

Wildlife Program

Week of July 14-20, 2014

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Bat Conservation Project Support: Selection of 2014 Competitive State Wildlife Grant projects, recently announced by USFWS, included a North American Bat Monitoring Pilot Expansion Project that involves 8 western states (AZ, CA, CO, ID, MT, TX UT, WA). This broad coalition of western states will build capacity to implement facets of the North American Bat Monitoring Program. The overall project will receive nearly \$500,000 of SWG funding for which there is a non-federal match requirement. Arizona Game and Fish Department is the overall project coordinator, but each partner state develops its own SWG contract within that umbrella. WDFW is the WA state partner through the Wildlife Diversity Division. WDFW will receive about \$86,700 of SWG funding to be directed toward its role in national efforts to monitor and track bats that are Species of Greatest Conservation Need; information collection on other bat species will be possible concurrently. Primary staff involved in obtaining this added financial support for WDFW included Eric Gardner, Penny Becker, Joe Buchanan, Gerry Hayes, Bruce Thompson, and Gary Wiles.

Survey Progress for SGCN Butterflies: Ann Potter and Mary McCallum, Wildlife Diversity Biologists continued surveys and monitoring for butterfly species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) inhabiting native grasslands and oak woodlands (as part of the State Wildlife Grant-funded Prairie-Oak restoration project). Surveys and monitoring in 2014 have been completed for 6 of the 10 focal SGCN butterflies: the oak-obligate Propertius Duskywing, Hoary Elfin, Sonora Skipper, Puget Blue, Great Artic, and state endangered Mardon Skipper. Surveys are currently underway in south Puget Sound for adult Great-spangled Fritillary, Valley Silverspot, and Oregon Branded Skipper, and for Taylor's Checkerspot oviposition sites on the north Olympic Peninsula.

Priority Landscapes of Conservation Need: Section Manager Wilkerson and Division Manager Gardner hosted discussions with Habitat Program leadership and the Executive Management Team about a potential process for identifying Priority Landscapes of Conservation Need at the statewide level, with associated place-based work both internally and with external partners. The concept was well received and we are moving forward to develop an agency-wide team to develop and apply more refined criteria for identification beyond the initial discussion piece developed by the Wildlife Program.

Natural Heritage Advisory Council: Section Manager Wilkerson attended the Washington DNR NHAC Meeting on July 8th as WDFW's representative. Discussion included an update of the Natural Areas Program, the Natural Areas Plan, the Forest Restoration Strategy, and NHAC leadership and business.

Climate Change: Section Manager Wilkerson participated in a July 9th meeting of the Joint Implementation Working Group of the National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy as WDFW's representative (a state, federal, and tribal effort). The JIWG will be releasing a report on the status of implementation work around the country in September. The JIWG approved a stakeholder outreach strategy and discussed next steps for the overall work plan.

Sage Grouse: Section Manager Wilkerson worked with USFWS staff on July 9th to design a spatial analysis intended to inform and prioritize private land for sage grouse conservation. The intent is to inform discussion regarding interest in the agricultural community in participating in a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances program that would provide assurances for continued management of private lands in the event of a federal listing of the sage grouse, according to agreed upon conservation measures.

Wildlife Diversity Advisory Council (WDAC): The WDAC conducted a conference call to discuss their review and comment process for the Game Division's Game Management Plan. The majority of WDAC members participated in the call, as did Director Phil Anderson, Game Division Manager Dave Ware, and Diversity Division Manager Eric Gardner.

Teanaway Community Forest: Section Manager Wilkerson participated in a field tour July 10th with the Teanaway Community Forest Advisory Committee to explore existing and potential recreation activities and management on the Teanaway Community Forest. Wilkerson facilitated a break-out session focused on developing objectives for recreation on the TCF to inform the Advisory Committee's recommendations to the Department of Natural Resources and DFW on the overall management plan for the TCF.

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

Outreach with the Falconry Community: Conservation Assessment Section Manager Bruce Thompson participated in the summer meeting of the Washington Falconer's Association (WFA). This participation responded to a request from the organization for additional interaction and information exchange. The forum provided opportunities for Wildlife Diversity Division staff to gain acquaintance with WFA members, see and hear aspects of year-round work by members to care for raptors held under permits from WDFW, obtain feedback on recently adjusted procedures for annual permits to take peregrine falcons for falconry use, and to respond to questions. Staff from Wildlife and Enforcement Programs in Region 4 also was present at the meeting. This was a productive forum to gain greater awareness of the people affected by WDFW regulations and procedures and the wildlife resources they use.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE.

