

Wildlife Program

Week of October 14-20, 2013

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Golden Eagle Survey Outcomes: Biologist Gerry Hayes collaborated with Tom Owens and Gretchen Blatz in the Wildlife Survey Data Management Section to finalize updates to the Golden Eagle database through the 2013 survey season. All survey data for the 2013 breeding season and data for prior years have been coded and archived. Merger of some previously considered separate territories were also made to the database based on comments received from district biologists during the 2013 survey. For the 2013 survey season, based on a representative random sample of 106 territories, 48.1% were occupied. For 45 sample territories with known outcome, productivity was estimated as 0.58 young per territorial pair. Based on feedback from other biologists, the 2013 breeding season was a relatively poor year, in terms of occupancy and productivity, for Golden Eagles around the Pacific Northwest. Additional data analyses are on-going.

Enhancing Butterfly Awareness: Insect Conservation Biologist Ann Potter compiled Washington butterfly observation records and reported them to the Lepidopterists' Society for the 2013 Season Summary Report. The Season Summary is the primary repository for North American butterfly and moth records. The focus of this compilation was records that reflect new spatial or temporal distributions, including taxa new to the state or a county and records from under-reported regions. Potter confirmed and compiled observations from several sources including noted Northwest lepidopterists, several skilled amateur lepidopterists, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) staff. Over 30 records were reported; some notable observations were the first detection of Monarch in Skagit County (high in the Cascades – during surveys by the National Park Service), several Monarch observations along the Similkameen River from District 6 Biologist Jeff Heinlen and Wildlife Area Manager Justin Haug and a variety of eastern Washington observations (an under-reported region) submitted from a small network of committed and skilled Spokane area lepidopterists.

Wildlinks Conference: Lands Conservation and Restoration Section Manager Cynthia Wilkerson attended the Wildlinks conference of the Cascadia Partnership Forum (joint PF between the Great Northern LCC and the Northern Pacific LCC) in Manning Park, British Columbia (BC). The Climate Impact Group at University of Washington (UW) will be working to develop practitioner-specific strategies for integrating climate connectivity modeling into on-the-ground conservation actions. The Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board is working with the UW Climate Impacts group to quantify the effect of forest health restoration on snowpack. Access Management was identified as a major priority to address in the Cascadia geography, and the second day of the conference was dedicated entirely to delving into that issue. As part of this conference, Wilkerson gave an overview talk on Washington State Access Management Policies

on Public Lands. British Columbia is working on a province-wide Natural Resource Roads Act; Don Gosnell is the lead staff.

Transboundary WA/BC Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Project: Natural Resource Scientist Schuett-Hames gave a formal presentation, and led informal work-sessions regarding this project during the annual transboundary “Wildlinks” meeting. Both British Columbia and Washington rely on transboundary connectivity to facilitate recovery of rare species. For British Columbia, this includes badgers and other shrubsteppe species from our Columbia Plateau arid lands. Conversely, in Washington we rely on transboundary connectivity to support recovery of rare carnivores, such as lynx, grizzly bear, and wolverine.

REGION 1

Wolf Management

District 1: Specialist Shepherd, a rancher, and a contract range rider removed a cow carcass which had wolf activity and scavenging evidence. The investigation the previous week indicated no evidence of a predator attack signature. The carcass was removed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the rancher to the Trout Creek deer pit.

Specialist Shepherd discussed an elk kill permit with a Pend Oreille County rancher and a deer fence with a Southern Stevens County rancher, and a recently learned of wolf during the summer that corresponds to livestock injuries and a carcass.

Specialist Shepherd discussed range riding contracts, lack of payment, invoices and other issues with multiple cattle producers.

Specialist Shepherd discussed horse injury issues with a southern Stevens County residence near Fruitland. Wildlife issues were ruled out.

Specialist Shepherd helped contract range rider get hay and discussed work priorities in the Tiger Hill allotment and near Spirit Junction in the Smackout wolf territory.

Specialist Shepherd and Sherman Creek Wildlife Area Manager Palmer discussed issues that may emerge or be resolved from using the Trout Creek deer pit, which is on wildlife area property but used by Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) for road-kill disposal, as a fenced composting facility for wildlife and livestock carcasses.

Specialist Shepherd examined photos taken by a remote camera owned by an anonymous, reliable source in the central portion of the Wedge. The series of photos documents a single grey-colored wolf taken on September 22, 2013.

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

Wildlife Management



Northeast Washington Deer Hunter Check Stations: Wildlife Program staff including Ella Rowan, Annemarie Prince, Jim Kujala, Woody Myers, and Dana Base worked the Deer Park and Chattaroy check stations along with Hunter Education and student volunteers on October 13 (Sunday), 19 (Saturday), and 20 (Sunday). Following are results of each check station:

A successful deer hunter visited the Deer Park Check Station on October 20.

Date & Location	Total Deer Hunters	Total Deer	White-tails	Mule Deer	Other Game
Oct. 13 th Deer Park	91	12	10	2	1 cougar 1 moose 7 forest grouse
Oct. 13 th Chattaroy	67	9	8	1	19 ducks 9 geese
Oct. 19 th Deer Park	87	17	16	1	1 coyote 5 forest grouse
Oct. 20 th Deer Park	84	15	13	2	1 bobcat 5 forest grouse
Oct. 20 th Chattaroy	76	9	9	0	
TOTAL:	405	62	56	6	

Check station participation continues to be low. Success rates are consistent with early season rates. In 2012, the same check stations on these three weekend days had a total of 408 hunters checked with 79 deer including 67 white-tails and 12 mule deer.

Wildlife Areas

Sherman Creek Wildlife Area (SCWA) Successful Deer Hunters: One camp on SCWA, who have been hunting here for over 20 years, harvested two white-tailed bucks this week. Of the seven camps on the wildlife area, this was the only successful camp we are aware of. Hunters reported seeing many does and fawns of both white-tailed and mule deer, but few bucks.





