



Director's Report to the Commission September 18-19, 2015

Wildlife Program

Wolf

Capture and Monitoring Update:

- Normally scheduled summer trapping efforts were curtailed in July initially due to high temperatures and then by wildfires. If the wildfire situation improves and access is restored, the Department may initiate trapping in September.
- There is some indication from recent monitoring efforts that the Huckleberry Pack has divided into two groups; Huckleberry North and Huckleberry South. The Department wanted to update the Fish and Wildlife Commission and public about this because of the relevance to a recent confirmed wolf depredation on a guard dog in the Huckleberry North area. The Huckleberry North group appears to be a minimum of three to four wolves, including the collared male from the original Huckleberry Pack. The Huckleberry South group has an unknown number of wolves, but it is known that they produced a litter of pups this spring. The Department will make the final determination on confirmed packs after December 2015 when the winter surveys are completed.

Wolf Conflict-Deterrence Updates:

- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Wildlife Conflict staff revised the Wolf-Livestock Deterrence Updates for each wolf pack. The Wolf-Conflict Deterrence Updates are available online under the new webpages for each pack at http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/gray_wolf/packs/. At the minimum, these updates will be revised annually prior to the start of a new grazing season.

Huckleberry Pack Depredation:

- On August 11 the Department received a report of an injured livestock guard dog in the Huckleberry North area; this event involved the same producer who had confirmed wolf depredations on domestic sheep during the 2014 summer. The Conflict Specialist was notified and met the producer at the veterinary clinic to examine the injured livestock guard dog and gather evidence. Based on the investigation, the event was confirmed as a wolf depredation.
- The producer that owns the guard dog operates under a Damage Prevention Cooperative agreement with the Department. WDFW staff have continued working with the producer with non-lethal preventative measures (e.g. human presence, guard dogs, fox lights, RAG box, data sharing). More information on preventive measures in place, the number of confirmed depredations, and other

pertinent information is available in the “chronology of events” online under the new Huckleberry webpage at http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/gray_wolf/packs/5/.

- The Huckleberry Pack was involved in multiple confirmed wolf depredations on livestock in August 2014, and the Department lethally removed one wolf in response to those depredations. Based on the guidance from the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (wolf plan) and WDFW’s Protocol for Lethal Removal of gray wolves (including flow-chart), the Department would consider lethal control in this situation after two confirmed wolf depredation on livestock (and requirements for non-lethal measures are met and depredations are expected to continue). Since guard dogs are defined as livestock in the wolf plan, the Department will initiate lethal removal of wolves from the Huckleberry North group on the next confirmed wolf depredation event (i.e., event #2) in the area.

Dirty Shirt Pack Depredations:

- No additional depredations have been reported since July 15.
- WDFW Wildlife Conflict staff continued to deploy contracted range riders for evening and night work. In addition, WDFW staff continued periodic (sometimes daily) patrols during day and evening hours. More information on preventive measures in place, the number of confirmed depredations, and other pertinent information is available in the “chronology of events” online under the new Dirty Shirt webpage at http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/gray_wolf/packs/3/.

Teaway Pack Depredation:

- There was a calf killed by wolves in mid-July.
- On September 6, 2015, an adult cow was confirmed to have been killed by wolves.
- Other livestock depredations have been found in area, either attributed to other predators or unknown predators.
- The sheep producer, as part of their normal grazing plan, has moved his flock outside of the Teaway Pack home range.
- More information on preventive measures in place, the number of confirmed depredations, and other pertinent information is available in the “chronology of events” online under the new Teaway webpage at http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/gray_wolf/packs/14/.

Wolf Advisory Group Meeting:

- The Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) had a meeting on September 3, 2015, in Tumwater, which was open to the public. The meeting included an update from WDFW on recent field activities, capacity building amongst WAG members, identifying potential topics WAG might address, and a discussion about WAG’s

perspectives on the coexistence of wolves and livestock grazing. In terms of the Department's general perception of the meeting, WAG appears to be moving forward with the expectations for conflict transformation of deep rooted issues. The September 3 WAG meeting reflected a substantial improvement from similar WAG meetings last year.

- On September 2 and early on September 3 (just prior to the scheduled WAG meeting), WAG had a field trip to Wolf Haven International to discuss "perspectives from the environmental community." The field trip was one of three field trips designed to expose WAG members to perspectives from the livestock, environmental, and hunter communities. The field trip which related to the livestock community occurred during the May 21-22, 2015 WAG meeting. The field trip related to the hunter community will likely occur during the upcoming October or December WAG meetings.
- The next WAG meeting is scheduled for September 30-October 1, 2015 in Ellensburg.