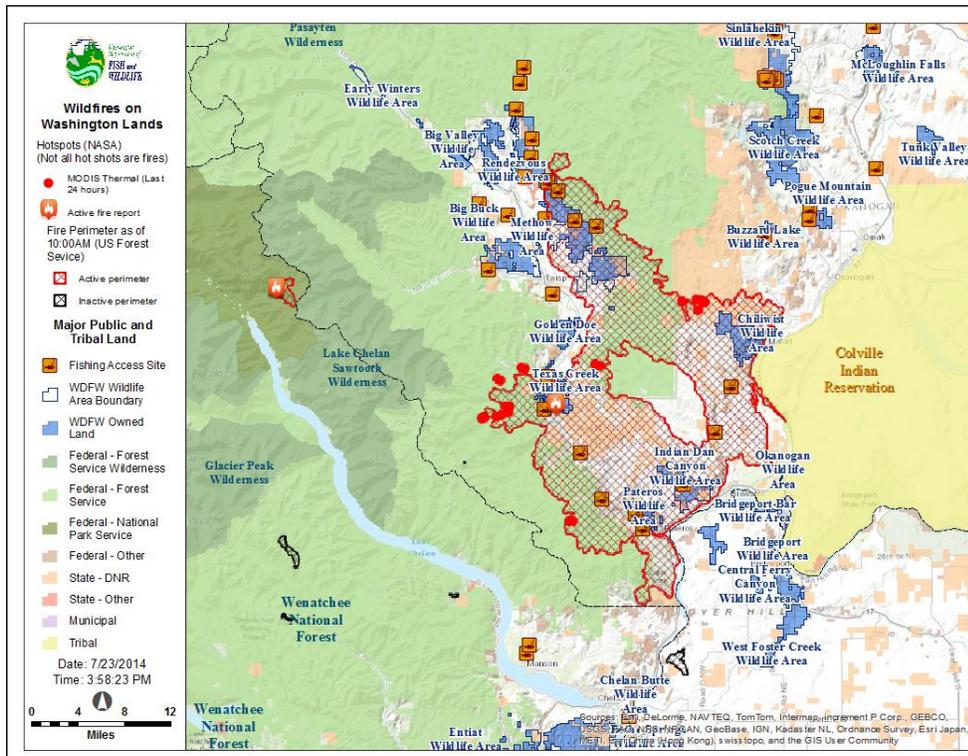
National Professional Recognition: Conservation Assessment Section Manager Bruce Thompson was recently elected Vice-President of The Wildlife Society, to be installed at the Annual Conference in October 2014. The Wildlife Society is an organization of professional wildlife biologists, conservationists, and managers with more than 11,000 members worldwide

but mostly in North America; many of them are among staff in state and federal fish and wildlife resource agencies. Upon installation, Bruce will begin a 4-year track of membership on TWS Council that guides operations of the organization.

SCIENCE DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Eastern Washington Fires: As you all know the wildfires in Okanogan County have taken their toll. Mike Schroeder is currently housing a couple residents of Pateros (and their 2 cats). The governor is meeting with former WDFW employee and Pateros city councilman George Brady today (Sunday). George has taken leadership of the recovery effort in that area. George's house escaped the fire by a few feet. Former WDFW employee Fred Wiltse wasn't as lucky. Dan Peterson and his staff were trapped for a night in the upper Indian Dan Canyon Wildlife Area, which appears to have mostly burned. They are OK. Mike has some geo-referenced photos of the wildlife area which should provide some long-term comparisons. Mike also redid some photos in Fraser Creek about a month ago that I took back in 2006. The 2006 photos were replicates of photos taken in 1968 and 1956. The map below was created by John Talmadge to show how the fire footprint overlays with WDFW WLA. Nice job John!



Mazama Pocket Gopher: Research Scientist Gail Olson and her crew wrapped up what should be the final season of intensive monitoring of the population of Mazama pocket gophers that was established at West Rocky Prairie Wildlife Area via translocations in 2009-2011. In 3 months of live-trapping, the crew captured 362 individual pocket gophers, including 283 adults, 63 juveniles, and 16 of unknown age. Of the adults, 93 were recaptures from previous years, including 3 individuals (all female) that were part of the very first release in 2009. That makes them at least 5 years old! We also recaptured 7 individuals that were released in 2010, some of which could also be 5 years old. The population overall appears to be very healthy, and growing steadily both in numbers and area occupied. Although the true success of the project can only be determined over a longer time frame, it appears that gophers have really found themselves a home at West Rocky Wildlife Area.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Wolverine Monitoring Stations: Wildlife Biologist Annemarie Prince identified two potential deployment sites in the Wedge and checked two wolverine run-pole stations in the Boulder Pass area. No wolverines were detected, but she did get pictures of a mule deer and a couple black bear.



Asotin Bighorn Sheep: On Tuesday, two young bighorn rams were observed on the edge of Asotin near some domestic goats. On Tuesday afternoon, DB Wik was able to successfully dart one of the 2 with the help of Officer Sabo and biologist Woodall. The other ram was able to escape for that day, but did have an eartag from a previous capture this winter. For the following 4 days, WDFW (Wik and Vekasy) and IDFG (Cassirer) staff attempted to capture and sample this young ram without success.