WT Wooten Wildlife Area Hunting Activity: Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Dingman checked the campgrounds. There are lots of people in the valley this week for the rifle general deer season. Two nice white-tail bucks were hanging in Campground 5, but no one was around to get permission to take photos of them. A really nice mule deer buck stopped at the Last Resort to have their picture taken for the bulletin board in the store.

A 25" mule deer buck taken in the upper Tucannon area.

Private Lands/Access

Sherman Creek Wildlife Area (SCWA) Pheasant Release: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Palmer, with the help of a hand-full of volunteers, released pheasants on SCWA this week. The photo below was the youngest member of our crew; 4 year-old Denton. It's always fun to watch youngsters experience something new.

Volunteer Denton helped release pheasants at the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area.



Pheasant Release: Technician Clements completed the pheasant release for the Fishtrap Lake site in Lincoln County.

This pheasant just didn't want to be released.

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

Wildlife Management



Republic Deer Immobilization: Conflict Specialist Bennett, Big Game Biologist Myers, and Wildlife Biologist Rowan met with Wildlife Technician Bendixen in Republic to immobilize a deer that had an arrow through her neck. The immobilization was successful in removing the arrow and the deer was seen the next day. Last report from Police Chief Jan Lewis was that she was doing fine and is back with her twins.

REGION 2

Wolf Management

Winthrop Report: Biologist Heinlen, Conflict Specialist Heilhecker, and Assistant Manager Dupont investigated a wolf sighting near Winthrop reported at the Winthrop deer check station. The reporting party led us to the site where two canines were observed resting in a field. Due to the distance, definitive visual identification was not possible; however, tracks located in the field measured 2.5 inches wide by 3.0 inches long which indicated the animals were not wolves.

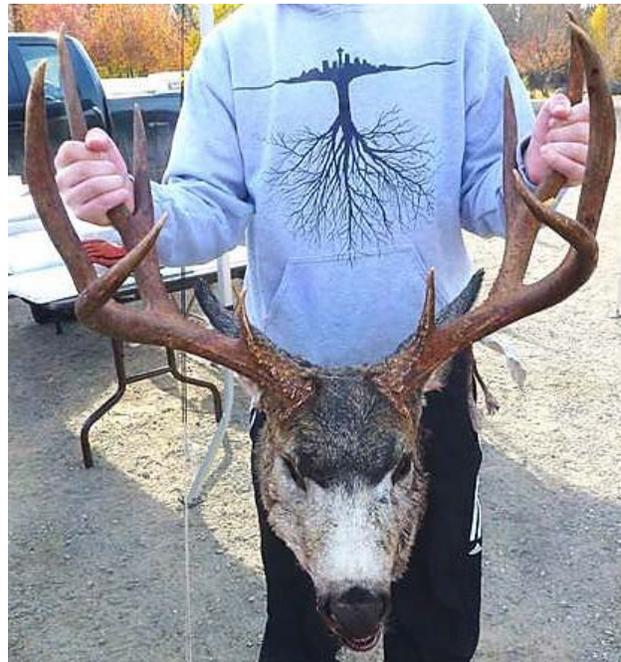


General Deer Season:

Biologists Fitkin and Heinlen ran the Winthrop deer check station for the final weekend of the general modern firearm season. Over two weekends we checked 252 hunters with 78 deer. The total number of hunters checked is almost identical to last year; however, the number of deer checked this year is up noticeably, indicating a significant increase in hunter success despite the mild weather. In addition, 44% of the checked bucks were in the 4 ½ years old or greater age category as compared to 30% in 2012. These check station numbers suggest late permit hunters should look forward to excellent hunting opportunity.



Creative deer transport.



Winthrop Check Station mule deer bucks. Photos by Scott Fitkin.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Scotch Creek Irrigation/Duck pond: Construction has started on the off channel irrigation reservoir on the Scotch Creek Unit, just off the Conconully Highway. This improvement will

allow us to efficiently utilize the water right in this area, irrigate riparian plantings and provide open water habitat that is limiting in this area.



State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE): Biologists Cotton and Dougherty spent three days marking forb plots for SAFE landowners in Douglas County. Specialist Bridges assisted with marking forb plots in the Mansfield, Dyer Hill and St. Andrews areas.

Private Lands Biologist Braaten spent time talking to private landowners about seeding forbs and grass into SAFE fields. Braaten made recommendations to a landowner who did not complete field prep correctly, suggesting that the landowner delay seeding for a year. Private Lands Biologist Braaten continues to update SAFE CPA-6 forms for the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

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

Wildlife Management

Waterfowl: Biologists Duvuvuei and Finger assisted Waterfowl Specialist Wehland with setting up and firing a rocketnet for capturing and banding small Canada geese.



Rocketnet site at Stratford Lake – Photo by Rich Finger

Hunter Contacts: Biologist Gallie contacted hunters in Chelan County Game Management Units (GMUs) 245, 250 and 247. No deer were checked in camps as this was the mid-week lull in hunting pressure, but did talk with several hunters about the migratory nature of the herd and the various areas to check out. Hunters were appreciative of the contact.

Pheasant release: Biologist Gallie released 200 pheasants on Swakane and Chelan Butte Wildlife Areas with students from WestSide High School.

Ellemeham Mountain Wildlife Area Parking Lots: Mike Nelson and Clark Topping completed two Parking/access points on the new Ellemeham Wildlife Area. Construction included a 4-strand wire perimeter fence, 16 foot metal tube gate and reader board. A few hunters stopped in and appreciated the new addition.



One of two new access/parking areas located at the Ellemeham Mountain Wildlife Area.

