attended a cultural resources training course in Ellensburg put on by the Department of Transportation. The course included a mix of classroom and fieldwork. The field portion of the course included visits to a homestead and traditional village site near Vantage, as well as visits to the Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park and Olmstead State Park. Coordinating and assisting with cultural resource surveys is an essential part of WDFW foresters' work. Cultural resource surveys are often conducted before the agency conducts thinning projects to review project areas for culturally significant artifacts to record and/or bound out. This training enables our foresters to more fully understand and better meet our agency's cultural resources responsibilities.



The cultural resource training included a mix of classroom work and field tours, including visits to the ruins of a native village site and visits to the historic homesteads of early pioneer settlers

SCIENCE DIVISION

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Ungulate Research Scientist, Melia DeVivo responded to a white-tailed deer mortality in Stevens County. Researchers collared this white-tailed deer this past winter for the Washington Predator-Prey Project, which is investigating the impacts of predators on prey populations in northeast Washington. Collars deployed on deer are equipped with a mortality sensor that notify researchers when the animal is motionless for 10 hours. DeVivo determined that this doe was killed by a cougar and was likely at risk of predation due to an active chronic infection of her rear leg sustained from an old injury. Mortality investigations like this help us understand not only the direct cause of mortality, but also the ultimate circumstances that contribute to prey vulnerability to predators.



Research Scientist, Melia DeVivo examines a white-tailed deer carcass of a doe that was collared for the Predator-Prey Project and was killed by a cougar

2) **Providing Recreation Opportunities**

Nothing to report this period.

3) **Providing Conflict Prevention and Education**

Nothing to report this period.

4) **Conserving Natural Landscapes**

Nothing to report this period.

5) **Providing Education and Outreach**

Nothing to report this period.

6) **Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Nothing to report this period.

7) **Other**

Nothing to report this period.

REGION 1

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Internal Cougar Working Group: Wildlife Biologists Prince, Atamian, and Wik as well as Regional Program Manager Robinette attended a two-day internal cougar working group. The initial task of the group is to evaluate and potentially recommend changes to the current cougar hunting structure. The group will continue to meet frequently throughout the summer and have a recommendation by this winter. Members of the group include enforcement sergeants, district wildlife biologists, research scientists, section managers, and carnivore biologists.

White-Nose Syndrome Surveillance: White-nose syndrome (WNS) is a disease in bats caused by the fungus *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* (*Pd*). The disease has killed millions of hibernating bats in the eastern U.S. and has been detected in recent years in western Washington. As part of the statewide WNS monitoring plan, Biologists Atamian and Lowe captured and sampled bats from a large *Yuma myotis* maternity roost on Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Rock Ranch property in Lincoln County. None of the captured bats showed wing membrane damage, a sign of the disease. Each bat was also swabbed to test for presence of *Pd* fungal spores. BLM technicians as well as Dr. Krisztian Magori and several of his students from Eastern Washington University assisted with capture set up and data collection.



Harp trap set up to catch bats as they exit the roost structure (left) - biologists examine the wing of a Yuma myotis under UV light to check for Pd fungus (right)

Beaver reintroductions on W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area: Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Dingman read the application submitted by the Pomeroy Conservation District to participate in the Beaver Relocation Pilot Project. The conservation district is working with Ecological Research and landowner Chris Herres to try to establish beavers in upper Tumul Creek. They approached Dingman about setting up a pen at the W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area headquarters to hold the beavers for the quarantine period.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Sacheen Lake Volunteer Work: Maintenance Mechanic Dziekan met with volunteers at the Sacheen Lake Water Access Site for a site clean-up day. The focus of the project was to brush out along the fence line and remove litter. The volunteers, who all belong to the Sacheen Lake Homeowners Association, also installed a loaner life-jacket station. Dziekan ended up hauling out two loads of green waste removed from along the fence line, along with several bags of garbage.



Volunteers working hard to remove brush



A brushed-out fence line at Sacheen Lake



Loaner lifejacket station provided by the Sacheen Lake homeowners

Restroom Vandalism at W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area: Natural Resources Worker McKeirnan checked the lakes and adjusted as necessary. Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Dingman and Natural Resources Worker McKeirnan picked up trash around the lakes. Graffiti was found in the brand new outhouse at Blue Lake and Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Dingman assisted Access Technician Heimgartner with removing the graffiti and repainting the wall.



Graffiti in a brand new restroom near Rainbow Lake

W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area Rainbow Lake Gravel: The gravel was finally delivered this week! The dump trucks spread the gravel on the west dam from the emergency overflow to the gate. Natural Resources Worker McKeirnan began spreading gravel on the west dam between the outlet screen and the emergency overflow with a rented skid steer. Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Dingman sprayed weeds around Rainbow Lake with the backpack sprayer. McKeirnan cleared the brush away from the pedestrian crossing and disabled parking signs.



Gravel spread by dump truck on west dam of Rainbow Lake

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Peola Elk: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade continued to receive and respond to more reports of large numbers of elk finding their way through the elk fence and into the commercial crops in Peola. Over 100 elk have showed up in the Peola area over the last two weeks. Wade with the assistance of Private Lands Supervisor Earl distributed 50-pound salt/mineral blocks at the one-way gates along a heavily used section of the elk fence in an attempt to lure the back through the fence. While distributing the salt/mineral blocks Wade and Earl located two heavily used holes in the elk fence. Wade relayed information about the holes in the fence to Wildlife Area Manager Dice and Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Dingman repaired the fence. Wade will continue to attempt to haze the elk out of the crops and back inside the fence prior to calving season.



Holes in the Peola elk fence where elk have been crossing into commercial crops



Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade placing a salt block at a one-way gate in the Peola elk fence

Bear Concerns in Stevens County: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett and WDFW Enforcement addressed a bear concerns near Addy. Due to the property damage, a bear trap was set and will be monitored for the next few days or until a bear is trapped.



Setting a bear trap in Stevens County after a report of a bear in the area

Bear Concerns in Ferry County: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett and WDFW Enforcement addressed a bear concern near Kettle Falls. Due to the property damage, a bear trap was set and will be monitored for the next few days or until a bear is trapped.



Bear damage to a chicken coop in Ferry County

Bear Concerns in Pend Oreille County: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett contacted a new landowner near Ione with concerns of a bear sighting at her new home site. Information was provided and a site visit once the owner moves to the location in the coming weeks. Another bear concern was also addressed with a hard release of a bear that had been spending too much time in an area.



WDFW Enforcement Officer Kirsch and Karelian bear dog Jax prior to releasing a bear that had been hanging around an area

Bear Necessities: Wildlife Biologist Turnock assisted Enforcement officers in immobilizing a black bear caught in a culvert trap. The landowner had some garbage on their porch that attracted the bear up to their house. After the first conflict, the landowner removed the attractants to dissuade the bear from coming back. However, the bear was not dissuaded and continued barging about the landowner's yard and porch at night. Game wardens set a trap to capture the bear, immobilize and ear tag it, then hard release the bear from the area with bean bag rounds and a bear dog. The hard release will hopefully mean the bear finds his necessities away from human habitations now.



Chemically immobilized black bear weighing 200 pounds

Nuisance Bear: Biologists Lowe and Atamian assisted Enforcement Officers Beauchene and Langbehn and Conflict Specialist Westerman with the capture and removal of an adult black bear. The bear had worked its way from the Dishman Hills into the city of Spokane Valley and was within 100 meters of I90. The bear was treed with the aid of a local houndsman, immobilized, and translocated to release location in Pend Oreille County.

Joint Private Lands and Wildlife Conflict Project: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade and Private Lands Supervisor Earl worked on installing a big game guzzler next to a habitat planting in Garfield County. The guzzler should aid in reducing damage from large herds of mule deer in the area by creating off site watering opportunity. The guzzler was purchased with funds from a Blue Mountain Community grant that Earl applied for and received. The grant also provided for 300 acres of yellow star-thistle control along the adjacent slopes as well as a habitat improvement planting.



Private Lands Supervisor Earl finishing touches on the big game guzzler



Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade digging holes for the guzzler frame

Cougar Depredation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman and Sergeant Sprecher conducted a depredation investigation on three lambs. A cougar killed two of the lambs, while the other one died from non-wildlife related causes. The depredations happened four days prior to WDFW being called, so there was nothing for the hounds to track. Cameras were placed to monitor. Westerman completed two separate depredation investigation reports for the incidences.



Wounds to the neck of a lamb caused by a cougar



4) Conserving Natural Areas

Habitat Restoration: Biologist Baarstad, Natural Resource Technician Seitz, Region 2 Biologists Braaten and Hughes, and a volunteer completed a shrub-planting project adjacent to a riparian area in northwest Lincoln County. The project will provide brooding and wintering habitat for upland game and waterfowl and a travel corridor for all wildlife using the area.

Volunteer: Biologist Baarstad worked throughout the week with a master hunter volunteer from Stevens County. He helped with several projects including shrub planting, nesting box construction, and general maintenance accumulating the hours required to renew his master hunter certification for another five years.

Wildlife Food Plots: Private Lands Biologist Gaston and Natural Resource Worker Fish worked to install three food plots totaling about four acres on private lands. The property is enrolled in the private lands hunting access program. The landowner was excited to have additional wildlife benefits near his Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) field strips.



Viewing two of the three food plots planted with cover crop mixes

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP): Natural Resource Worker Fish continued to assist the Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District with tree and shrub plantings along a riparian area. The property is enrolled in CREP and must maintain a specified number of trees and shrubs along the riparian corridor.



5) Providing Education and Outreach

Monofilament Line Recycling Stations: Region 1 North Access Manager Daniel Dziekan worked with the Inland Northwest Wildlife Council's Chairman Ken McNaughton to recruit volunteers to install monofilament line recycling stations at WDFW water access sites around northeast Washington. Dziekan purchased the supplies and built the stations using money from the Department of Ecology, which was provided to help with litter control activities. Dziekan supplied posts to install the stations onto, along with concrete and hardware.



Bear Education: Biologist Lowe and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman presented three after-school bear programs at public libraries in Spokane. They shared information about species identification, the fascinating biology of bears, and responsible living and recreating in bear country.



Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman discusses food storage for campers during a bear presentation in Spokane

Asotin Creek Wildlife Area RMEF Workparty: Approximately 35 volunteers from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) and the local Asotin County Sportsman’s Association gathered at Smoothing Iron Ridge for their 16th annual work party on May 3 and 4. Volunteers came from all over the state to participate. Several miles of old, barbed wire fence was removed and numerous springs and troughs were cleaned up and serviced. Volunteers also placed salt blocks at many sites in the area for elk and deer. Virtually all interior fences at Smoothing Iron have been removed.



RMEF volunteers cleaning water troughs at Smoothing Iron



RMEF volunteers rolling up an old barbed wire fence

Asotin Creek Wildlife Area Forage Plantings: Wynn Stallcop spent many hours planting spring oats and preparing fields at Smoothing Iron and Joseph Creek. The 20-acre field seeded to alfalfa at Smoothing Iron has been a huge attractant for elk this spring. The elk simply won't leave it and have been keeping the planting trimmed back.



Elk gathered on alfalfa at Smoothing Iron Ridge



Alfalfa at Smoothing Iron



Technician Wynn Stallcop harrowing a field at Smoothing Iron

4-O Ranch Wildlife Area fence: Dave Meisner and Scott McGee completed a difficult fence at the 4-O Ranch Wildlife Area just below the top of Hanson Ridge. Steep terrain, rock, rattlesnakes, and poison oak all added to the misery of completing this fence, which greatly benefits two of our neighboring landowners. The fence is up, our obligations have been met, and we are not planning to ever return to it for maintenance. That part is our neighbor's responsibility.

4-O Ranch Wildlife Area Weed Control: Dave Meisner and Scott McGee have been spending quite a bit of time spraying weeds on the 4-O Ranch Wildlife Area. Many old agricultural fields are choked with sulfur cinquefoil preventing all grass species from growing. Far from being pristine native habitat, many acres are a mess. Using all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), Dave and Scott have been spraying about 25 acres per day.

4-O Ranch Wildlife Area Grazing leases: Livestock from both 4-O Ranch leases are on the ground and utilizing lower elevation ranges. There have been some comments from neighboring landowners about excessive utilization along Grande Ronde River Road and most of those areas are invasive annuals such as cheat grass and fox tail.



Livestock on the 4-O Ranch Wildlife Area Area eaten by cows on the 4-O Ranch

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing to report this period.

7) Other

Nothing to report this period.

REGION 2

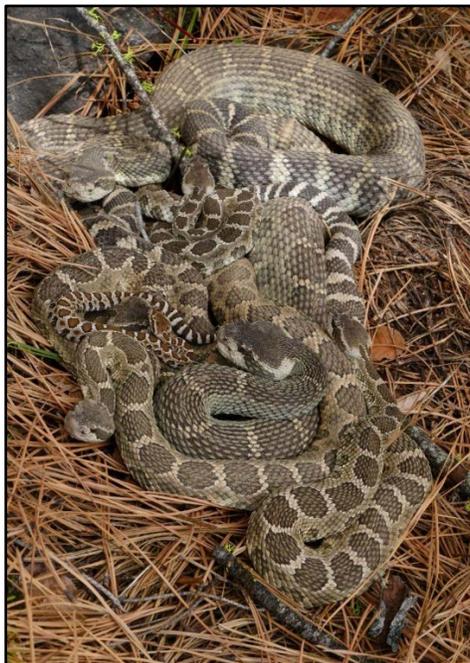
HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Rattlesnake Monitoring: Biologist Fitkin and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Biologist Rohrer visited three northern Pacific rattlesnake dens in the upper Methow Valley observing around 100 snakes between the three sites including individuals from all age classes, suggesting these sites are supporting healthy self-sustaining populations. This is part of a long-term effort to document the distribution, status, and ecology of this often misunderstood species near the edge of its range.



A large northern Pacific rattlesnake beginning to move away from the winter den – Photo by S. Fitkin



Pile-o-snakes near the entrance to a winter hibernacula – Photo by S. Fitkin

Northern Leopard Frog Recovery Project: Biologists Rowan, Hallock, and Grabowsky concluded northern leopard frog (NLF) egg mass surveys for 2019. Eight egg masses were found near Potholes Reservoir and portions of each egg mass were transported to the Oregon Zoo for head-starting. Updates from the Oregon Zoo indicate that the eggs have successfully hatched and the tadpoles are growing at appropriate rates. Now that egg mass surveys have been completed for the season, funnel trap surveys have begun. The goal of funnel trapping is to collect additional tadpoles from other ponds around in an effort to increase the genetic diversity of the population that will be released at Columbia National Wildlife Refuge. So far, no NLF tadpoles have been captured via funnel trap, although American bullfrog tadpoles, tiger salamander larva, and many tree frog tadpoles have been captured. Pacific tree frogs and NLF tadpoles can be difficult to distinguish, so looking for key traits is important for identification (Figure 1). Biologist Grabowsky also traveled to Creston, British Columbia to meet with NLF collaborators and learn from a recovery team that has successfully restored NLF habitat and facilitated NLF breeding (Photo 1).

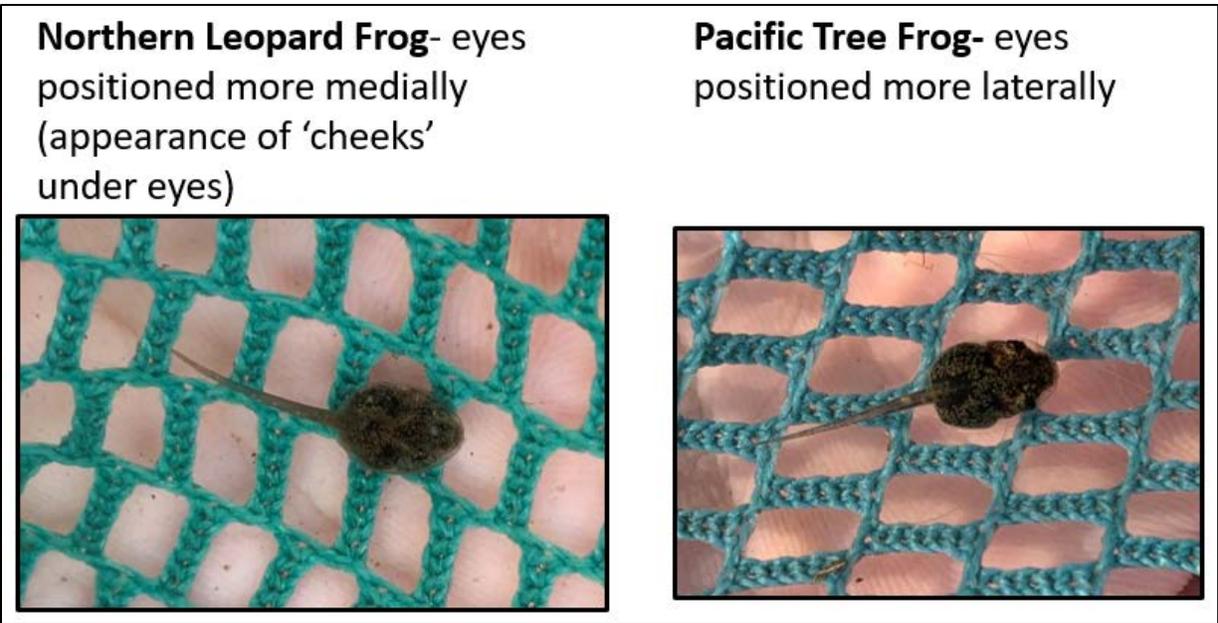


Figure 1. Pacific tree frog and northern leopard frog identification - Photos by Emily Grabowsky



Northern leopard frog overwintering habitat in Creston, BC - Photo by Emily Grabowsky

Washington Ground Squirrel Translocations: Biologists Rowan spent time working on trapping and translocation issues. This state candidate will be trapped from a highway right-of-way adjacent to private property and translocated to the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge where a soft-release enclosure was built in 2018. The translocations are beneficial in two ways. They reduce the population helping to ensure they do not become a nuisance on the private property, and they help to bolster dwindling populations in other areas.

Chelan Butte Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Comstock and Officer Oswald investigated the second bighorn sheep mortality since the capture at Chelan Butte. A second ewe was found to have been killed by a cougar. Given the close proximity to the previous mortality, it is possibly the same cougar. GPS collar data from the remaining six collared ewes indicate they are staying in close-knit groups on the breaks of the Columbia River, while the two rams have sauntered north to Daybreak Canyon.



Bighorn sheep ewe, collared on Feb 21, died May 8

Biologist Comstock contacted Utah Division of Wildlife Resources to get an update on the twenty bighorn sheep translocated to the Stansbury Mountain. Jace Taylor reported that they have lost five ewes to cougar predation and hence have implemented aggressive cougar removal to mitigate this mortality source. The herd seems to be doing well but has not yet integrated with the resident bighorns.

Grouse Surveys: Biologist Hughes conducted lek surveys on the Dutch Henry and Alstown leks. Hughes accompanied Biologist Braaten and Biologist Comstock to learn how to conduct surveys for sage grouse and sharp tail. Hughes counted 19 birds between the two leks she surveyed this spring. Braaten is finishing grouse lek surveys this month.

Private Lands Biologist Braaten also coordinated an outreach event with staff members from Sage Grouse Initiative, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Foster Creek Conservation District to observe sage and sharp-tailed grouse on leks. It was a great opportunity to show other agency personnel native grouse and discuss habitat use and visually show them what is important and why. On one sage grouse lek, an annual high count was recorded at 36 (30 males and 6 females).



Foster Creek Conservation District (Douglas County) staff members looking at a sharp-tailed grouse lek during outreach visit with WDFW personnel - Photo by Eric Braaten

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Methow Snake Survey: Biologists Fitkin and Grabowsky, Scientist Anderson, USFS Biologist Rohrer, and a host of volunteers conducted the annual snake survey on a portion of the Methow Wildlife Area. Despite the warmer than ideal conditions the group tallied 31 individual snakes from five different species. This effort helps track species diversity and status locally, and contributes to a nationwide snake-monitoring database. What better way to spend Mother's Day!