Wildlife Areas



Asotin Creek Wildlife Area Well Water: Biologist Woodall checked the well at Smoothing Iron on the Asotin Creek Wildlife Area and re-set the timer from 8 hours to 12 hours pumping. This hot weather has had the elk greatly consuming more water than normal and our supply in the tank has dwindled. We hope to keep the tanks near full in case DNR or USFS fire trucks need to tap into it.

Left: *Winter wheat heavily used by elk. They ate it as fast as it grew!*

Right: *Winter Wheat food plot well received by the elk*



Private Lands/Access

Deer-vehicle Collision: Biologist Thorne Hadley was contacted by the mother of a young man who was driving a wheat harvest truck that hit a white tailed buck just outside of town. She said that the young man wasn't going fast but the buck was knocked down and didn't get up. Biologist Thorne Hadley and Natural Resource Worker Pearson drove out the reported site but could not find the buck.

Stevens County Fish and Wildlife Advisory Group (SCFWAG): Specialist Shepherd attended the monthly SCFWAG with District Biologist Base and gave an update on wolves to and discussed other predators with local sportsmen.

Permits and Pre-Season Correspondence for Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement (DPCA) Landowners: Conflict Specialist Bennett resumed contacting landowners with current DPCAs for deer, elk, and turkey numbers in their commercial crops. Most landowners were out in the field tending crops.

Game Damage: Wildlife Conflict Technician Bendixen spoke with a landowner who is currently enrolled in the Hunt by Written Permission program about deer damage that he is experiencing in his alfalfa field. Bendixen explained the options available to address damage. The landowner signed a Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement and was issued five damage permits and one kill permit. Bendixen left him with some hazing advice and an article about the effectiveness of deer repellent and WDFW's "Living with Wildlife" (deer) packet.

Palouse SAFE projects: Biologist Lewis assisted two landowners with the application process for the CRP Palouse SAFE program. One project is 60 acres and the other is 20 acres.

Private Lands Access: Natural Resource Worker Wade continued to conduct early morning and late evening hazing efforts south of Pomeroy in Garfield and Asotin Counties. Wade has been encountering several large groups of deer and a spike bull elk that thinks he is a mule deer buck.



Large group of Mule deer bucks near Peola



Spike Bull elk travelling with some mule deer bucks outside of the elk fence south of Pomeroy

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Golden Eagle: Biologists Volsen and Gallie assisted Raptor Researcher Watson with banding a fledgling golden eagle. The bird fledged from the Rocky Reach Dam territory down onto Hwy 97A, where Volsen retrieved the bird after a motorist reported it. After getting a clean bill of health from Rehab Vet Womack, we placed the solar GPS transmitter on the bird, collected samples, and fed the bird before release. Wanting to give it the best chance of survival, we needed to hike it back up to the nest area, which happened to be a 1000 vertical feet up a hillside to where the parents could locate it for feeding. This also happened to be a day of 103 degree temps, so we waited until evening to hike the bird back. The released bird was in good condition, the rattlesnakes were on cue when we descended in the dark, and the Biologists were whooped. Locations received from the GPS transmitter indicate the fledging is alive and moving and most likely being fed by the adults.



Gallie and Watson processing the fledgling golden eagle and preparing it for release.

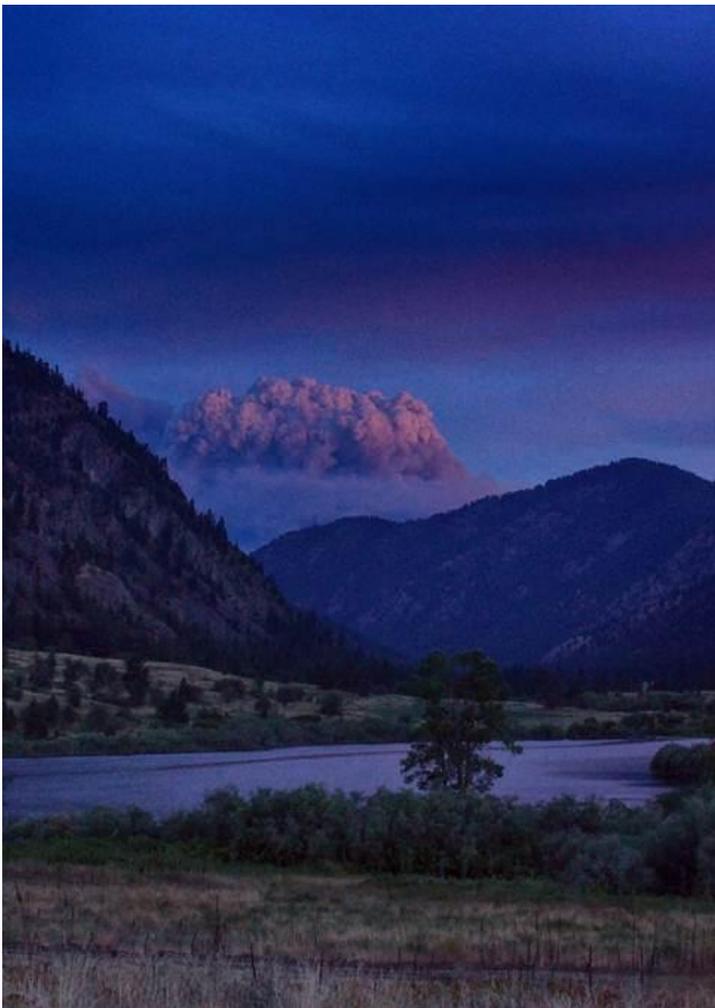
Sage Grouse Recovery: Biologist Gallie and SGI Biologist Brown mapped and inventoried all the fence lines within 1 mile of all known leks in Douglas County. Fences immediately around leks have been shown to be most likely areas where grouse collisions occur. Marking with plastic tabs or removing these fence lines will reduce fence collision mortality. Sage Grouse Initiative has funding available to landowners for fence marking and removal. We mapped approximately 33 miles of fence lines within 1 mile of lek sites. We collected data on the condition of the fence, presence of grazing, and owner of the fence. Nine of the 33 miles have already been marked from SGI contracts. An additional 13 miles will also be proposed to be marked in areas where grazing still occurs. 11 miles will be recommended to be removed completely as they occur on the edges of wheat/canola fields, are incomplete, or just standing posts with down wire. SGI will take the lead on landowner contacts. While we did not specifically search for grouse, we were surprised to see 5 broods of sage grouse (26 birds total). It did not seem normal to see that many grouse and we hope this is the first sign of the population rebound.