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

Wildlife Management

Deer Complaint: Specialist Heilhecker met with a landowner in Tonasket on October 15. He stated two to three does with fawns are eating his newly planted pear trees. The landowner was issued one damage permit with the stipulation he will install a temporary fence around the trees.

Specialist Heilhecker will meet with a landowner in Tonasket on October 18. Based on information given to her by law enforcement, this property has traditionally received damage permits. Apparently, this particular orchard is highly attractive to deer.

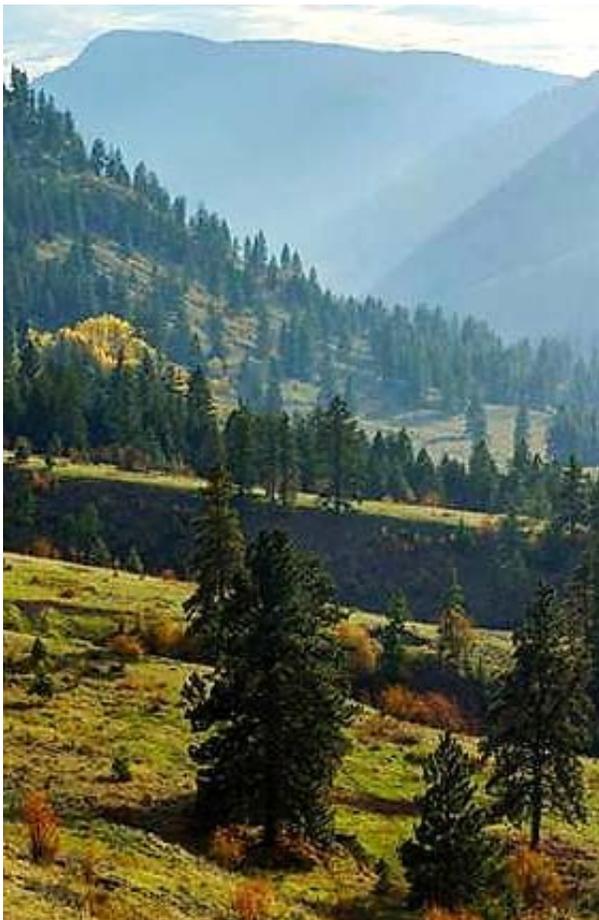
Specialist Heilhecker called the landowner in Oroville who she met on October 8. She passed along updated information regarding the possibility of the Department providing some financial assistance for the fence around his 20 acre apple orchard.

Museum Specimens Transfer: Biologist Gallie transferred numerous carcasses from the Wenatchee Office freezer to staff from the Burke Museum in Seattle. Burke has annually taken wildlife carcasses (under their Scientific Collection Permit) we find and collect on our jobs. Curators prepare and store skins, skeletons, and DNA banks of each species, plus add to their studies and outreach opportunities with the University of Washington science programs. Highlights from this year's transfer were entire bighorn sheep (ewe) and cougar carcasses, plus otters, raptors, owls, rodents, and a fox (all that fit into a Nissan Altima). This partnership has been a rewarding option to deal with dead wildlife rather than just tossing them in the trash or rotting in the field.

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

Wildlife Management

Assistant Manager hiring: After interviewing two final candidates for the assistant manager position, we made an offer to the top candidate. Unfortunately, she declined the offer. On the bright side, we had an excellent second candidate, John Lindsey, who did accept the position. We are hoping to have John start by the middle of November.



Looking south down the valley (left) and north towards Loomis and Chopaka Mountain (right) from the Pickering Acquisition, Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. – Photos by Justin Haug.



Fall colors on the Ellemeham Mountain Wildlife Area.



Deer season in the Methow – Photo by Tom McCoy.

Burn Module Team Leader Interviews: Interviews were conducted for three of four eligible candidates for the prescribed burn team leader position. Interviewing the last candidate has been delayed until the October 29.

REGION 3

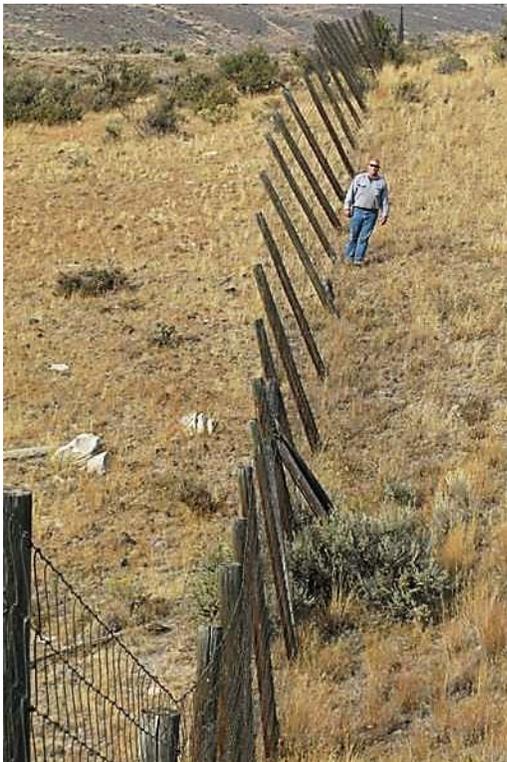
GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Tieton Bighorn Sheep: The last known sheep from the Tieton bighorn herd was removed on Monday. Biologist Bernatowicz organized the effort after receiving information from a deer hunter over the weekend. One of the contract hunters then spotted the animal and was able to get a clean shot. Samples were retrieved and shipped.

Wildlife Areas

Wenas Elk Fence Replacement: Wenas Wildlife Area Manager Confer Morris and Assistant Manager Taylor reviewed a three-mile stretch of elk fence that is planned for replacement this biennium. The stretch, between Kelley Hollow and Fusner's corner, is in poor condition with some posts leaning at a 45 degree angle and other sections where the rock jacks are falling apart and the fence is almost flat. This rebuild will tie into the new metal fencing at the Kelley Hollow corner that was installed after the fire last year.