The western racer uses its large eyes to visually hunt for lizards, small mammals, and even other snakes during daylight hours – Photo by S. Fitkin



The rubber boa has relatively poor eyesight since it hunts mostly at night in rodent burrows and among the forest floor litter – Photo by S. Fitkin

Leavenworth Spring Birdfest: Biologist Comstock, led two birdfest trips this year, Beginning Birding by Ear and a full day trip to the Big Bend Wildlife Area to bird the School Creek area. Twelve birders joined Biologist Comstock and volunteer Joe Veverka, to bird Rock Lake and the School Creek drainage and nearby ponds. Thanks to cooperation with Wildlife Area Manager Peterson, birders were treated to a unique opportunity to bird Big Bend. Over 50 species of birds were found on our trip, including black-chinned hummingbird, lark sparrow, and Lewis's woodpecker. Participants also had the opportunity to watch a plucky garter snake try to eat a large tiger salamander.



Birders watching a very cooperative black-chinned hummingbird at Big Bend Wildlife Area



Black-chinned hummingbird (left) and Lewis's woodpecker (right) - photos by Rick Matsen

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Black Bear Issue: Specialist Heilhecker met with a couple to discuss a bear getting into their beehive and garbage. They installed a four-strand, hardwired electric fence around the beehive, which seems to have deterred the bear. However, the bear moved on to the garbage. They haul garbage once a month and leave the garbage outside. Specialist Heilhecker suggested they haul the garbage to a disposal site immediately. She also recommended they find another secure location to store their garbage if they did not want to leave their garbage inside the garage next to the car.

Wolf Meetings: Specialist Heilhecker has been working with Forest Service personnel at the Tonasket Ranger District regarding wolf sighting reports and livestock turnout that will be around June 1. Heilhecker also participated in a wolf internal group subcommittee that is brainstorming ideas to address locations with chronic depredations and lethal removal operations. The next step will be determining if any of the ideas are feasible. Several suggestions often heard from the public focus on land management and herd management, which fall outside WDFW management authority.

Deer in Orchards: Specialist Bridges responded to a landowner's concern of deer in his orchard. He did not personally see the deer, but his local garbage collector did, and reported 27 deer to the orchardist. Upon meeting with the landowner, he invited Bridges inside his house to talk his concern over a plate of cheese and crackers. It turns out, the landowner does not want the deer lethally removed, and only would accept non-lethal hazing materials. He was instructed to contact Bridges if he needed more hazing materials, or if he was not getting satisfaction with the non-lethal materials provided.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Ramsey Creek Fencing: Regional staff members met near Ramsey Creek on the Methow Wildlife Area to help re-construct a boundary fence that has allowed neighboring USFS cattle to drift onto WDFW lands. Employees from the Methow, Sinlahekin, Scotch Creek, and Chelan wildlife areas help reconstruct nearly one mile of fencing and repair additional segments in the area. Improving the fencing in this area will allow this landscape to be restored and recover following the suspension of a grazing permit in this area. The Methow Wildlife Area staff

members appreciate all the extra help during this project and look forward to additional cooperative projects in the future.



Methow Wildlife Area Manager Troyer lining out the crew for the day - Photo by Justin Haug



Troyer and Chelan Wildlife Area Technician Vallance finishing up - Photo by Justin Haug

Scotch Creek Land Swap Meeting: Okanogan Lands Operations Manager Haug and Scotch Creek Wildlife Area Manager Olson met with adjacent landowners to discuss a future swap for the benefit of sharp-tail grouse and public access. The discussion aided in determining potential boundary adjustments and how the process will be implemented.



Property adjacent to the Scotch Creek Wildlife Area where a swap is considered - Photo by Haug

Russian Knapweed Biocontrol Agents: The Scotch Creek Project received 400 *Aulacidea acroptilonica* insects for the bio-control of Russian knapweed from Jennifer Andreas, Washington State University extension. The insects were released along a section of Ninemile Creek on the Charles and Mary Eder Unit of the Scotch Creek Wildlife Area. This particular area being a riparian zone and close to water, is also a host for upper Columbia steelhead, a federal listed species for recovery. Because of the listing and proximity to water, no herbicides are allowed with Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) funding and thereby making this an excellent location for bio-controls. Over time these bugs should help reduce the infestation of Russian knapweed.



400 insects being released in Russian knapweed - Photo by Jim Olson

SAFE - Shrub-steppe: Biologist Hughes spoke to two landowners regarding concerns about erosion in their fields that are enrolled in State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) – Shrub-steppe. Based on this concern Hughes assessed field conditions for landowners enrolled in the program in Grant County. The majority of the fields did not have much damage. Hughes discussed different management options with one landowner in particular that had a washout go through a section of his SAFE field. This field was seeded with native grasses last fall. Hughes and the landowner agreed to wait and see what comes up this spring. Depending on how the native grass comes up, Hughes and the landowner may discuss future management options with Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Grant County.



Draw in a SAFE field has now expanded from this past winter - Photo by Melinda Hughes

NRCS-FSA State Acres for Wildlife (SAFE): Private Lands Biologist Braaten worked on several updates for SAFE contracts that required forb substitutions, etc. Private Lands Biologist Braaten also visited 10 SAFE fields to determine new grass growth size and make broadleaf spray recommendations to landowners. Douglas County Farm Service Agency is meeting with landowners weekly now about cost share from Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) field operations last year.



Private Lands Biologist Braaten determining native grass size to recommend when operator should spray for broadleaf weeds in a SAFE CRP field in Douglas County - Photo by Braaten

Wildfire Monitoring: Assistant Manager Bechtold assessed an area that recently burned near Dodson Road and the Winchester Wasteway. Bechtold estimates the total area burned was 30 acres, however, this is a very rough estimate as much of the area burned is inaccessible via ATV and the fact that the burn itself was very patchy. The fire burned primarily through decadent stands of common reed (*Phragmites australis*), a listed noxious weed and rapid wetland colonizer.



Partial consumption of common reed - Photo by Bechtold

Roadside and Public Access Residual Herbicide Treatment: Assistant Managers Bechtold and Cole completed the annual roadside and public access residual herbicide treatment this week. Over the past month and a half the two combined to make over 40 trips to treat various parts of the wildlife area and treated roughly 250 acres in total. The treatment is designed to prevent the germination and growth of weeds along transportation corridors. It serves multiple purposes on the wildlife area, including wildfire prevention and the maintenance of defensible space and firebreaks, prevention of the spread of noxious weeds and to maintain the aesthetic qualities of public access areas.



Treating the shoulder of the wildlife area headquarters driveway - Photo by Bechtold

Food Plot Planting: Biologist Walker seeded two and a half acres of wildlife food plots on hunting access site 392 in southern Grant County. Access site 392 is the most popular Hunt by Reservation site in Region 2 and offers opportunities for upland birds, waterfowl, mule deer, and an occasional elk. Plots were mowed and sprayed prior to planting. Corn, forage peas, millet, sorghum, and canola were planted in both food plots in attempt to attract a variety of game as well as add a diversity of soil residue and inputs aimed at enhancing soil quality. This was also the maiden voyage of the private lands team's new no-till seed drill – she worked like a dream.



New native grass seeder at wildlife food plot - Photo by Bo Walker

Frenchman Regulated Access Area Camera Trap Survey: Specialist McPherson and Manager Eidson went and took down trail cameras that were capturing pictures of migrating waterfowl using the project during spring. This information helps inform wildlife area on how waterfowl respond to habitat manipulations, food plots, and water drawdown.



Canada geese using cell seven of Frenchman in early April - Photo by C. McPherson

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Visiting Local Elementary School: Biologist Dougherty gave a presentation to the third grade class at Hiawatha Elementary school about wildlife corridors. All of the third grade students were present and were quite enthusiastic about the subject matter. The most comical aspect of the entire ordeal was that Biologist Dougherty was treated with celebrity status.



Artistic representation of the third grade class in attendance - Photo by Sean Dougherty

High School Career Day: Specialist Bridges, Officer Smith, District Wildlife Biologist Comstock, District Fish Biologist Maitland, and Lands Manager Fox all attended the annual Career Fair at Eastmont Junior High School. This year, a lot of materials and photos were available to hopefully draw kids out of their shells to engage in dialog!



WDFW displayed during Career Fair at Eastmont Junior High School in East Wenatchee

Wildlife Habitat Restoration Outreach: Private Lands Biologist Braaten coordinated with Foster Creek Conservation District (FCCD) staff for an outreach event to evaluate riparian habitat restoration projects each agency has completed. The meeting allowed the group to identify common ground in planning and highlighted project limitations each group had. FCCD has funding and cultural resource survey abilities for projects, but are somewhat limited on equipment, knowledge, labor and design. WDFW Private Lands Program is limited by habitat project funding and cultural resource survey/planning requirements funding.

The possibility of a future partnership between WDFW Private Lands and FCCD was discussed to develop future projects that restore riparian areas important to grouse and other wildlife in Douglas County. FCCD uses Department of Ecology Water Quality Grants to fund some of their riparian project costs. Currently there are FCCD projects occurring on private lands that are enrolled in WDFW Private Lands Hunter Access and Habitat Program.



Staff members from Foster Creek Conservation District and WDFW Private Lands Program review wildlife habitat projects each agency has completed to compare notes and discuss future partnership opportunities - Photos by Eric Braaten

Columbia Basin Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) and Public Outreach

Meeting: Lands Operations Manager Finger assisted in hosting an inaugural WAAC meeting to start the Wildlife Area Planning Process. The meeting laid out the ground rules for the WAAC, described roles and responsibilities, and gave an overview of the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area. The meeting was concluded with scoping level discussion about concerns or general comments about the wildlife area. Lands Ops Manager Finger also assisted in hosting an inaugural public meeting that provided an overview of the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area and was then opened up to scoping level discussion about concerns or general comments about the wildlife area.

Oden Road Fire Study: Okanogan Lands Operations Manager Haug participate in the tenth annual Oden Road Fire Study west of Okanogan. Haug has participated all ten years in this study the monitors the post-fire landscape following the Oden Road Fire in 2009. Students from Okanogan High School's advanced biology class monitor a variety of different things. Soils, wildlife, aquatic invertebrates, forest pathogens, vegetation transects, invasive species, and photo monitoring data were all gathered this year. Also participating were the U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan Land Trust, Okanogan Conservation District, Conservation Northwest and a number of volunteers. A presentation will be made to the public next month with the students presenting the data that has been gathered this year and throughout the study.