Wildlife Areas

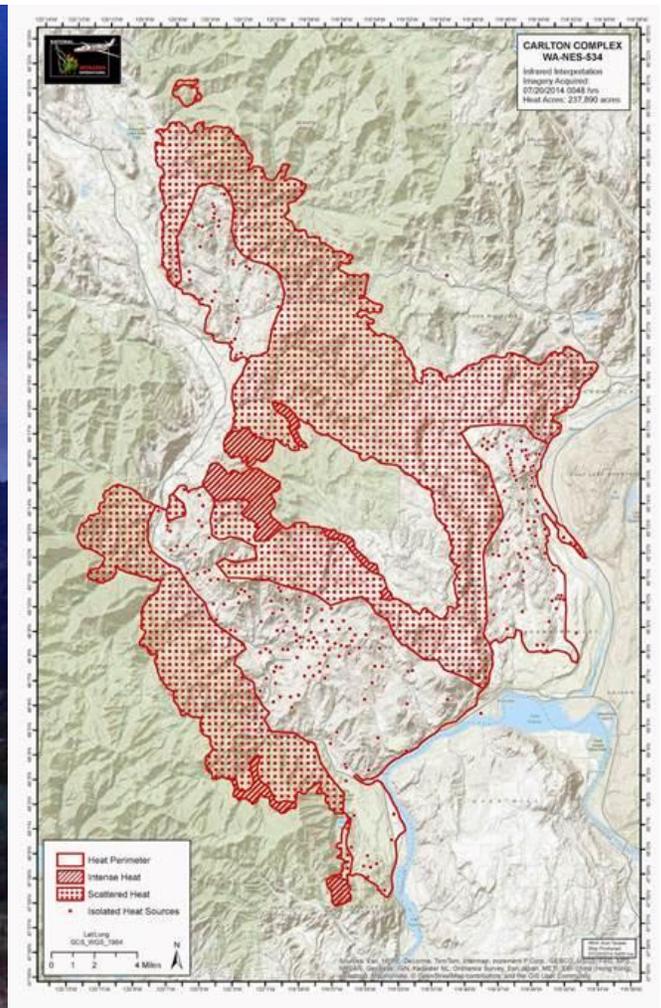
Carlton Complex Fire: As of Sunday July 20, 2014 the Carlton Complex fire has burned 237,237 acres within Okanogan County. So far many different wildlife habitats have been affected with deer winter range the largest affected. With the fire continuing to burn, negative

affects to wildlife will be better assessed when the extent of the fire is realized. The safety of people and property is of the most important. The following paragraphs were taken from the latest update on Sunday July 20, 2014 from the “InciWeb Incident Information System” (<http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3967/>) concerning the Carlton Complex fire:

“The Carlton Complex fires started on July 14, by lightning from a weather system that moved through the Methow Valley. The Carlton Complex consists of four fires: Stokes Fire, Gold Hikes Fire, French Creek Fire and the Cougar Flat. The Stokes and Gold Hikes fires are now one larger fire. The fires are burning in timber and grass. Cooperating agencies include the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Washington State Department of Natural Resources, (WA DNR), Bureau of Land Management, WA Department of Fish & Wildlife, Okanogan Fire District 6, Okanogan Fire District 15 and the Okanogan County Sheriff’s Office. The extreme fire behavior and hot weather conditions will continue to challenge firefighting efforts. Structure Protection crews are working throughout the fire areas patrolling and monitoring around structures. Firefighters are working with property owners to help reduce vegetation and remove debris.”