Left: Section of leaning elk fence. Above: Section of failing rock jacks.

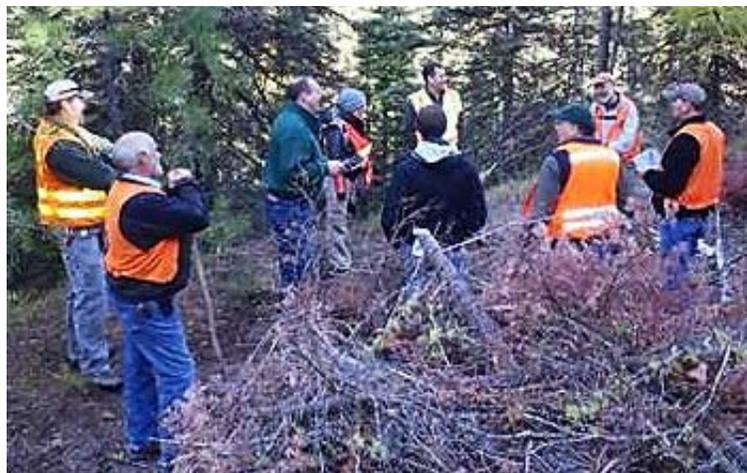
Heart K Elk Fence: LT Murray Wildlife Area staff Winegeart, Hunt and Schnebly worked with volunteers to complete an elk fence project on the Heart K that was started by Wildlife Conflict Specialist Novack and other volunteers. Scott Nicolai (Yakama Nation) spearheaded the effort

and rallied a good group of Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) members and other interested folks. Scott, Shana and Craig prepared some BBQ for the crew afterward.



Volunteer elk fence crew at Heart K.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area Forest Restoration Project: Oak Creek Wildlife Area Manager Huffman, Assistant Manager Berry, Regional Program Manager Clausing, Regional Director Livingston, Deputy Assistant Director Schirato, Lands Division Manager Sprague, Section Manager Dahmer, and Assistant Section Manager Vigue toured several sites on the Oak Creek Forest Restoration Project with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Forester Dahlgreen. The group looked at sites that have had non-commercial treatments this past season and discussed the history of the project, prescription development, goals and road blocks to implementation. The picture shows most of the group in a unit discussing the thinning objectives and the outcome.



Wildlife Area, Regional and Olympia staff toured the Oak Creek Forest Restoration Project with The Nature Conservancy.

Manager Huffman, Assistant Manager Berry and TNC Forester Dahlgreen also began burning slash piles as part of the Oak Creek Forest Restoration project. Huffman and Berry burned about 40 piles the first day, taking it very slow to make sure the piles did not spread or send burning material anywhere. The piles consumed well and did not spread at all. Huffman checked on the area the following day and found most of the piles out with a couple of old stumps that were under the piles smoking. Burning will continue, as time allows, until the area cannot be accessed due to winter conditions.



Oak Creek Assistant Manager Berry stands near a slash pile that was just ignited on the Oak Creek Forest Restoration Project.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Osprey Management: Biologist Anderson returned multiple requests for direction and process regarding take authorization of osprey nests on cell towers and other structures. On behalf of Regional Wildlife Program Manager Link, Biologist Anderson issued multiple nest Take Authorizations.

Great Blue Heron Management: Biologist Anderson continues to work with various project proponents of a proposed single-family development to examine potential removal of trees with heron nests in them. Anderson has asked the group to examine species biology, use of site, and WDFW management recommendations in providing justification to remove known nests. This is to meet legal take authorization under Revised Code of WA 77.15.130; Protected fish or wildlife – unlawful taking.

Anderson worked with a number of Seattle building applicants for heron management consultation regarding known Seattle colonies, per Seattle code and Growth Management Act.

Common Loon Efforts: Biologists Anderson and Smith winterized both the Calligan and Klaus lakes loon platforms. After seven years of use, the timbers of the platforms are beginning to hold quite a bit of water, creating a situation where they are floating a bit lower than desired. Anderson and Smith retrofitted the Calligan platform with a pilot retrofit of close-celled filled and sealed PVC pipes to increase buoyancy. Initially, this lifted the platform approximately 3/4" at a time where it is most waterlogged. District 12 will continue to examine this technique so that these very sturdy platforms can continue to be utilized in the long term.



Left: Common loon platform retrofitted to float higher in the water. Above: Close-up of loon platform retrofitted with sealed PVC pipe to increase buoyancy.

Citizen Science -- Woodland Park Zoo (WPZ) – WDFW Amphibian Egg Mass Monitoring Project: Biologist Anderson is working with an Advanced Inquiry Master's Candidate who is working with WPZ, Earth Expeditions, and Miami University Project Dragonfly Global Field Program to examine 2012-2013 occurrence data. This will assist in meeting classroom theme requirements of community-based conservation and participatory education, as well as public engagement in science. The student met with Anderson, went over the data, and went over some descriptive presence/absence summary and comparison statistics that will assist her in compiling and illustrating the data.

<http://www.zoo.org/page.aspx?pid=2122>

<http://www.zoo.org/page.aspx?pid=2004>

<http://www.earthexpeditions.org/borneo>

Mountain Goat Population Discussion: Biologists Milner and Danilson met with Region 4 and Olympia staff to discuss the results of this summer's surveys and consider options for the future including augmentation, future surveys, and updating the Game Management Plan for Mountain Goats.

Swinomish Brant Reserve: Biologists Danilson and DeBruyn did annual maintenance on buoys marking the reserve in Padilla Bay. One marker was replaced as well as several severely corroded.