Group photo of the Oden Road fire study- Photo by Justin Haug

6) **Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Nothing for this reporting period.

7) **Other**

Nothing for this reporting period.

REGION 3

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) **Managing Wildlife Populations**

Region 3 Private Lands Biologist Hulett helped Roger Rodriguez with Oregon State University locate site information for the North American Bat Monitoring Program being conducted in Yakima, Benton and Klickitat counties. The surveys will consist of deploying ultrasonic detectors to record bat echolocations and establish species present.

Private Lands Biologist Hulett conducted site inspections on SAFE contracts that were seeded this winter. The contracts in Franklin County looked promising and the landowner has scheduled an aerial herbicide application to deal with the broadleaf weeds that are beginning to grow. The contracts in Benton County on the other hand looked pretty minimal but had low amounts of weed pressure. Some fields that were scheduled to be seeded during the winter were not and they were brought to FSA attention.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Ferguson, along with District 4 Wildlife Biologist Fidorra and Natural Resource Technician Wascisin hosted the Yakima Valley and Richland Audubon Society chapters for two days of birding at the Sunnyside Unit of the Sunnyside Snake River Wildlife Area. Birders were treated to close-up observations of American avocets, Virginia rails, and cinnamon teal among many other interesting finds.

The event served to connect with the broader local community and increase awareness of local public lands and recreation opportunities. Many of the birders had never visited the wildlife area and of those who had, many were unaware of the diversity of bird life present. We hope to see return trips from many of the participants and to make the field trip an annual event.



Birders in action at the Office Pond wetland



Birders taking in the sites at the Rice Paddies wetlands

This year WDFW has continued their collaboration effort in the Bumble Bee Atlas Project. The projects objective is to gain a better understanding of the distribution of bumblebee species and their habitat throughout Washington, Oregon and Idaho. A detailed well-organized website of the project can be found at <https://www.pnwbumblebeeatlas.org/about.html>. Region 3 Biologists Moore and Babik performed two point surveys near the Columbia River, but did not find a single bumblebee. Biologist Bernatowicz, Sunnyside Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Ferguson and Technician Wascisin surveyed two areas on the Sunnyside Wildlife Area with a similar result. In 2018, Bumble Bees were found in good numbers in July and August on the Sunnyside Wildlife Area. The thought in 2019 was to survey earlier in hopes of finding different species.

2) **Providing Recreation Opportunities**

The opening of the winter closure areas proved to be another popular event amongst users wanting to search for elk antlers. There were 84 vehicles that went through the Oak Creek Wildlife Area Headquarters gate upon opening at 6:00 am on May 1. This amounted to 159 people. An additional 64 people went through a walk-in gate at headquarters. Six cars went through the main Oak Creek Road (USFS 1400) gate for a total of 13 people. There were 21 vehicles (including ATVs) waiting at the upper gate on Bethel Ridge. Cowiche saw 42 vehicles with over 80 individuals at the Cowiche Unit parking area accessing by foot and horses. There were campers in the Oak Creek headquarters parking area beginning on Saturday evening April 27 growing to a nearly full parking lot by the afternoon of April 30. Oak Creek staff members again hid an antler that was found on the Oak Creek Unit and reported back to headquarters to receive a modest prize. See picture below.

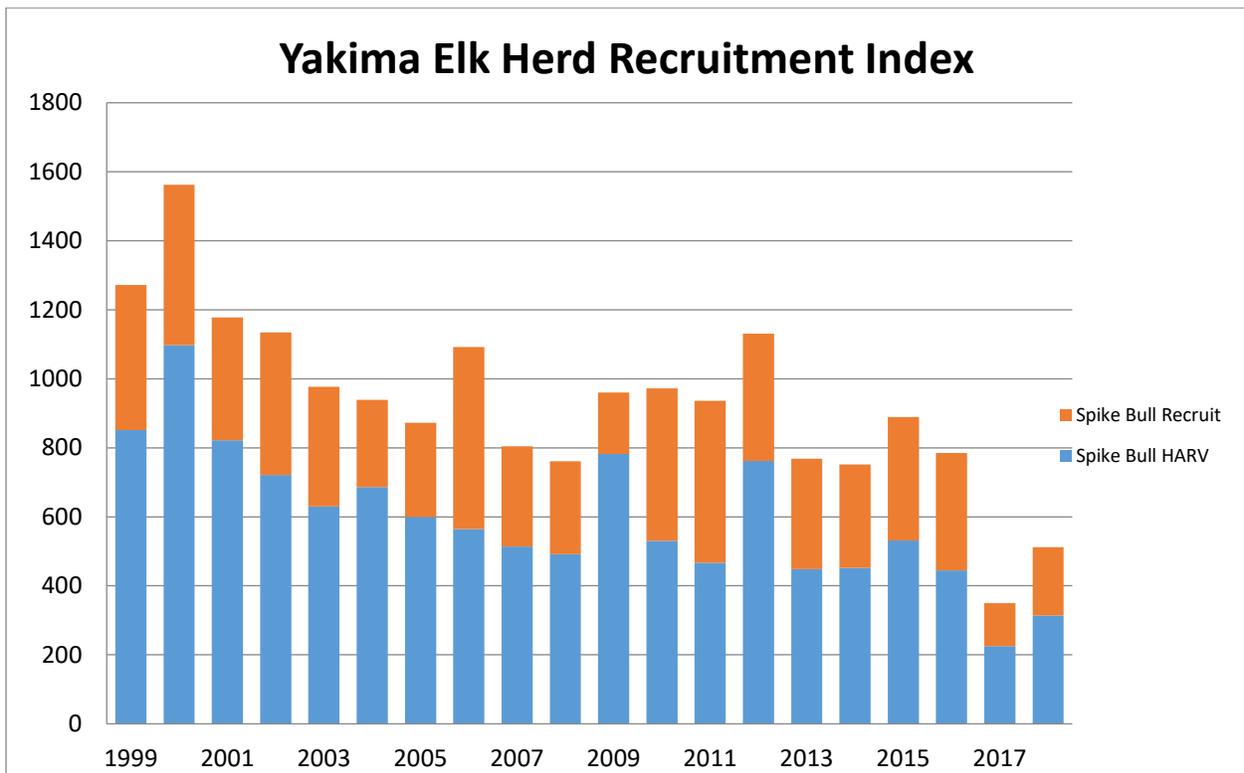


Winner of the placed antler contest at Oak Creek receiving a certificate as a prize



Bird's eye view of Oak Creek headquarters prior to the May 1 gate opening

District 8 Wildlife Biologist Bernatowicz has been replying to numerous calls and email regarding the decline in 2019 bull permits for the Yakima Elk Herd. The recent herd decline was due to a combination of drought and severe winter conditions. There are not only fewer total elk, but lower than normal calf ratios. Few calves means few spike bulls recruited into the adult population. Based on February 2018 calf numbers, the 2019 recruitment is expected to be lower than 2018. Recreational opportunity will continue to be low until recruitment increases.



3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand developed damage permit packets and met with landowners in Elk Area 3721 Corral Canyon to deliver permits and coordinate hunting and hazing operations. These permits are designed to discourage elk activity from leaving Hanford's southern boarder for adjacent wheat fields.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand inspected and repaired roughly three miles of stock fence that is regularly damaged by elk on Rattlesnake Mountain. While in the area, an inspection of a highly used natural spring was visited. Unfortunately, the bottom of a large tire used as a water tank had washed out. Information for a repair was passed to the landowner.



Bennett Springs water tank

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand coordinated with a landowner in the Crow Butte area to exercise a kill permit to remove a deer from a vineyard that is experiencing heavy damage. This permit was issued after non-lethal techniques became less effective in minimizing deer damage. The carcass was processed by the Richland Rod and Gun Club's meat salvage team and donated to the Union Gospel Mission.

District 8 Conflict Technician Leuck and Conflict Specialist Wetzel hazed elk from areas near Reecer Creek hay fields. Elk have been moving up in elevation in larger numbers, which is reducing elk conflict in many agricultural areas. Conflict Technician Leuck placed salt in additional areas of the lower Wenas Valley above private lands to lure elk out of the private pastures and up to WDFW lands. Most elk have moved up in elevation and away from private pastures in the last few days.

Cost share fencing for a large orchard owner in the Badger Pocket area was expanded to include some fencing along the sides of the orchard in areas where elk may walk the end of the fence. The project is now 8500 feet of fencing. A new cost-share fencing project in Thorp has been initiated with a plan to fence 3200 feet of a commercial flower growing operation. The area experienced deer conflicts last year and elk are near the area.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Oak Creek Wildlife Area Forester Hartmann conducted planting operations on a high severity burn area of the 2016 Rock Creek fire. Nine-hundred-ten western larch seedlings were planted across approximately ten acres.



Freshly planted western larch seedling within burned area of the 2016 Rock Creek fire

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Oak Creek Wildlife Area Manager Mackey and Assistant Manager Berry staffed a WDFW display at The Mighty Tieton art show event. Many questions about the wildlife area were addressed in a local community setting, and maps and other educational materials were passed out. Special thanks to Customer Service Specialist Rosalea Burge for putting together the display board.



WDFW display at the Mighty Tieton art exhibit

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Manager Babik was a panel guest speaker for Central Washington University's senior seminar. The panel discussed career options and the differences between careers in federal, state, and nonprofit.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Manager Babik presented at Ellensburg High School's Career Fair for juniors and seniors. Students were very interested in wildlife management and asked great questions.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Winegeart led a Backcountry Horseman work party to replace the kiosk at Tamarack Springs and installed interpretive panels on the Green Gate kiosk (purchased by Conservation Northwest).



Tamarack Spring's kiosk



Green Gate kiosk

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this installment.

7) Other

Oak Creek Wildlife Area Manager Mackey and Assistant Manager Berry retrieved a piano dumped on the Cowiche Unit. Perhaps it is an enforcement program outreach” *Break the law here and face the music.*” Manager Mackey has requested interest from local schools in receiving the piano as a donation.



Piano strangely found along Cowiche Creek

REGION 4

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Waterfowl Breeding Population Surveys: Biologist Hamer served as an aerial observer for the statewide Waterfowl Breeding Population Survey. The survey is conducted throughout the state, along fixed-width transects, from a Bell Jet Ranger helicopter. The annual survey estimates the state's breeding waterfowl populations and results aid migratory bird season setting and bag limits.