***Carlton Complex Blow-up late evening – July 17th over Blue Lake, Sinlahekin Wildlife Area.
Photo by Justin Haug***



Carlton Complex Fire map; Sunday July 20, 2014. From the “InciWeb Incident Information System” website (<http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3967/>)

Attached are a few photos taken by Wildlife Area Manager Dan Peterson on Sunday. Not a single living bitterbrush could be found. Each area has been wiped clean of their bitterbrush and sagebrush. It's quite depressing, and it looks like this from the Chelan/Okanogan county line to a few miles south of Okanogan, a distance of some 30 miles.

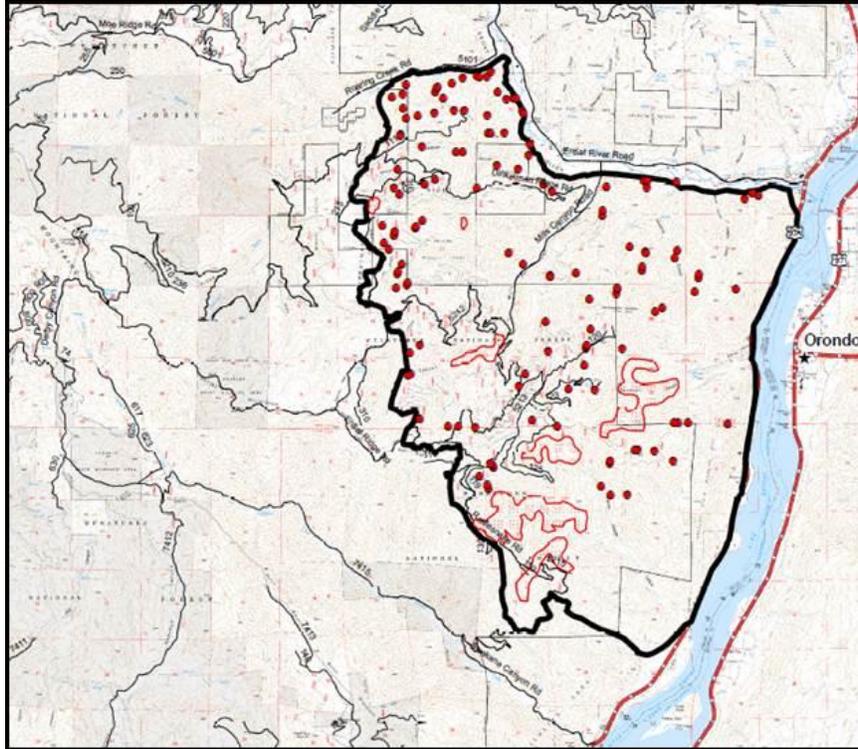


Carlton Complex Fire – Chiliwist: Late Friday the Carlton Complex Fire took aim at the Chiliwist and Malott areas moving quickly from the northwest. The town of Malott was spared for the most part but the Chiliwist Wildlife Area and community to the west were heavily damaged (see pictures below). The wildlife area was completely burned over by the fire. The Stout inholding was spared, however the historical barns to the south were consumed. Manager Haug has already begun taking stock of what was lost in terms of infrastructure and will have an estimate soon.

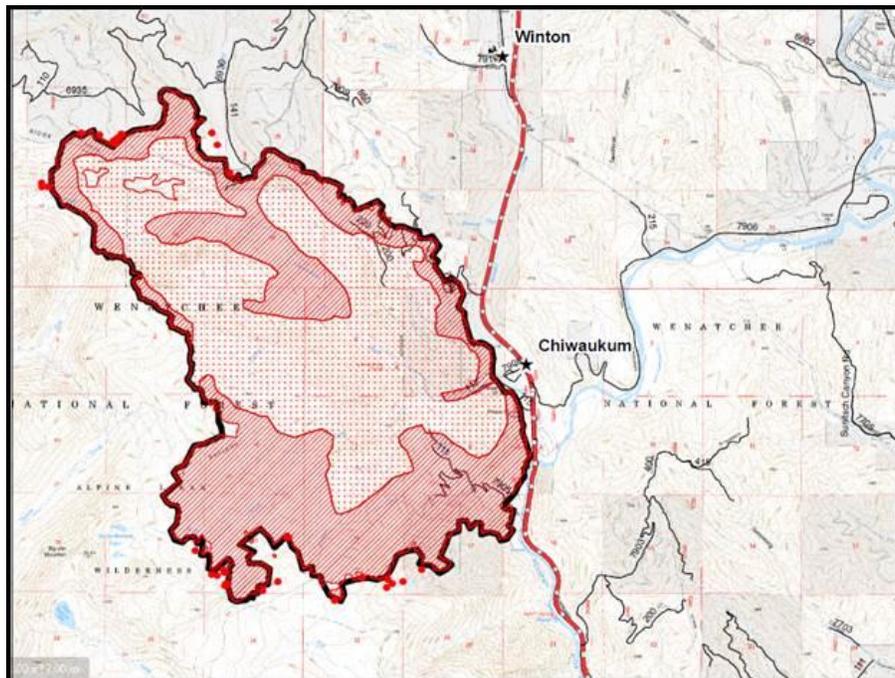


Above – The post-fire effects of the Carlton Complex Fire on the Chiliwist Wildlife Area taken approximately 24 hours after the fire had passed through. Photos by Justin Haug.