WAG Contract:

- The Department established the Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) in July 2013 to enable a diverse group of stakeholders to help the Department implement the 2011 Wolf Conservation and Management Plan.
- Initially, Department staff and WAG members found it difficult to establish a cohesive relationship and to reach consensus, primarily due to the contentious nature of wolf management.
- The Department started using an in-house facilitator in 2014, but WAG still struggled to build trust and reach agreement on key issues.
- By December 2014, seven years after the discovery of the first wolf pack in Washington, it had become clear that increasing public acceptance of coexistence with wolves was one of the most challenging aspects of wolf management. (Public acceptance is one of the four goals of the wolf plan.)
- The Legislature this year recognized the need to increase public understanding of coexistence with wolves. For example, the state House of Representatives approved legislation (House Bill 2107) calling for a neutral third-party facilitator to work with stakeholders and included funding for the facilitator in their operating budget for WDFW.
- The bill was not enacted, but the concept of a neutral facilitator was strongly supported by Democrats and Republicans, along with every member of WAG. Ultimately, lawmakers provided funding for a facilitator in the 2015-17 state (capital) budget.
- With funding in place, WDFW issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) and awarded the contract to Human-Wildlife Conflict Collaboration, led by Francine Madden.

2015-2016 Benchmarks:

- 6-8 WAG meetings
- 5-20 sub-group, sub-committee, or other small mixed or homogenous facilitated group dialogue as needed with, between or within WDFW and/or stakeholder groups/subgroups
- Capacity building: WDFW 5-10 days; Stakeholder groups 5-10 days
- Ongoing WDFW, Commission, and stakeholder strategic guidance and support
- Exploration and pursuit of opportunities for constructive engagement in and around wolf recovery and management
- Complex system engagement must allow for emergence of constructive change

2016-2017 Benchmarks:

- 6-8 WAG meetings
- 5-20 subgroup, sub-committee or other small mixed or homogenous facilitated group dialogue as needed with, between or within WDFW and/or stakeholder groups/subgroups
- Capacity building (up to): 10 days for WDFW, stakeholders, relevant parties
- Ongoing WDFW, Commission and stakeholder strategic guidance and support
- Exploration and pursuit of opportunities for constructive engagement in and around wolf recovery and management

Budget:

Line Item	Amount	Units	Cost per unit	Total
Facilitation Services (WAG, capacity building, other)	40	days	\$8,000	\$320,000
Time in Travel (based on 15 trips)	270	hours	\$ 200	\$ 54,000
Air travel plus luggage fees	15	trips	\$ 850	\$ 12,750
Ground travel DC	30	trips	\$ 30	\$ 900
Vehicle rental and fuel	15	rentals	\$ 364	\$ 5,460
In-person engagement	32	days	\$4,000	\$128,000
Meals/lodging	100	MIE	\$ 129	\$ 12,900
Remote engagement and strategic guidance	790	hours	\$ 400	\$316,000
Total				\$850,010

Federal Grant Secured for Hunting Access

The Department recently secured a grant through the Natural Resource Conservation Service's Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program for approximately \$1.4 million to expand access on up to 60,000 acres of upland bird hunting in southeast Washington, up to 10,000 acres of deer and turkey hunting access in northeast Washington and Klickitat County, and deer hunting access on sites near the Puget Sound urban center on small ownerships. We will also focus on waterfowl hunting access on sites near the Puget Sound urban center and encourage practices that provide important food resources to birds wintering in the region.

Wildlife Deputy Assistant Director: Eric Gardner

I am pleased to announce that Eric Gardner is the new Wildlife Deputy Assistant Director. Eric received his Bachelor's degree from Colorado State University and worked for over 20 years at the Arizona Game and Fish Department in a variety of positions, including the nongame branch chief, a field operations division coordinator, and a wildlife manager (similar to our district biologist with enforcement duties). Eric joined WDFW's Wildlife Program as the Diversity Division Manager in November 2012 and has served as the Acting Wildlife Deputy Assistant Director since January. This past year, he has served as the Director's representative to the Pacific Flyway Council



and as the Governor's representative to the Sage Grouse Task Force. Eric has a great blend of knowledge of national wildlife policy issues as well as possesses the skills and pragmatism to implement on-the-ground wildlife conservation. He is committed to our mission and to the Program. I know you'll find him to be knowledgeable, capable, and very supportive in seeing the Department succeed.

Eric is married to his wife, Kim, and they have two adult daughters. He enjoys fishing, hunting, archery, mushroom hunting, and boating, and is enjoying exploring his new surroundings in the Pacific Northwest.