Bog Beetle Training: Biologists Milner, Anderson, C. Moore, and Hamer attended a bog beetle training event in North Bend. The event was hosted by Chris Sato and included bog beetle expert Jim LaBonte. We began the training with a discussion on bog beetle ecology and conservation status then we searched King Lake Bog for Beller's ground beetle and Hatch's click beetle. We did not find either beetle species during our search of the bog, although they were found there last year. The rainy conditions likely limited beetle activity during the time of the training survey.

Leque Island Pre-Bid Site Show: Engineer John Hansen, Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton, Planner Jenny Baker, and Ducks Unlimited staff held a site tour for construction contractors interested in submitting a bid to construct the restoration project. The tour highlighted several points on the site to allow potential bidders to better understand the property and project.



The Leque Island pre-bid site show was well attended by prospective bidders

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Nothing for this reporting period.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Deer on San Juan Island: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman responded to San Juan Island to contact several landowners about deer-related damage to crops. While on the island, a deer was reported to be behind a residence that had a sewer pipe cap stuck on its hoof. The deer had been carrying the cap around for several weeks and just happened to be near the residence when Conflict Specialist Witman arrived. The landowner had purchased several cutting tools that he felt could adequately remove the object from the deer's hoof. With the assistance of the landowner, Witman safely darted the deer and was able to remove the object with the landowner's assistance.



Immobilized black-tailed deer to remove sewer cap



Black-tailed deer post immobilization

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Litter Cleanup and Prevention: Private lands personnel in Region 4 worked with Sierra Pacific Industries personnel to remove a large garbage dump on their property. Using funding from a Department of Ecology litter cleanup and removal grant, Region 4 private lands staff members rented a mini excavator and provided three dump trailers and Sierra Pacific Industries personnel provided the equipment operational expertise. This project ended with the removal of nearly six tons of garbage and the blocking of the road to prevent future garbage issues at the site.



The large pile of garbage being prepared to be loaded into the dump trailers



Loading garbage into the dump trailer



Offloading garbage at the county dump



Partnership

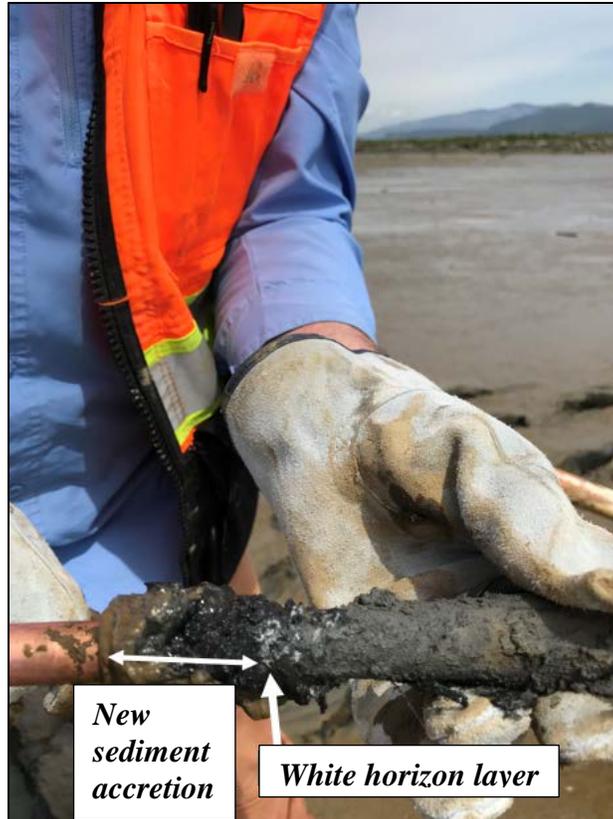
Fir Island Farm Sediment Monitoring: Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Planner Jenny Baker, Habitat Engineer Channing Syms, and a Western Washington University research associate collected annual data from sediment elevation tables in the Fir Island Farm estuary restoration area.



Planner Jenny Baker is measuring the adjustable pins that are screwed onto a fixed rod driven into the marsh to calculate elevation change in the restoration area



Engineer Channing Syms pours liquid nitrogen to freeze a core sample in the marsh



A layer of white clay was spread on the ground in sampling areas prior to the project, so now when a core is taken, we can measure how much new sediment has entered the site

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Washington Waterfowl Association: Waterfowl Section Coordinator Spragens and District Biologist C. Moore attended the Whatcom Chapter of the Washington Waterfowl Association's monthly meeting. Spragens presented information to the group about the process of how waterfowl hunting regulations are created. The information was well received and the two fielded questions after the presentation.

Backyard Wildlife Festival: District Biologists Andersen and C. Moore assisted Communications Manager Blomker at the very well attended Backyard Wildlife Festival in Tukwila. The team fielded a wide assortment of questions from the public about all things wildlife. Information about bats and white-nose syndrome in Washington was highlighted at the booth to encourage reporting. The kids were especially fond of the animal skull, track, and scat replicas at the table, and of course, all the awesome WDFW swag.



*WDFW personnel in the booth at the Tukwila Backyard Wildlife Festival on Saturday, May 11
 – Photo by WDFW*

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Wildlife Immobilization Training: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Whitman, and District Biologists Waddell and C. Moore attended a two-day agency Wildlife Chemical Immobilization and Handling training course. The course teaches employees how to properly handle and anesthetize wildlife. This training will prove useful for a variety of research and monitoring projects under taken by the department.



*Wildlife Chemical Immobilization and Handling training course attendees gather around Department Veterinarian Mansfield to learn the steps to safely immobilize a wild animal -
 photo by Callie Moore*



Wildlife Conflict Specialist Whitman observes as a WDFW enforcement officer during tranquilizer target practice - photo by Callie Moore

7) Other

Nothing for this reporting period.

REGION 5

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

White-Nose Syndrome Monitoring: Biologist Wickhem assisted White-Nose Syndrome Coordinator Tobin with sampling at three sites this week. First, the two biologists, along with United States Fish and Wildlife Service Biologists Newsome and Barnett and Volunteer Hadley, set-up mist nets and captured bats at a known roosting site on Conboy Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Once captured, each bat was inspected for signs of the disease and the face and wings were swabbed, before being released. At two additional sites in western Skamania County, several bats were swabbed in-place while roosting, swabs were taken of the roosting area, and soil samples were collected. All swabs and soil samples will be sent to a wildlife disease research lab to be tested for the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome, *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*. Surveying hibernacula and common roosting sites throughout the state is a crucial step in tracking the spread of this devastating disease.

In addition, Biologist Holman joined Biologist Tobin and U.S. Forest Service Biologist to collect samples from traps designed to capture bat guano in Lewis County. The collected guano is then submitted for disease testing associated with White Nosed Syndrome.

For more information on white-nose syndrome in Washington, or to report sick or dead bats, please visit: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/diseases/bat-white-nose>.



Setting up mist nests



Swabbing for white-nose syndrome

Western Pond Turtle Trapping: Over the past three weeks, Biologists Wickhem, Bergh, and Burlingame have focused on trapping turtles at two different sites in the Gorge. At a site in Klickitat County, they set and checked 45 hoop and basking traps targeting reproductive Western pond turtle females as part of a study investigating the effects of shell disease on reproductive success. Once captured, the female turtles are CT scanned to confirm they are carrying eggs, and to assess disease severity. Each female then receives a radio-transmitter that is glued onto her carapace. During the nesting season, these females will be tracked multiple times per day in order to find their nests and determine how many eggs are laid. In addition to reproductive females, the team also collected hatchlings for microbiome swabs and any new, wild turtles so they could be measured, marked, and entered into our database. In total, 18 females were captured, scanned, and fitted with a radio-transmitter. Tracking will begin next week.



Two female western pond turtles receiving their transmitters after completing CT scans

Juniper Hairstreak Butterfly Survey: Biologists Bergh and Potter, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Wildlife Biologist Munzing, and volunteer Flick surveyed three sites on DNR land in eastern Klickitat for juniper hairstreak butterflies. These butterflies are a state candidate species found in the Columbia River Basin of southeastern Washington. The larvae feed on western juniper and the brief adult flight period is in late April/May. In 2017, Volunteer Flick searched historic locations in Klickitat County as well as several other suitable habitat sites and

only found the juniper hairstreak at one of the new sites. At that same site, 11 juniper hairstreak butterflies were found this week. Biologist Potter was able to describe the key features of the site and the important nectaring plants for the rest of the survey crew so that they could look for the butterflies during these type of surveys or other work in the future. Biologist Potter also described the key features to look for when identifying this butterfly and noted that the butterflies seen had likely just emerged from the chrysalis and begun their flight period because their wings were in very good condition.



Adult juniper hairstreak butterfly nectaring on Lomatium triternatum

Western Painted Turtle Evaluations: Biologists Burlingame, Wickhem, and Bergh captured western painted turtles over the past two weeks to evaluate presence of shell disease. The shell disease that currently affects western pond turtles has not been seen in painted turtles, but so far painted turtles have not been evaluated using CT scans. CT scans can be used to identify very small/new lesions that are not visible from the surface. Nineteen painted turtles received CT scans and none were found to have signs of shell disease.



A painted turtle returns to the pond after a CT scan



Examining the plastron for signs of shell disease

Black-tailed deer buck captures: Biologists Holman and Garrison made initial attempts to capture black-tailed bucks for the buck mortality research project. Attempts were made in GMUs 520 (Winston) and 568 (Washougal). Sixty-one deer were located including three that could be positively identified as bucks. None of the bucks were within suitable range for capture by dart gun. In addition, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen assisted Biologist Holman in an attempt to capture and collar a black-tailed deer buck. Sixty-nine deer were observed during the effort but none were captured.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Private Lands Access Agreement: Wildlife Conflict Specialist/Private Lands Biologist Jacobsen met with representatives from Weyerhaeuser Company to enroll 6,638 acres of land in Wahkiakum County in WDFW's Feel Free to Hunt access program. The majority of this land is adjacent to land owned by Washington state, and will be an invaluable addition of land open to public hunting.

Turkey Hunting Advice: Wildlife Conflict Specialist/Private Lands Biologist Jacobsen provided advice on places to go turkey hunting to an eager turkey hunter. Different properties enrolled in WDFW's Private Lands Access Programs were discussed.