American Pika Surveys: Assistant District Biologist Cyra submitted final data products from this summer's U.S Navy American Pika surveys.



Placing a new anchor for a Buoy in the Swinomish Brant Reserve

Great Blue Heron Management: Assistant District Biologist Cyra responded to a citizen's concern over snag management along SR203 near a small Great Blue Heron colony.

Wildlife Areas



Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm worked with two volunteers to build and install a sign kiosk at the middle parking area. An agricultural gate was also installed to keep the public from driving in the fields during off-hours. While Manager Boehm was on site, he continued to meet and greet hunters and educate them on the 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. regulation for pheasant release sites. Additionally, Manager Boehm met with WDFW Watershed Steward Doug Hennick to review crop-related grant deliverables and develop a plan to phase those tasks into the work plan.

Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm worked with two volunteers to build and install this sign on the Ebey Unit of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area.

Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project: WDFW Public Affairs distributed a press release, and Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Skagit Wildlife Area staff prepared a sign to be posted in the Leque Unit parking lot to advertise for the upcoming public meeting. The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 30 from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. in the Stanwood Middle School cafeteria, located at 9405 271st St. NW, Stanwood, WA 98292. WDFW will present background information, project goals, and the expected timeline for drafting conceptual designs and selection of the preferred alternative. For more information, contact Loren Brokaw at Loren.Brokaw@dfw.wa.gov.

Projects Coordinator Brokaw prepared information to include on a webpage to be developed for the above project. Project documents will be posted on the webpage as they become available.

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with WDFW staff to improve the gravel bridge abutments and access roads within the unit. Manager Boehm also coordinated with the Wild Fish Conservancy to continue restoration planting for the Waterwheel Creek Project. Approximately 100 native plants were installed. Additionally, Manager Boehm coordinated maintenance repairs on the pheasant net pens by volunteers.

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm worked with Werkhoven Dairy to complete the planting of winter wheat in the fields that were harvested earlier this month. A fresh crop of new growth covers the fields. This will provide a variety of forage material for wildlife and waterfowl including barley, corn, wheat and grass. Additional safety zone and informational signage was also installed by volunteers. While monitoring the parking areas, Manager Boehm noticed signs at the west parking area of Crescent Lake were vandalized over the weekend. A pumpkin was used as a projectile to damage one sign kiosk, and two other “8:00 – 4:00” signs were also damaged. Similar signs were also damaged at Cherry Valley and Stillwater. Enforcement was notified of the incidents.



The planting of winter wheat in the fields that were harvested earlier this month on the Crescent Lake Unit are looking good.

Lake Terrell Dam Water Flows: Manager Kessler monitored the water level at the Lake Terrell dam on Terrell Creek. The beavers have once again dammed up Terrell Creek where it leaves Lake Terrell. The dam will be worked on next week to make sure there is adequate water flow in the creek for salmon.

Lake Terrell Cutthroat Trout: A load of cutthroat trout were released into Lake Terrell.

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

Wildlife Management

Modern Firearm Deer Season: Biologist Anderson answered inquiries regarding King County areas to hunt and GMU restrictions for the now open modern firearm general season for black-tailed deer. Anderson heard back from hunters regarding successfully getting an animal or finding a site that was promising and will be followed-up on. King County has limited public lands for hunting. Contact public land entities (DNR, USFS) for any restrictions and access considerations. Make friends with your community and look into private lands opportunity to hunt. Some nice deer are to be found with some ground work and knocking on doors.

North Cascades Elk Management Wildlife Program Updates: Biologist Danilson prepared an internal memo to Wildlife Program managers that summarized the activities of the Region Wildlife Program, with a focus on the ongoing North Cascades Elk Management Work Group meetings and wildlife conflict efforts. Danilson also compiled background information for a PowerPoint presentation for an upcoming special legislative session to be held later this month in Skagit County. A portion of legislative session will focus on ongoing elk-related agricultural conflicts and game manager will be giving an update on their efforts to address elk damage.

Sea Duck Detectability Report: Assistant district biologist reviewed and commented on the 2013 Sea Duck Detectability Report produced by Waterfowl Survey and Sea Duck Specialist Evenson that documents several seasons of work by the winter waterfowl crew to better quantify our survey data. The very detailed work by Heather Tschaekofske is truly appreciated and was instrumental in this work.

Wildlife Areas

Lands 20/20 Proposals -- Projects Coordinator Brokaw made final edits to the Region 4 applications and briefed Regional Director Everitt on current status of the proposals prior to them being reviewed by the Executive Management Team. The two Region 4 applications involve acquisition of property on Ebey Island to improve public access to existing WDFW property, and acquisition of waterfowl hunting property in the Skagit delta.

Whatcom Wildlife Area Hunting Information: Manager Kessler responded to many requests from hunters for wildlife area hunting access information.

Whatcom Wildlife Area Pheasant Release: Manager Kessler received 390 pheasants for the pheasant releases. Birds were released by volunteers on the Intalco, Lake Terrell and BP units.

Tennant Lake Hunting Blinds: Manager Kessler monitored use of the waterfowl hunting blinds on Tennant Lake.

British Petroleum (BP) Hunting Access: Manager Kessler posted signs and managed a partial closure of the hunting area at the British Petroleum unit. BP workers performed environmental monitoring of vegetation survival in wetland enhancement areas. Another partial closure will occur on Tuesday of this week.

Maintenance: Manager Kessler performed landscape maintenance on the Lake Terrell Unit.

Island Unit: Manager Belinda Rotton, Resources Specialist (NRS) Greg Meis and WDFW Permit Biologist Chris Gourley met with representatives from the Department of Ecology (DOE) to discuss the water quality certification and best management practices (BMP) for a number of projects pending on the Skagit Wildlife Area. The group toured the Island Unit and discussed the permit for the ditch maintenance work in detail. Additional coordination and review from DOE is needed with their BMP specialist, a conference call is being scheduled for early next week. The group also discussed the upcoming projects for the Wiley pump station and tidegate repair project as well as providing a brief summary of the Samish River Unit project.