Chelan County Wildfires: Four wildfires are burning in Chelan County currently, the Mills Canyon Fire at 22,500 acres, the Chiwaukum Fire at 10,120 acres, and the Kelley Mtn (98 acres) and the Duncan fire at 833 acres. Containment ranges from 75% (Mills canyon) to 0% (Chiwaukum and Duncan).



Perimeter of the Mills Canyon Fire in Chelan County.



Perimeter of the Chiwaukum Fire in Chelan County.

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

Wildlife Management



Peregrine Falcon: Images a local male peregrine falcon banded in District 7 at roughly 15 days of age and again at 59 days.

Wildlife Areas

Moist Soil Management: Biologist O. Duvuvuei gave a tour of the Frenchman Wasteway, Regulated Access & Reserve Area to Biologist E. Duvuvuei. Water levels were adjusted to moisten soil in the Regulated Access Area to promote growth of the millet which was seeded this spring. The millet, smartweed, dock, and bidens are all thick and healthy. The seeds produced from these desired plants should provide plentiful waterfowl forage and excellent hunting opportunities this fall.



A solid, healthy stand of bidens and smartweed with millet intermixed at the Frenchmen Regulated Access Area. Photo by O. Duvuvuei

Migratory Birds: Biologist E. Duvuvuei continued scouting pre-baiting efforts for waterfowl & dove trapping. The game camera photos below show waterfowl use at a trapping site that should be productive next week.





Above – Fritillary Butterfly and juvenile Rufous Hummingbird on Buzzard Lake Wildlife Area. Photos by Justin Haug.

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman completed the end of season forage utilization surveys for the Emerick Grazing Permit on the Worrell Ranch. Utilization was well below the permitted amount with 14 percent use in both pastures. Use of the upper pasture was low again due to a lack of water. The Emericks had the gates open to their private property to the west where there is more water so cow numbers were fairly low in the permit area. Only 162 of the 250 permitted AUM's were used.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Bjornstrom contacted Mike Erickson about the rehab project at Ringold Hatchery. Wildlife area staff will be procuring seed, shrub, and trees for a fall project. Mike is checking on insurance claims resulting from losses incurred by wildfire. Manager Bjornstrom was awarded duck stamp monies for some of the rehab work. NRT2 Medina showed the beaver trapping team from Ellensburg some possible beaver trapping sites on the wildlife area, mowed a road in the Brady area and mowed an access road for the beaver trapping crew at the Johnson Wetland with the ASV. NRT2 Medina also released pheasant chicks. Assistant Manager Buser attended the pre-construction meeting for the Mesa Lake West Pigeon Pond renovation project. The meeting included WDFW, Ducks Unlimited engineers and LKE Enterprises. Assistant Manager Buser monitored progress of construction for the Mesa Lake West Pigeon Pond renovation project. The contractor has most of the clear and grub work done and piling dirt from the borrow site. Assistant Manager Buser picked up materials for installation of a beaver deceiver that will be incorporated into the Mesa Lake West Pigeon Pond renovation project.

Wildlife Management

Mourning Doves: Three days of dove banding occurred in District 4 this week and 89 additional birds were marked. Capture rates remain high averaging ~33 doves banded every day. This capture rate is being driven primarily by a large number of juvenile (“hatch year”) birds. Hatch year capture has been averaging 26 birds/day compared to ~15 birds/day in 2011-2013. Capture of adult (“after hatch year”) birds coincides closely to the 3-year average of ~6 birds/day. Total number of birds banded this year is at an all-time high of 229. Access Tech Kaelber continued to work Mourning Dove trapping. Kaelber trapped at the new banding site for the first time but was unsuccessful, capturing zero birds. Kaelber suspects that much of the bait is being eaten by quail, despite the many doves in the area. He continued baiting the site through the week and may try trapping once more but the new site may be a bust. Trapping success was much higher at the Ringold site on Friday. Kaelber successfully captured around 70 doves although most were recaptures.

Burrowing Owls: Biologist Gregory and Technician Kaelber installed a trail camera at the burrow currently occupied by the owl wearing the PTT transmitter and her young. While they were there they checked the artificial burrow for additional unbanded owlets and managed to band two more. After reviewing the resulting photos it has been determined that the owls are indeed using the secondary tunnel that has been excavated underneath the existing artificial tunnel. In addition there is at least one more unbanded owlet at the burrow. It is possible that

the owls dug this tunnel themselves. There were some other interesting photos captured in addition to owl movement in/out of the new tunnel (See below). Thanks to the Sunnyside Wildlife Area for lending the camera to this project.