Cowlitz Wildlife Area Peterman Trail Signage: Assistant Cowlitz Wildlife Area Manager Vanderlip and Tacoma Resource Lands Coordinator Russell began installing signs along the 20 miles of Peterman Trail. The new construction from last year has no signage and we members of the public using the trail have state they would like to see signage. The trail utilizes both gated roads and new single-track trail. In some places, it is not clear where the trail is located once you are on a gated road. The old sections of trail utilized signage with a colored dot system that many found confusing. The new signs will provide directional information that is clear and concise.



Directional/informational signage at road crossings (left) Hiker placard that will be located along the trail (right)

Klickitat Wildlife Area Road Maintenance: The WDFW road maintenance crew improved water drainage along the road to the Stinson Flat Campground and hauled rock to the North Breaks Road to fill potholes and create a more durable driving surface. A water drainage issue at the Stinson Flat campground was also addressed so that winter runoff does not flow through the campground. Assistant Manager Steveson cleared overhead limbs from roads to facilitate work by the heavy equipment operators.

The South Breaks Road on the Soda Springs Unit has been deteriorating over time, and one segment of the road became impassable this spring due to a combination of poor water drainage and vehicle use on this already marginal road. This week WDFW road maintenance crew added rock and soil to the worst part of the road and graded it smooth. Altogether, about 200 feet of the road was improved, making approximately one and a half miles of road accessible to vehicles again.



Adding rock to the surface of the South Breaks Road grading new material smooth

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Beaver Damage to Crop Field: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and Biologist Bergh coordinated with private landowners regarding a beaver that had constructed a dam and flooded an agricultural field. The beaver will be trapped and relocated to a more suitable site elsewhere in the county.

Amboy Elk Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen met with several different landowners in the Amboy area concerning elk damage to hay crops and fences. Advice was given, and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen will continue to work with landowners to deter damage caused by elk. One landowner was enrolled in a Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement.

Glenwood Elk Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by and met with multiple landowners in the Glenwood area of Klickitat County concerning damage to high quality hay crops and pasture grass. Approximately 200 head of elk have been moving between USFWS wildlife refuge land and adjacent private property where these crops are being grown. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen will continue to work with the landowners to deter the damage caused by elk over the coming months.



A hay field in the Glenwood Valley that has been regularly visited by elk

Carson Elk Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was also contacted by a landowner in the Carson area of Skamania County about elk damage to pasture land and fences. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen will meet with the landowner next week to discuss further deterrent methods.

Sheep Depredation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen, Captain Wickersham, and Sergeant McQuary investigated a report of a cougar-killed sheep in Skamania County. The freshly killed sheep was confirmed to have been killed by a cougar. A houndsman was called to the scene and a cougar was located and euthanized.



A cougar-killed sheep that was cached with grass

Skamania Elk Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen met with a landowner who has been experiencing elk damage to his pasture ground in Skamania County. At this time of year, the grass should be close to knee-deep on this pasture, however, with the elk spending 24 hours a day in the pasture, the grass has been cropped down to approximately four inches. With no rain in the forecast for the foreseeable future, it is unlikely that this pasture will fully regenerate by the time the landowner needs to put his cows on the pasture. Hazing methods and fencing options were discussed with the landowner.



Cow pasture ground with elk damage

Bear Complaints: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen received several complaints this week about bears getting into bird feeders, trash, and compost bins. Advice was given to remove the attractants in all cases. One bear in particular decided to cause quite the headache for a couple of neighbors. The bear opened a window and climbed into a house on two separate occasions, despite the window being shut the second time. A third attempt was made the next day after the window was locked. This same bear was able to open up the back door of a car at the residence and climb around in the back seat. It later visited the neighbor's chest freezer which was sitting on his porch, and helped himself to several hundred dollars-worth of frozen seafood. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and Sergeant McQuary set a culvert trap for the bear, but the bear did not return to the residence again this week.



Culvert trap set for the black bear

Cougar Concerns: A concerned landowner contacted Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen regarding a cougar that had been seen several times in her horse pasture. Jacobsen stopped by the residence to discuss the concerns with the landowner, provide advice on keeping livestock safe, and deployed a fox light near the landowner's foaling pasture where her horse will be giving birth in a week or two.

Injured Deer: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen assisted Captain Wickersham and Officer Myers with a call regarding a deer-vehicle collision. The deer was euthanized, and staff members were able to donate the meat to a local resident.

4) Conserving Natural Areas

Cattle Turnout on Soda Springs Unit:

This week cattle were turned out onto the area of the Soda Springs Unit that is grazed under permit. The animals were driven north along the Glenwood Highway, escorted by six riders, two dogs, and two sheriff's deputies in vehicles, and were counted when they entered the gate on the Wildlife Area. The day was ideal for moving cattle and the riders were pleased with how well it went.



Cattle drive along the Glenwood Highway as cattle were turned onto the North Breaks pasture

Klickitat Wildlife Area Rangeland Habitat Quality Monitoring: Photos were taken at designated photo points on the Soda Springs Unit this week as part of a long-term range quality-monitoring program. There is one grazing permit on this unit. Six photo points, first established in 1981, are visited annually.



Photo Point 3 in May 2008



Photo Point 3 in May 2019

Klickitat Wildlife Area Fire Hazard Reduction: Department of Natural Resources fire crews plan to assist WDFW with piling tree limbs and tops left from a forest health enhancement project to reduce woody debris along the Soda Springs Road, which is a county road that runs through the wildlife area. Six piles of slash were constructed in this area in April by volunteers, however, there is more to be done to complete the job. Klickitat County, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Department of Natural Resources staff members frequently consult with each other to develop projects that advance both agencies’ objectives on state land, and this is an example of such a project.

Cowlitz Wildlife Area Kosmos Tree Planting Mitigation Project: The Cloud Base Country Club (CBCC), a hang gliding group that uses the Kosmos Unit as a landing site has historically maintained the LZ through a permit issued by Tacoma Power. In 2018, Tacoma revoked the CBCC permit for permit violations.

Additionally, it was decided during last year’s Wildlife Area Management Coordinating Committee meeting that WDFW would be the issuing authority for all future permits for activities occurring on the wildlife area. One of the violations that occurred was the cutting of approximately 150 red alders near the landing site. As mitigation for the loss of the trees, the club agreed to plant 150 trees and ensure their survival for three years. Upon the planting of the trees, WDFW would issue a permit to the club so that they may mow the landing site and keep the reed canary grass short for the safety of their pilots. The club has successfully completed the tree-planting project.



Club volunteers planting a tree



The Cloud Base Country Club Crew



Young trees planted in sleeves to protect from being browsed by wildlife

5) **Providing Education and Outreach**

Forest Service Presentation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin and WDFW Officer Schroeder presented to approximately 30 Forest Service staff members. Conklin presented information on cougars and outdoor safety and Officer Schroeder presented on witnessing crimes, how to be a good witness, and common violations observed in the Johnson Ridge/Coldwater areas.

Trout Lake School Presentation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and Habitat Biologist Johnson gave a presentation on wildlife to a third grade class at the Trout Lake School. The students were in the middle of their Lewis and Clark “Being a Naturalist” unit and all the students were very excited to see examples of wildlife specimens that Lewis and Clark would have seen on their journey across the west. The bear and cougar hides, along with the raptor taxidermy mounts, were of the most interest to the students. The biology of these species, identifying tracks and other animal sign, and learning proper techniques for living with wildlife were all discussed. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and Habitat Biologist Johnson were very impressed when every single one of the students knew the appropriate behavioral response for encountering a cougar in the wild.

AGForestry Leadership Presentation: Biologists Holman and Azerrad along with Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald presented to a group of approximately 25 students enrolled in AGForestry’s leadership course. Azerrad’s presentation focused on WDFW’s outreach efforts to find mutual conservation related goals among forestland owners, non-governmental organizations, and governmental agencies. Holman’s material included information on the ways in which WDFW interacts with forestland owners to implement WDFW management and research activities in support of both hunted and diversity species. Hauswald took to the field and visited WDFW managed forestlands highlighting the recent Merrill Lake acquisition and WDFW’s forestry activities to promote robust wildlife habitat. The educational undertaking is designed to build skills among those involved in natural resource management especially in rural communities. For more information on AGForestry, or to nominate a prospective student for the course, please see their website at <http://agforestry.org/>

Society of American Foresters: At the request of the organization, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen gave a presentation to the Society of American Foresters in Longview. The presentation covered the job duties of a wildlife conflict specialist as well as the 2018 Washington wolf update.

Klickitat County Commissioner Presentation: Regional Director Lee, Regional Wildlife Program Manager Jonker, Biologist Bergh, and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen delivered a presentation to the Klickitat County Commissioners during a regular commissioner meeting. The presentation provided an update on Washington wolf numbers and the status of wolves in Washington, as well as covered future steps pertaining to wolf recovery in the state. Several members of the public attended at the meeting.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Wildlife Immobilization Training. Biologists Holman and Bergh attended Wildlife Immobilization Recertification Training. The two-day course was held in Region 4 and taught by Veterinarian Mansfield with assistance from Region 3 Wildlife Program Manager McCorquodale as well as Statewide Bear and Cougar Specialist Beausoleil. The course features units on planning, regulations and policy, pharmacology, capture equipment, zoonotic disease, animal care, euthanasia, etc. The course also features segments specifically devoted to the capture of ungulates, bears, and cougars as well as raptors. The course concludes with a practical involving the immobilization of domestic goats and dart gun practice. The course is required every five-years for those staff members who are issued wildlife immobilizing drugs. The course was attended by a handful of Wildlife Program personnel and many Enforcement officers.

7) Other

Tame deer: Officer Bolton was contacted by a landowner near Goldendale about a tame deer in his yard with orange cattle ear tags. Region 5 Customer Service were also contacted by a neighboring landowner about this tame deer. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and Biologist Bergh went out to the neighborhood and found the deer hanging out with a small herd of cattle. The deer was lured with some hay, immobilized, ear tags removed, and relocated to the Klickitat Wildlife Area. Enforcement personnel will be following up on this case, as it is illegal to raise or possess wildlife.



Tame yearling buck deer with cattle ear tags

Oak Tree Bud Break: New leaves are emerging on Oregon oak trees at the 2,000-foot level. Oaks bloom while the leaves are developing, so these trees will be in flower soon.