Eric and a turkey he harvested in northeast Washington this past spring.

2016 Hunting Pamphlet Cover Contest

The theme for the 2016 Hunting Regulations pamphlet will be "Finding Inner Strength," a tribute to hunters with disabilities. As the nation celebrates the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, we want to celebrate thousands of Washington hunters – and their hunting companions – who overcome unique challenges every year to find success in the field. The Department is asking hunters to send us their photos showing these accomplishments, along with a short paragraph description of the hunt.

Enforcement Program

Officers have been incredibly busy over the past month with salmon run monitoring, orca patrols, market checks, Aquatic Invasive Species check stations, wildfire response assistance, and the recently opened hunting seasons, along with responding to wildlife complaints and problem bears.

Joint WDFW-Tulalip Shellfish Trafficking Investigation

The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife Police and the Tulalip Tribal Police concluded a joint and long-term investigation involving large-scale shellfish poaching and trafficking by serving a number of state and tribal arrest and search warrants. Two suspects were booked into the Snohomish County Jail for their role in closed season and undocumented crab and shrimp harvest, along with the theft of a boat motor. The poaching occurred during the hours of darkness and/or under the guise of a subsistence fishing when commercial harvest and sales were closed. The two suspects committed 16 fish and wildlife felonies. Based on a 66-page affidavit, 15 state and tribal search warrants were obtained and executed on the Tulalip Reservation by WDFW Police. As is usually the case, the illegal harvests were encouraged by the illicit seafood market ready to purchase undocumented product and closed season product. Detectives have interviewed about a dozen related businesses and seized a vehicle used to purchase some of the illegal catch. Clearly, the Tulalip Tribal Police and WDFW Police recognized that a joint and comprehensive approach was needed to address the full scope of this illegal operation and take out both the source and receiving end for the illegal seafood. The Tribe also filed 13 charges against the two members. WDFW has completed the seizures for forfeiture of vehicles and a vessel involved in the violations, as well as other evidence seizures, and has referred charges to the prosecutor.

Commercial License Suspension Review Committee

A draft letter regarding creation of the Commercial License Suspension Review Committee has been prepared. It requests industry folks who are interested in serving on the committee contact the Department to convey their interest. The committee will review appeals from those commercial license holders who are convicted of qualifying commercial violations and have their license suspended by the Department. It is hoped that the Department will receive enough applicants to convene the committee so that individuals who are convicted of suspension eligible offenses that undermine the integrity of the industry may be suspended accordingly. The majority of industry participants are law-abiding, and qualifying convictions are infrequent, so the committee will likely only hear a couple appeals per year.

Seven Guilty Convictions Obtained in Kittitas County Deer Waste Case

Seven guilty convictions for waste and \$14,000 in restitution were obtained for WDFW in a Kittitas County case where a landowner killed and wasted over 20 deer on his property. The landowner had never contacted WDFW to address or seek assistance with damage to ornamental shrubs and raspberry bushes on the landowner's property.

Instead he took matters into his own hands and killed at least 20 deer, piling them up on a corner of his property. In addition to other penalties, the Department is moving forward with suspending his hunting privileges for life. More information on the case is available here: <http://nwsportsmanmag.com/headlines/dishonor/kittitas-county-man-fined-heavily-for-wasting-deer/>

New Karelian Bear Dog Puppy Joins the WDFW Enforcement Ranks

The Enforcement Program is happy to announce and welcome the addition of a new Karelian Bear Dog (KBD) puppy to their KBD Team! The puppy's name is Jax and he is from Denmark. He is assigned to Officer Kirsch and will be the latest Wildlife Services dog to aid in protecting the public and wildlife in Region 1.



Renton Bear Baiting Case

A father/son duo is under investigation for baiting and killing a bear in Renton, Washington, orphaning her two cubs. One cub was found and taken to a local wildlife rehabilitator, but the other cub was never found. The case has resulted in a lot of public attention. The bear had been around before, attracted to unsecured garbage by a neighbor, but left after that neighbor secured their trash. When WDFW visited the neighbor's property with a KBD, the father approached them about his issue. Officers spoke with the father about his trash and informed him about the regulations related to bear hunting and baiting. Apparently, the bear then was coming around the father's home, where he claims the bear attacked the family dog. Instead of contacting WDFW for assistance, the father set out dog food to attract the bear, including some dog food in a bucket to act as an "alarm." The son hid in his father's boat and shot the bear as it approached. They sent the bear's hide to a taxidermist. Baiting bears for hunting or negligent storage of food 24 hours after a warning is illegal. Killing a bear may be allowed depending on the circumstances, but only if there is an immediate threat of physical harm to a person, or if the bear is in the physical act of attacking livestock or domestic animals. Enforcement is continuing the investigation and evaluating potential charges that may be filed with the prosecutor.