A burrowing owl marked with a PTT transmitter in 2013.

A young burrowing owl receives a meal.



Poached Antelope: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received a report from Enforcement program related to a buck antelope that was poached near Locust Grove in Kennewick. The landowners in this area are very protective of this small population of antelope and are concerned what effects poaching have on the population.

Duck Banding Prep: Access Tech Kaelber began prepping for duck banding this week. He dug out the water control structure at the Bailey Ranch to allow the lower wetlands, where trapping occurs, to flood. He also put in the posts for traps.

Dove Trapping: Biologist Bernatowicz trapped 3 sessions, banding only 9 mourning doves. The problem was obvious the first session as a hawk was seen on one of the traps. The raptor was consistently present and keeping mourning dove numbers low and away from the



Hawk attacking dove in trap

traps. Small mesh size on the traps kept the few trapped doves relatively safe.

The hawk did not seem to have any interest in Eurasian collared doves, possibly due to size. Some searching and calls were made looking for alternated trap sites. The Yakama Nation agreed to start pre-baiting a few sites



Nine of ~30 collared doves trapped

and cooperatively band if doves concentrate. Biologist Bernatowicz will also return to the original site this week to see if hawk has moved on.

Deer Study: The WADDL lab at WSU reported the radioed deer that died with severe pulmonary edema probably had an orbivirus (EHD/Bluetongue). This would be very early for EHD/Bluetongue and the deer did not frequent areas with water where the vector (gnats) would be present. PCR is being run on the samples.

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

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart met with Undersheriff Clay Meyers and Sgt. Steve Panattoni to discuss County interest in a proposed new shooting range. Hunt opened the locked gates at either end of the Robinson View Road on Tuesday, providing vehicle access to the public after a temporary closure for Golden eagle nest protection.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris participated in a conference call with Section Manager Posner and Brian Hyder, NRA Range Technician, to discuss an upcoming field review of Wenas shooting areas and finalize the date of the tour (August 19).

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

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart met with private landowners impacted by the Taylor Bridge fire two years ago. Each landowner provided information about their property and

expressed level of interest in having a cooperative WDFW/Mule Deer Foundation bitterbrush planting project occur on their lands. Winegeart and MDF Regional Director Dan McKinley also met with PSE to discuss their interest in providing a cost share on the bitterbrush project and other projects in the future. Manager Winegeart also wrote a wood removal permit for a local landowner in Parke Creek. Mr. Raymond Floyd asked to cut 50 5"-dbh trees killed in the Colockum Tarps fire for use as teepee poles. The wood is not merchantable, but Mr. Floyd will clean up trash from camps in Parke Creek in lieu of payment for the wood. As per our emergency restrictions, chainsaw use was not permitted, and trees will be cut with hand saw or axe.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman attended the monthly Cowiche Canyon Conservancy Stewardship Committee Meeting.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris attended a meeting of the Yakima Valley Fire Adapted Communities Coalition (YVFACC). The group is updating the Yakima County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), which includes completing a wildland fire risk assessment for the County and developing mitigation recommendations to reduce wildfire ignitions and increase fire-resilience. The group including shrub-steppe and other non-forest lands in the plan, something that wasn't done in the original plan.

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Enhancements on Private Lands: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman and NRCS staff did a field visit with a Benton County landowner who is interested in wildlife enhancements through EQIP or other federal avenues. Stutzman will write an NRCS conservation plan for the producer that shows him his options and also meets the "Certified Planner" assignment for Stutzman. After the field visit, Stutzman completed a number of documents and maps that are required for the plan.



Benton County landowner and NRCS Agronomist Kevin Davis. The landowner is hoping to improve both upland and wetland wildlife habitat.

Teanaway State Forest Legislative Tour: Biologist Moore worked with Habitat Biologist William Meyer to create map products for handouts that will be distributed at the upcoming Legislative Tour. Moore used GPS data from the current Colockum Bull Study to illustrate migration and home range estimates for elk that summer on the Teanaway State Forest. Moore

also worked with Regional Program Manager McCorquodale to scout out the area and identify a location for a field trip stop.