Hunting Season Prep: Natural Resources Tech Curran Cosgrove monitored crops and field conditions at the Leque Island, Samish and Padilla Bay units. The field corn planted at the Samish Unit is ripening and hardening off well.

Pheasant Release program: Natural Resources Specialist Meis and Natural Resources Tech Cosgrove removed the foot bridge to the old parking area at Bow Hill road. Wildlife Area staff assisted with the pheasant delivery and pheasant releases throughout Region 4.

Private Lands/Access



Waterfowl Quality

Hunt sites: Private Lands staff built hunting blinds and posted the unit boundary at access sites in Skagit and Whatcom counties. Staff contacted partners in the Waterfowl Quality Hunt program to get access agreements signed. The hunt unit signs which contain the rules and a map of the unit were posted and additional signs for the parking area were also added.

Snohomish County Blue Geese



Waterfowl Quality Hunt opened and ready to hunt.

Private Lands Access Contracts: Biologist Milner met with a landowner for the quality snow goose hunts and discussed possibilities for an access agreement this year. Milner and technician Otto met with a landowner in Snohomish County to get a contract signature and explain the reservation system, which his property will be under this year. Milner also worked on setting up second interviews for the Bio 2 position which will occur this week.

Private Lands Access for GMU 418 Buck Hunt: To facilitate private lands access for late season quality buck permit holders for GMU 418, Biologist Danilson finalized a schedule for WDFW staff and volunteers to attend a gate onto private timber lands for the GMU 418 “draw only” buck hunt. The 25 tag holders for this six day hunt will hit the field in mid-November.

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

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Program Conservation Plan: Assistant District Biologist Cyra reviewed the recently released Wildlife Program Conservation Plan, a document that will be used for current and future direction within the program and is a component of the Department’s Strategic Plan, available at http://wdfw.wa.gov/about/strategic_plan/.

Big Game and Waterfowl Hunter Assistance: Biologist Danilson followed up with several hunters inquiring about quality hunt sites, goose hunting regulations, access to private lands, and general questions about access. Among those hunters was an out-of-state mountain goat tag holder, who called to provide notification that he was heading for the Mt. Baker area in search of his trophy animal. Danilson provided the hunter some information about access and potential conflicts with other recreational user groups. Danilson was also contacted by a local hunter who harvested a mountain goat in the Mt. Baker Avalanche Gorge hunt unit. Danilson and assistant district biologist met with the hunter to take measurements and collect biological samples.



Left and Below: District 14 Wildlife Biologist Chris Danilson prepares to sample a mountain goat harvested from the Mount Baker area. Right: Biologist Danilson removed a growth from a mule deer to placate a hunter.



Skagit County Elk Conflict: Conflict Specialist Griffith was in contact with seven landowners this week regarding elk damages in the Day Creek, Concrete, and Hamilton areas. All but one is a commercial operation and Griffith will be issuing a total of 11 damage permits. The remaining landowner is a resident that has a few elk grazing on his front lawn at night. Griffith advised him on practices that the landowner could implement to discourage the elk from grazing on his lawn and issued him a few 12 gauge rubber slugs for aversive conditioning the elk.

Skagit County Deer Conflict: Conflict Specialist Griffith followed up with an orchard and vineyard owner in Rockport regarding exclusionary fencing. The owner is supportive of exclusionary fencing and is compiling a fence material list for Griffith.

Bobcat Pelt Sealing: Biologists Anderson and Smith sealed three bobcat pelts from hunters. These animals were legally taken, via hunting, with a small game license. These animals can also be taken with appropriate trapping permit and methods. All were young males in very nice shape. One was a conflict animal that the landowner wished to keep; therefore they purchased the required small game license and took the animal in a hunt. Conflict animals, if not taken with hunting or trapping permit in a conflict situation, must be turned over to the department immediately. More information on bobcat ecology, conflict management, hunting, and legalities can be found either on our hunting website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/> or our Living with Wildlife Bobcat website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/bobcats.html>.

Wildlife Areas

Samish River Unit/Welts Wetland Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw submitted Shoreline Exemption and Special Use permit applications to Skagit County, as well as final SEPA application materials to the WDFW SEPA Coordinator.

Restoration Project Tracking Form: Projects Coordinator Brokaw submitted a draft restoration project tracking form for review by staff who coordinates restoration projects on WDFW lands. The project tracking form is intended to be completed by WDFW and project sponsors to ensure all necessary steps are planned for and taken during restoration projects.

Skagit Agriculture Program

Fir Island Farms: Staff repaired field entry fences and gates on the DeBay Slough Swan Reserve Hunt Unit and on the Fir Island Farms Reserve. Manager Rotton contacted the Lessee for the Fir Island Farms property, but was unable to reach him by phone this week.

Leque Island: Staff repaired a footbridge near the Eide Road parking area on Leque Island and repaired a sign that had been knocked over.

There was a reported incident of a window broken out of a passing vehicle that was believed to be by a gun shot. WDFW Officer Maurstad followed up on the report with Stanwood Police and also interviewed the hunter and other witnesses in the area. In response to the incident, WDFW staff posted additional safety zones signs and signage with maps for all the field entry locations. The safety zone was expanded to 100 yards from Highway 532.

Staff mowed grass areas in the Safety Zone at the Leque Island Unit, both for invasive weed control and to reduce the amount of cover in the Safety Zone for pheasants.

Wiley Slough Restoration project: Manager Rotton and Habitat Engineer Bob Barnard met with a farmer on the neighboring Wylie farm. Mr. Boon has drainage concerns that he believes are related to the restoration project. Rotton and Barnard agreed to investigate surface water condition on the site and work with them and other partners to better understand the issue.