Oregon oak trees along the South Breaks Road on the Klickitat Wildlife Area. New oak leaves emerging. The pendant flower clusters will appear soon. There are two trees in this group.

REGION 6

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Bog Beetle Searches: Biologist Murphie carried out some logistical work related to this assignment; securing approval and access from a local timber company to conduct searches on their land. He conducted a site visit to Cranberry Lake to look for Hatch's click beetles (confirmed presence of Beller's last year). He collected two samples that are possibly Hatch's and will send them in for a confirmation.

Biologist Tirhi and Volunteer Terry continued conducting bog beetle surveys in Sphagnum bogs in Pierce County. The team has located two sites containing Beller's ground beetle (*Agonum belleri*) but no sites containing Hatch's click beetles.

Beetle Surveys: Biologist Michaelis began surveying for the Beller's (*Agonum belleri*), and Hatch's click beetle (*Eanus hatchi*) in Sphagnum bogs within District 17. The current distribution of these uncommon beetles is largely unknown. The first site yielded a few samples of Hatch's click beetle. These samples will be shipped to an entomologist with the Oregon Department of Agriculture for verification.

One particular bog located just north of the town of Humptulips and on public lands, had other interesting plant and animal life in it.



Photo of a coastal Sphagnum bog in north-western Grays Harbor. Vegetation along the edge and extending out into open water were sampled

An unidentified shrub was in full bloom and quite spectacular

Mountain Goat Relocation: Biologist Murphie rustled the logistics of conference calls and emails on this activity that will begin in July. He also fabricated a prototype of a device to help restrain goats while crating.

Snowy Plovers: Biologist Sundstrom finished posting the north and south ends of the protected area at Midway Beach for nesting plovers. Symbolic roping spanning 1,320 feet was installed on the north end and will be added to the south end when the rope arrives from Amazon.

Red Knot Research: Biologist Michaelis assisted Scientist Buchanan, Lori Salzer, and the *Spartina* crew surveying for Red Knots in Grays Harbor. A new protocol is being developed to estimate abundance of knots during their brief stopover in Grays Harbor.



Photo of a Red Knot marked from Mexico with a yellow flag (center). Other species such as dunlin, western sandpiper, black-bellied plovers are seen in the image

Band-Tailed Pigeons: Biologist Sundstrom traveled north to the Lake Ozette area posting wanted posters of band-tailed pigeon sightings. There were several responses to the posters from Forks to Neilton and she followed-up with on-site visits at three locations to verify the presence of the birds

Breeding Waterfowl Flights: Biologist Michaelis assisted Seaduck and waterfowl survey specialist Evenson on a helicopter survey to observe and enumerate breeding waterfowl in the Chehalis river drainage. Survey transects were eight miles apart. Many different bird species were observed. Conditions were extremely dry compared to prior years. Data will be compiled by specialist Evenson to generate a statewide estimate.

Bats: Biologist Tirhi, Butler, and Tobin continued with capturing bats at various bat colonies in District 11 for monitoring white-nose syndrome in Washington bats.

<https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/diseases/bat-white-nose>

Bats were trapped at a private residence in Olympia (19 captures) and Elbe (19 captures). Bats were also trapped with partners at Northwest Trek Wildlife Park in Eatonville (four captures). At each location, bats were visually inspected for wing damage associated with white-nose syndrome and swabs were taken for the fungus. Each bat was also weighed and measured. District 11 has one more location to trap in order to meet its assignment of five sites.

Western Pond Turtle: Biologists Butler and Tirhi finished the annual western pond turtle captures this year at the Pierce County recovery population. Trapping occurred over a two-week period with the goal of attempting to trap all turtles at the recovery site with an emphasis on adult breeding females and previous shell disease treatment turtles. All turtles captured were identified, weighed and their shell measurements taken. Each turtle was also assessed visually for shell disease. Thirty-eight priority turtles were sent for CT scans at the Veterinary Specialty Center of Seattle, and twenty-five breeding females received a transmitter. In total, close to 200 turtles were captured with over 120 occurring on the first day of trapping. A huge thanks goes out to the numerous volunteers who helped with the trapping effort this year!

The western pond turtle nest monitoring season also kicked off this week. The 25 female western pond turtles that received transmitters will be monitored every day from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. from mid-May until mid-July. This year ten females are being monitored to support the head-starting effort and nests from these females will be transported to the Woodland Park Zoo. The remaining 15 are being monitored as part of a project assessing the effect of shell disease on reproduction and their nest will be left to incubate naturally. This year WDFW is lucky to have monitoring assistance from Center for Natural Lands Management and Joint Base Lewis-McChord volunteers and interns. This week's monitoring was focused on training these new monitors and preparing them to work independently throughout the season.



Volunteers assisting with fence repair around the turtle ponds



Female Western Pond turtle with newly attached transmitter

Taylor's Checkerspot Surveys - Clallam County: Two occupied Taylor's checkerspot sites west of the Elwha River are monitored by WDFW using a distance point count method. The 2019 season includes two additional surveyors Biologist Bell and Biologist Murphie. The 2019 surveys include a total of 278 Points, an increase of 73 points from the 2018 total of 205. There are two main sites west of the Elwha River, the northern site and the southern site. These sites are further subdivided into routes that are assigned to the surveyors. The numbers were higher for each second survey conducted.

Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly: A highlight was a count of over 300 checkerspots on one survey route by Biologist Murphie. Biologist McMillan coordinated with the other surveyors to complete nine additional survey routes to protocol, with results shown on the table of raw counts below. The counts will be analyzed later by Researcher Olson.

Taylor's Checkerspot Surveys	Northern Site TOTAL	Northern-Upper	Northern-U2s	Northern-Es	Northern-Lower	Southern West	Southern - Jenny	Southern - Parallel	Southern - Ridge Road TOTAL	Ridge Road - A1	Ridge Road - B	Ridge Road - C	Ridge Road - D	Southern - Lower East Road
# Points	89	41	5	5	38	52	34	20	57	12	16	20	9	22
25-Apr-19	21	17	0	0	4		Incomplete							
26-Apr-19							48							
28-Apr-19						160								
29-Apr-19	75	65	2	0	8			9	14	6 (11 pt)	6	1	1	
30-Apr-19														6
2-May-19														Incomplete
4-May-19							202	22	Partial	2 (11 pt)				
5-May-19									Partial		1 (14pts)	0 (19 pts)	0	
6-May-19									20	6 (11 pt)	8	4	2	
7-May-19						338	119	24	Partial	8 (11 pt)				
8-May-19														29
9-May-19	199	121	18	N/A	60				32	10	11	8	3	
10-May-19	207	112	7	12	76									39
						Count-color indicates surveyor	Gary	Shelly	Bryan	Anita				

Taylor's Checkerspot Habitat Improvement: On May 8, Biologist Ament reviewed some of the habitat improvement projects that were conducted by the Washington Conservation Corps crew at the northern Taylor's checkerspot site west of the Elwha River. Tree and brush removal had been completed in the fall of 2017. Vegetation was piled up and burned last fall. Biologist Ament acquired some extra host plant seed from the United States Forest Service. She assisted the Washington Conservation Corps crew with distributing the seed at burn pile sites last fall. The planting effort proved to be very successful. Dense *Collinsia paraviflora* and *Plectritis congesta* plants were found in bloom at the seeded burn pile sites. A few Taylor's checkerspot and other butterflies were observed in the vicinity. Biologist Ament has contacted Department of Natural Resources staff members and requested that the Washington Conservation Corps crew leader and crew be advised that all their dedicated hard work certainly paid off to assist with the recovery of this unique endangered species.



Burn pile areas seeded with TC host plants



Collinsia and Plectritis in bloom

Flight Season Surveys - Taylor's Checkerspot: Biologists Linders, Randolph, and Cook, assisted by Joint Base Lewis-McChord Biologist Richardson, have been engaged in annual distance estimation training and implementation at two former reintroduction sites, two active reintroduction sites, one colonization site and one extant site in the Puget lowlands (table results presented in this order). Since the first butterflies emerged on April 15, five to six surveys have occurred at each site. Numbers rose slowly in the early part of the season, but most sites achieved and sustained excellent numbers before beginning to decline. Estimated numbers of butterflies counted per survey by date and site are listed below, actual counts and subsequent abundance estimates will be provided in the annual report produced later this year.

Date	SCS1	R50	TA7S	TA15	SCS2	R76
20-Apr		372				302
21-Apr			0	22		
24-Apr	614				8	
26-Apr			5	165		
27-Apr		1498				
29-Apr						2201
30-Apr	1672		8		20	
1-May		1893		237		1893
3-May			12			
4-May	1127				52	
6-May		1267		194		1385
7-May			11			
8-May	676				75	
10-May			18			
11-May		366		55		385
13-May	185				50	

Many unusual observations have been noted so far during the 2019 flight season. For example, hundreds of fifth instar larvae that were undetectable at the start of the flight season, later emerged to feed (left below). At the start of May, it was unclear whether they would return to diapause for a second year or progress to the adult stage; small females emerging last Monday suggest some may have chosen the adult track. Some larvae continued to sixth instar because they were home to parasitoid wasp larvae, which could be seen crawling from the spiracles to pupate nearby (middle below); yes, this is fatal for the checkerspot. Fortunately, the abundance of large females and good weather provides a high likelihood that countless eggs (right below) have been distributed far and wide across occupied Puget lowland prairies in spring 2019, in spite of a cold and confusing start.



Photos by M. Linders

In addition to abundance surveys, the checkerspot crew conducted checkerspot occupancy surveys across all of Scatter Creek South Unit, and has assisted Joint Base Lewis-McChord and Center for Natural Lands Management crews in conducting occupancy surveys across the Artillery Impact Area (AIA) and adjacent training areas. Scattered checkerspots were observed across Scatter Creek in and surrounding areas, and were readily observed singly and in varying sized clusters across much of the AIA and surrounding training areas on Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

Taylor's Checkerspot Collection/Release: The checkerspot crew also collected 40 females to be split between the two captive rearing facilities and release about 200 adults to each of two reintroduction sites on May 7, half from each of the rearing facilities. Adults were released under ideal conditions, with temperatures ranging from 60 to 72 degrees Fahrenheit, sunny to partially sunny skies, and no precipitation. Released adults were observed basking, nectaring, mating and otherwise interacting with local adults in the period following release.