Fish Program

2015 Puget Sound Recreational Salmon Fishery Update

- Chinook provided a mixture of angling success with slow fishing until a late bump in catches for Sekui (Area 5), one of the best openers in Port Angeles (Area 6), solid catches in Admiralty Inlet (Area 9; closed after 11 days), great catch-and-release fishing in Area 10, and slow but variable success in Area 11/13 (south Puget Sound).

- It was not uncommon to hear of reports of 20+-pound hatchery Chinook being caught in Puget Sound this year.
- Drought's effect on migration and possible low returns has had an increasing affected on effort in our marine fisheries.
 - Some terminal areas were closed to help meet Chinook broodstock at some facilities.
- An early return of pink salmon provided great opportunity to fisheries where fishing was either slow or were closed to Chinook fishing with some amazing catches occurring in Area 7 (San Juans) and Humpy Hollow (Area 8-2/9), and is ongoing but slowing down for most Marine Areas.
 - Pink salmon returning this year were of variable size as many caught were in the 1-3 pound size.
- Resident coho fishing great early season catches and opportunities for mid-Puget Sound (Areas 9-11) and larger migratory coho are just starting to draw the interest of anglers in most northern Puget Sound waters (Areas 5-9).

2015 Buoy 10 and Columbia River Salmon Fishery Update

- Buoy 10: The Buoy 10 fishery was closed to Chinook retention August 29, ten days prior to the scheduled closure on Labor Day. The Chinook catch per angler in Buoy 10 in August was a new record, resulting in the wild Chinook Endangered Species Act impact limit being reached before the scheduled closure.
- Hanford Reach: The fall Chinook fishery in the Hanford Reach is underway and off to a fast start. Fishing should be very good for a few more weeks, with over 300,000 adult fall Chinook expected to pass over McNary Dam. The majority of the upriver brights are wild and hatchery fish destined for the Hanford Reach area with additional fish turning into the Yakima and Snake Rivers and also passing upstream of Priest Rapids Dam.
- Snake River: This years' return of fall Chinook to the Snake River is strong with over 35,000 passing over Ice Harbor Dam through mid-September. The sport fishery in the lower Snake River was open to marked hatchery fall Chinook by emergency regulation beginning September 1.

North of Cape Falcon Ocean Commercial and Recreational Fishery Update

- Commercial Troll: The commercial troll fishery took all but 1,030 of the spring quota of 40,200 Chinook and the remainder was rolled into the summer fishery. The fishery will close on September 22 and is expected to take all of the summer Quota of 27,830 Chinook. Coho fishing has been quite slow all summer with less than 4,000 coho taken on the quota of 19,200.

- Ocean Recreational: Marine Area 4 (Neah Bay) had very good Chinook fishing and had to be closed for two weeks in August. Coho fishing was quite slow and the Quota was switched from selective to non-selective on September 4. Heavy fishing pressure from neighboring Area 5 caught the quota in one week and Neah Bay was switched back to selective for coho.
- Marine Area 3 (La Push) had very good Chinook fishing and was reduced to a one chinook per day limit. Coho fishing was very slow in La Push as well and it also went to a nonselective fishery on September 4.
- Marine Area 2 (Westport) has had good Chinook and relatively good coho fishing all season. Enough coho were left in the quota that Westport also went to a nonselective fishery for coho on September 4.
- Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco) has had good Chinook and coho fishing all season. Effort has been down from historic levels and enough coho were left in the quota that Area 1 also went to a nonselective fishery for coho on September 4.

Impacts from the Drought

Washington's extreme drought has put immense pressure on many of the state's fish hatcheries and fisheries in 2015. With help from Department of Ecology Drought Relief Funding, the Department was able to take numerous actions to minimize impacts at the hatcheries (aeration pumps, oxygen meters, shade cloths, salt, formalin, etc.). Temperatures have cooled significantly and with the addition of rainfall over the past week, things have calmed down. In many cases, river and stream flows are at almost normal levels. With lower temperatures and adequate flows, adults are seen beginning to return to the hatcheries and spawning grounds. Fish mortality rates at the hatcheries due to drought conditions have ended at this time. Many fisheries are still either closed or under hoot-owl restrictions, but some of those fisheries that have been closed over the course of the summer are opening up again, and we expect to see a continued lifting of restrictions/closures provided we continue receiving rainfall and lower temperatures.