Samish River Unit: Manager Rotton is working with CAMP field crew to gather survey information needed for the engineer drawings of the culvert crossing and field entry location on the Samish River Unit. This project needs to be included in the permitting package to be submitted for the project.

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

Wildlife Management

Mandatory IT Security Training: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Assistant District Biologist Cyra completed the mandatory IT Security Awareness Training.

Radio Training: Assistant District Biologist Cyra assisted several staff in providing instruction on radio training, radio use requirements, and assigning radio call numbers.

Aircraft Safety: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued work on a proposed over-water component to the Aircraft Safety Program.

Volunteers: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continued to recruit local volunteers to assist with field work and maintenance projects. While the list of people who say they want to volunteer continues to grow, only a few have made the step to do so.

Wildlife Conflicts Technician Hiring: Conflict Specialist Griffith selected candidates from the list of applicants and will be contacting applicants to schedule interviews in the coming days. Biologist Danilson provided guidance to Griffith regarding the hiring process and the development of a work plan for this position.

Wildlinks: Biologist DeBruyn attended the annual Wildlinks conference that was held this year at Manning Park B.C. The conference is a gathering of biologist and wildlife managers from both sides of the Washington/B.C. border to discuss issues related to wildlife research and management. The Cascadia Partnership Forum has been born out of these meetings and is a contributing partner to The Great Northern and The North Pacific Landscape Conservation Cooperatives. One of this year's main focuses was access management as it relates to wildlife, particularly large carnivores. Climate change and connectivity also provided a lens through which to examine wildlife issues.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Coyote Wall Access Project: Biologist Anderson conducted a follow-up site visit to a recreation development in the Columbia River Gorge. This project involved the development of public access to a unique geological/wildlife habitat area in Klickitat County. The USFS requested WDFW participate to provide recommendations for protecting western gray squirrel habitat and in providing mitigation to sensitive California mountain king-snake habitat found at this site (photos).



California mountain king snake

California mountain king snakes are rare in Washington and found in a narrow band of habitat in the Columbia River Gorge (photo).



U.S. Forest Service Coyote Wall Access Project

Hoof Disease Technical Advisory Group Meeting: Regional Wildlife Program staff attended a meeting of the Hoof Disease Technical Advisory Group, which is comprised of veterinarians and pathologists from the local area as well as across the country. The most recent results from this year's hoof disease elk collection efforts were presented, although not all diagnostics have been completed. General discussion about possible causes and also possible management strategies occurred. Progress on our understanding of this disease is occurring despite many unknowns.

Black-tailed Deer Research Project: The Region 5 portion of the black-tailed deer research project is ongoing. Study does are still being monitored by a combination of remote (satellite) and field (VHF) methods. The does are located in two study clusters concentrated within the Washougal (568) and Coweeman (550) Game Management Units (GMUs). During 2013, six fawns have been captured in the Washougal cluster. Fawn monitoring is currently being conducted. To date, three 2013 fawns remain alive in the Washougal study cluster.

Biologists Bergh and Holman met with Research Scientist Rice regarding the black-tail study. Plans for 2014 include capture of eight additional adult females in the Washougal and Coweeman GMUs, monitoring of the associated young, monitoring of any remaining yearlings from the 2013 captures, etc.

The hunting public is reminded to please contact your closest WDFW Regional office if you harvest a collared animal. Radio and satellite collars often contain valuable information and can also be refurbished and used again. Thanks in advance for cooperation in returning these valuable pieces of equipment.

Wildlife Areas

Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area -- Fall Fertilizing: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Technician Sample worked on spreading pelletized nitrogen fertilizer over areas of the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area to further enrich the soil and promote additional vegetation growth; providing added forage for wintering elk. A total of about 25 acres was covered with 2,500 pounds of nitrogen fertilizer with some grass seed mixed in. Manager Hauswald also reseeded areas, with grass seed, that were previously treated with herbicide to reduce mouse-eared hawkweed regrowth.

Klickitat Wildlife Area -- Sondino Unit Barn: A 1970s era barn on the Sondino Unit was determined to be structurally unsound and was condemned by building surveyors hired by WDFW. Rather than simply allow the building to collapse and possibly risk the safety of workers and equipment, the barn is being dismantled, with as much material to be salvaged and recycled as possible. This week Biologists Anderson, Holman, Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven, and Technician Davis moved equipment out of the big barn



Barn Cleaning

and into alternate storage facilities and hauled a pickup load of unneeded items to the transfer station. Manager Van Leuven met with independent contractors to discuss removal of the roof structure and plan the work. Once the roof is gone, Manager Van Leuven plans to have WDFW workers from Engineering Division take down the walls and remove the debris.



Beaver Deceiver

Cowlitz Wildlife Area -- Mossyrock Unit Beaver Deceiver: Cowlitz Wildlife Area staff built and installed a flow device into one of the pond risers at the Mossyrock Unit to help with seasonal flooding from beaver dams. Beaver dams create great wetland habitat on certain parts of the Wildlife Area, but have become a maintenance issue and threat to flooding certain County roads on the property. The flow device allows the Wildlife Area to maintain manageable pond levels while “tricking” beavers from continuing to plug up outflow structures due to the sound of running water.

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

Wildlife Areas

Klickitat Wildlife Area -- Hunter Success Surveys: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis contacted hunters October 19-20 to gauge how the deer hunting season is going. There were fewer hunters on the Klickitat Wildlife Area, which is typical for the second weekend of the season. Van Leuven and Davis talked to 45 hunters on Saturday with one deer, and 59 hunters on Sunday with three deer.