*Biologist Linders, YTESC-SPP graduate student Curry, and Biologist Randolph release captive-reared adult Taylor’s checkerspots into the field once their role in captivity is complete
May 7 2019 – Photos by K. Curry, M. Linders*

Dead Sea Otter Pup: Biologist Ament was contacted by a very close friend, Lynne Roberson, who was a fellow ranger with her at Lake Ozette in Olympic National Park back in 1991. Lynne had been hiking at Third Beach in Olympic National Park and encountered a very young sea otter pup that was dead along the high tide line along the beach. She was well aware that this is a protected species and was glad that her cell phone was successful in reaching Biologist Ament from the remote location. Biologist Ament directed Lynne to collect the dead pup that was very fresh and showed no signs for the cause of death. Biologist Ament promptly contacted appropriate personnel from the U.S Forest Service and Olympic National Park to notify them. Biologist Ament obtained the pup and has it store in her agency freezer until it can be delivered to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



Sea otter pup that was found dead at Third Beach

Dead Eagles: Biologist Ament was contacted this past month about several eagles that died within the district. Two bald eagles were reported as electrocutions by the Clallam County Public Utility District (PUD). One adult bald eagle was electrocuted on power lines at Neah Bay on the Makah Reservation. PUD staff members collected this eagle and delivered it to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) personnel at the Dungeness Refuge. A reported golden eagle was apparently killed on power lines on the Quileute Reservation. This eagle was collected by a tribal member. Biologist Ament is investigating this situation more to determine if it was indeed a golden eagle and if it was properly transferred to USFWS. Biologist Ament worked in the past to negotiate an Avian Protection Plan with the local PUD. Staff members at PUD were contacted about each electrocution and will be working to modify the power lines. Biologist Ament also collected a dead adult bald eagle that was found at the Olympic Game Farm in Sequim. The cause of death is unknown but fighting with other eagles is suspected.

Purple Martin Box Installation: Biologist Ament and the local Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society (OPAS) have been working the past several years with the North Olympic Salmon Coalition (NOSC) to maintain a nesting colony of purple martins located on pilings north of the Three Crabs agency property near Sequim. Dedicated volunteers from OPAS met on Easter morning to install the boxes. Eighteen boxes were installed on the metal poles and another four boxes were placed inland on the WDFW property. Apparently, four to five purple martins showed up to inspect the boxes on the first pole while the team was installing the boxes on the second pole! A warm thank you to John Gussman for the fabulous photos he took from the ground and air. See link - <http://www.dcproductions.com/nestboxes/>.



2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Johns Landing Upgrades: At Johns River, there are improvements being made. The handicapped loading facility is being rebuilt and the dyke trail is being resurfaced, both of these projects were bid out. The Olympic crew assisted this project by resurfacing the main apron from the county road, which was holding progress up for the Grays Harbor County permitting process. The Olympic crew also took some time for access point maintenance at Chinook as well as an opportunity to look at the new acquisition there.



Home scheduled to be removed from recently acquired addition to Chinook Unit

Lands Access: Biologist Michaelis continued to work on identifying and field proofing access into public lands in region six. Effort was focused on locating Grays Harbor County lands in the northern portion of Game Management Unit 642 (Copalis).

Hunting Access: Biologist Harris, Regional Program Manager Calkins, Captain Chadwick, and Program Manager Strickland met with a large timberland owner to discuss last hunting season's public access. In addition, they discussed possibly developing an agreement for another block of land.

Natural Resource Technician Tupen visited a few sites where people have been leaving a lot of shooting trash. Tupen contacted the timber company that owns the property and gained permission to hang signs asking the public to pack their trash out with them.

Dump Sites: Natural Resource Technician Tupen, accompanied by Biologist Sundstrom, continued to pick up dumpsites on private timber company lands in Grays Harbor County.



Abandoned Boats Removed: Water access team members Reeves and Mitchell removed two abandoned boats in Kitsap County. An 18-foot Reinell was dumped right next to the Misery Point launch ramp just prior to the very popular shrimp opener. An equipment trailer was used to transport the vessel to the landfill.

At Tiger Lake, a dump trailer was used to remove a 16-foot vessel dumped in the parking lot.



Misery Point



Tiger Lake

Pleasant Harbor: The water access team spent ten hours dressing up the Pleasant Harbor salt-water site prior to the shrimp opener. Mowing, weed eating, road brushing and asphalt blowing was performed.



3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Beaver Problems: Natural Resource Technician Tupen continues to monitor a private timber company lands site for any signs of beaver activity. Tupen is using tactics such as hanging bear hide and placing predator attractant in areas of high beaver use.

Bear Capture: Tupen assisted Biologist Blankenship with a bear capture in Olympia. The bear was moved and released to a remote area in Pierce County. Law enforcement along with a Karelian bear dog were able to assist with the successful release.



Approximately two-year-old sow being transported away from civilization

Predator Sightings/Conflicts: Natural Resource Technician Tupen responded to a bear a complaint in Quilcene of a bear getting into a landowner's dumpster and leaving trash everywhere. Advice was given. The landowner was very understanding and open to all suggestions. Tupen checked several bear traps located in Thurston and Pacific counties and re-baited where necessary. Region 6 personnel also handled numerous bear complaints. The most common report was bears getting into bird feeders.



Puncture marks in a dumpster lid, believed to have been made by a bear

Raccoon Rescue: Natural Resource Technician Tupen responded to a report of three orphaned baby raccoons at a residence in Long Beach. Upon arrival, he discovered that two of the raccoons had passed, but one was still breathing. Tupen took the raccoon to a local veterinary office where they gave the raccoon some much needed fluids. Tupen then transported the raccoon to Center Valley Animal Rescue, where they will continue the rehabbing process. The homeowner that found the raccoons was thrilled to hear that one of them may survive.



Orphaned, baby raccoon on its way to Center Valley Animal Rescue

Satsop Elk: The Satsop elk decided to make a showing in an area where they have never been during the spring. Unfortunately, it was a recently planted cornfield. Hopefully, they did not do much damage. Master hunters, Natural Resource Technician Tupen, and the owner's employee mobilized quickly to herd the elk off. The elk came back several times and each time they got exercised. Tupen has been keeping a close eye on the area and has not been able to locate the elk. We are hoping they are on industrial forestlands.

Forks Elk: Biologist Harris spoke to two producers in the Forks area to check how the elk were behaving. As expected, they are still around. The producers report the elk respond to hazing and herding much better now that we are starting to apply the ecology of fear. This is a somewhat unique effort. Everyone agrees elk are part of Forks and are wanted. We just have too many and need to manage the group size. One producer on the east end of town reported that many of the elk were in poor condition. Some are starting to look better. This is consistent with what Biologist Harris has observed. Most of the pastures the elk were using are extremely overgrazed by the elk resulting in poor nutrition.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Spring Clean Up: The Olympic crew has been preparing for a busy season getting wildlife areas prepared for mowing. This winter brought lots of wind, which sent trees and debris into the fields, as well as high water, which eroded some areas away. Also in the works are preparations for re-farming in unit two of the Wynoochee mitigation as well as the Lynn Place.



Prescribed Fire on west side Wildlife Areas: Biologists Lowery, Cook, Linders Randolph and Tveten met with Matt Eberlien from WDFW's prescribed fire program to exchange information on fire planning, restoration objectives, and recent changes to WDFW's fire program. Fire on Puget lowlands sites has been conducted via a cooperative inter-agency group from Center for Natural Lands Management, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WDFW, and Department of Natural Resources. Lands Section Manager Dahmer joined the group for a field tour of recent forest treatments at Scatter Creek, and a survey of similar needs at West Rocky Prairie. These sites and others, including acquisitions underway, indicate an increased need for prescribed fire as a restoration and management tool on WDFW lands west of the Cascades.

Habitat Connectivity: Biologist Ament participated in a webinar on April 30, where hosts described the process of selecting focal species for a [habitat connectivity modeling project](#). This project, managed through a partnership of Washington Department of Transportation, USFWS, WDFW, Conservation Biology Institute, and the Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group, aims to map and model wildlife habitat connectivity across western Washington. The project is similar to the [Columbia Plateau Connectivity Analysis](#), where results have since guided some of WDFW's work in eastern Washington. This current project will provide spatially explicit tools to support land management decisions within a broader landscape context. This includes Washington State Department of Transportation, who will use the models to identify areas to invest in highway crossing structures that provide the greatest long-term benefits to wildlife populations. Resource agencies, land trust and non-governmental organizations will also be able to use the data to identify and prioritize lands for easements and acquisitions. Biologist Ament will be assisting with the efforts to identify focal species that will be used in modeling efforts.

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Great Blue Heron: Biologist Murphie provided consultation to a homeowner on a proposed construction project and a potential for conflict with a heron nest. The nest is inactive this year and no conflict is expected.

Taylor's Checkerspot Reintroduction in the News: Biologists Linders and Cook met with Public Affairs representative Wettstein and Dan Warn, a reporter for the Nisqually Valley News and the Daily Chronicle. Stories celebrating the success of the reintroduction work appeared on WDFW's Facebook page as well as in both newspapers. The article can be viewed at http://www.yelmonline.com/news/article_7685d276-71e5-11e9-8d36-d711beceb133.html

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) Grant Review: Biologist Novack finished reviewing the 75 ALEA grant proposals submitted to WDFW for funding and provided an initial ranking to the regional management team for further comments. Novack then participated in a panel with 13 WDFW personnel from across the state to further discuss the proposals and, finalize the scoring. ALEA grants coordinator Josh Nicholas will take the panel's rankings to the agency's executive management team for final approval. Region 6 should see multiple grants awarded. Twenty-three of the submissions were located partly or wholly in Region 6 and many scored highly amongst all panelists.

7) Other

Injured Wildlife: Biologist Murphie responded to a call regarding an injured great blue heron in Seabeck. He collected and transported the heron to the West Sound Wildlife Rehabilitation Shelter. He also responded to a call regarding an injured Canada goose at Timberlakes, near Shelton. He located the goose, but after speaking with local residents determined this goose has been there for at least two years, and although injured it appeared to be doing fine. He did not attempt to capture it.