One of the animals taken was a 5x6 buck. Although they did not connect with many hunters who had used their deer tags, a WDFW officer found that a local meat locker business contained approximately 70 deer carcasses, indicating that the 2013 deer season has been a successful one for quite a few folks. In addition, two cougars were killed on the Klickitat Wildlife Area during the last week.

Pheasant Release: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis worked with volunteers Morrison and Wheelhouse to release pheasants on the day before pheasant hunting season started. Seventy birds were released on the Goldendale Trout Hatchery property, 36 were released at the Gun Club site, and 14 were released on the Finn Ridge Road property.

Lyle Community Trails Meeting: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven attended a meeting in Lyle among trail advocates, landowners, and other stakeholders to learn about a proposal to expand an existing system of trails onto public land near Lyle. Washington Department of Natural Resources and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife both manage property in the area. The proposal is still in development and volunteers have offered to map the user-built trails that already exist.

Private Lands/Access

Fall Upkeep: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes used the blower on the ADA parking and around the restroom, raked branches and twigs, spread new gravel around the restroom, and filled in potholes in front of the boat ramp and around the parking area at the I-5 Access site. Spangler and Rhodes spread a layer of gravel around both restrooms and used blowers to blow leaves off the parking lot and picnic area at the Silver Lake Access Site.

In addition, staff pressure washed the restroom entrance, spread gravel around the restroom, and picked up and hauled 120 pounds of trash at the Vancouver Lake Access site.



Fall Upkeep



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

Wildlife Areas

Cowlitz Wildlife Area -- Hunter Education Online Evaluation Class: Cowlitz Wildlife Area staff conducted their final hunter education online evaluation class of the year at the Cowlitz Wildlife Area office. The students take the agency approved online course studying at their own pace. After each unit they must take a quiz and pass with an 80% before proceeding to the next unit. Once each unit has been successfully completed, they may then take the final exam. They then enroll in an evaluation class to be trained in the safe and proper handling of firearms. If they pass a 20-question review quiz, demonstrate a proper attitude, and show an understanding of the eight required skills they are then certified under the Hunter Education program. Twelve of the thirteen students passed the evaluation and received their hunter education certificates.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Citizen Science Amphibian Road Use Monitoring, Thurston County: Biologists Tirhi and Schuett-Hames in partnership with City of Olympia (Michelle Stevie) and Thurston County Stream Team (Ann Marie Pearce) initiated a new citizen science endeavor in Thurston County focused on using volunteers to collect amphibian road use and road mortality information. Tirhi and partners initially met with Thurston County Public Works to discuss whether the county would use amphibian road use information in road permitting and design if such information was collected. The county was enthusiastic about receiving this information and committed to using the information and partnering in a pilot project.

Following this, Tirhi and collaborators met to formulate protocol, process and data forms; Stevie and Prince oversaw volunteer involvement. A half-day training was held this Saturday at which Tirhi presented on amphibian identification and data form, Schuett-Hames presented the results of her 2-year amphibian road use study on Steamboat Island, followed by volunteers and staff walking a road section and practicing with data collection. Approximately 13 volunteers attended the training. The collaborators will be asking the volunteers to monitor specific road sections near wetlands that are believed to have high amphibian road use/mortality and on which the county may have the ability to mitigate.

Black-tailed Deer Study -- Capitol Forest: Biologist Michaelis continued to monitor radio-collared deer in the Capitol Forest Cluster and there were no mortalities reported. The total number of deer being monitored in the Capitol Forest Cluster remains at six does and one yearling.

Black-tailed Deer Study -- Mason County: Biologist Michaelis also monitored deer in Mason County while Biologist Murphie remains on Annual Leave. There are 12 does and 4 fawns being monitored in Mason County and Michaelis received live signals on all deer, except one of the fawns which was not heard at all.

Black-tailed Deer Study -- Pysht Cluster Monitoring: Six does, seven fawns and one yearling continue to be monitored in the Pysht cluster. No mortalities this week.

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

Wildlife Management

Goose Check Stations: Biologists Hoenes, Michaelis, and Sundstrom prepared for the Raymond and Reikkola goose check stations prior to the season opener. Due to the government shutdown, the Reikkola station had to be temporarily moved from the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge to the WDFW Nahcotta Shellfish Lab. Biologist Hoenes had called the local hunt clubs to let them know about the change in check station location, but also posted a sign at the Reikkola site that indicated where the check station had been moved to. Hunters responded well to the temporary change – seven hunters checked 23 geese at the Nahcotta site and six hunters checked 15 geese at the Raymond check station on the opener.

Both goose check stations operated the next week at their normal locations because the government shutdown ended and the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge re-opened. At the Raymond check station, Sundstrom reported that one hunter brought in 4 geese on Wednesday and six hunters brought in 12 geese on Saturday. At the Reikkola check station, Capelli reported that two hunters brought in 6 geese on Wednesday and on Saturday.

Private Lands/Access

GoHunt: Biologist Harris worked on entering private land hunting opportunities into the Private Lands Hunting Opportunity webpage, ultimately ending up on the WDFW GoHunt website.

Quality Waterfowl Hunting: Biologist Harris completed two private lands access agreements. One was for waterfowl hunting access on 70 acres in the Chehalis valley. Hunting access for this site will be managed under the Hunt by Reservation program. The other was a renewal that included an extra 50 acres. The landowner liked the concept of the reservation system allowing the extra 50 acres and two more hunting blinds on lands that previously had very limited hunting access because of the proximity to farm operations.

Feel Free to Hunt: Biologists Sundstrom and Harris signed Feel Free to Hunt areas in the Chehalis Valley. They also visited with some adjacent landowners who had some bad experiences with some hunters. Efforts are underway to minimize these conflicts.

Biologist Harris visited Feel Free to Hunt sites in the Brady Flats on the pheasant opener. All sites had multiple hunters!