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

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman attended a GIS Webinar for the Management Plan process. The meeting focused on mapping needs for the new wildlife area management plans, including developing a consistent design that meets the needs for planning and public use. Manager Huffman met with Project Supervisor Fulks and Welder Haverfield from the Yakima Construction Shop about scheduling and work to be completed for RMAP work in the Oak Creek area. The crew will be starting on the 21st. Manager Huffman and Engineer Kuykendall toured RMAP work in the Rock Creek Unit. A culvert on Dry Creek was brought to our attention by DNR as being a fish passage barrier. The culvert was inspected and needs to be replaced. Numerous other culverts primarily on seasonal and cross drains also need to be replaced. Additional work will focus on erosion issues and some abandonment. Kuykendall will begin work on permitting and design so that construction can be completed this fall. Manager Huffman and Real Estate Agent Hendrix inspected the Olson Property at Windy Point for any hazardous materials. The site was purchased by DOT during highway work and now they want to transfer to WDFW. The 1 acre parcel has had significant rehab and has been planted with native vegetation. There was no sign of any hazardous materials and some of the plantings are starting to grow well. Manager Huffman completed all updates to the Tim's Pond State Lands Restoration Project and submitted into Prism by the due date.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris met with WLA staff to review the new BPA contract Statement of Work (SOW) and discuss future aerial herbicide needs. BPA is developing the statement of work for a biological assessment contract to assess the effects of aerial herbicide applications on listed species that occur, or may occur, on the Wenas WLA. Currently we are unable to apply any herbicides aerially within the BPA-funded portion of the wildlife area.

LT Murray Wildlife Area: All staff worked to install electric fence on the Skookumchuck and Whiskey Dick boundaries of the Wild Horse Wind Facility in anticipation of livestock turn out next week. Manager Winegeart and Assistant Manager Hunt attended a pre-construction meeting with Casey Davidson (DFW Engineering), Paladin Construction President Jeff Brownfield, and PSE representative Shane Alberg on Tuesday. Paladin will start fence construction next week.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Sak posted the Fire Restriction signs on the wildlife areas access sites, replaced a control contactor on one of the pivot towers at the Upper Rupley pivot, and had the lift pump at Giffen Lake pulled out to replace bearings.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Region 4 (District 12) Ungulate Damage: Biologist Smith responded to calls regarding deer and elk damage from residents ranging from Whidbey Island to Enumclaw. Damage occurred to crops, ornamentals, fences and gates. Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements were signed by several landowners with the intent of decreasing future damage. Smith entered DPCA's into the Novatus system. Smith also monitored elk/deer activity on other area agricultural fields with the help of deployed trail cameras.



Elk frequenting agricultural fields in King County.

Common Loons – Monitoring: Biologist Smith checked on two local nesting loon pairs. One pair (with a chick documented earlier in the year by Biologist Anderson) was not to be seen from shore, potentially foraging in a marsh area at the far end keeping the chick out of sight. Smith did not launch a canoe as to avoid disturbing the birds more than necessary. The second pair is still incubating a single egg on the nest. Further checks will be required to determine if this egg is viable.



Loon incubating a single egg.

Western Toads on Whidbey Island: Biologist Milner contacted a reporter on Whidbey Island who agreed to publish an article asking for sightings of western toads, especially eggs, tadpoles or migrating toadlets so we can look for breeding sites on the island. The article received very positive responses, with several individuals contacting Milner with leads to check out. Individual sightings have been passed on to WSDM.

Band-tailed Pigeon Mineral Spring Surveys: Biologist DeBruyn conducted a count of pigeons at the northern most mineral spring in the study near Sumas. Seventy four pigeons came to the spring in an orderly fashion. These annual surveys are coordinated with other partnering agencies throughout the Pacific Flyway during a 10 day survey period in July, when pigeons frequently visit mineral springs. Long-term data from these surveys provides an index of overall band-tailed pigeon population status. This was the third and last spring surveyed in District 14.



*Biologist DeBruyn conducted a count of pigeons at the northern most mineral spring in the study near Sumas.
(Photo by Kim Chandler)*

Wildlife Areas

Milltown Island Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Wildlife Area Manager Rotton met with Skagit River Systems Cooperative (SRSC) to discuss work on Milltown Island that SRSC has proposed. SRSC has breached dikes and created channels on Milltown Island over the past several years, which has created fish access to additional salmon habitat in the lower Skagit River. SRSC is planning one additional dike breach to take place this summer on the northeast side of the island.

Fir Island Farm Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan: Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Habitat Planner Brian Williams and staff from the Nature Conservancy are making edits to Fir Island Farm Monitoring and Adaptive Plan before sending it forward to the Independent Technical Review Team.

Stillwater Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated invasive weed control efforts with King County Noxious Weed staff to treat purple nightshade, teasel, blackberry, and yellow tansy at the Stillwater and Cherry Valley Units. King County provided a WCC field crew for additional manpower. Additionally, Sound Salmon Solutions continued herbicide application to blackberry along Harris Creek. Manager Boehm also reports that the south parking area has been mowed as well as the south field access roads.

Cherry Valley Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated a team approach to solve mowing problems due to mechanical failure of the tractor. DFW will be providing fuel and mower for the effort. Frohning Dairy, local dog training clubs, the Northwest Retriever Club, and a volunteer operator worked out an agreement to rent a tractor for two weeks. Frohning Dairy provided the rental tractor, dog club donations will share the cost, and Manager Boehm will provide fuel as a win-win solution. Mowing will be conducted at Cherry Valley and Stillwater for the next two weeks.

Intalco Unit Water Control Maintenance: Manager Kessler and Natural resource Tech Deyo worked to clean out a water control on the Intalco Unit that had been plugged up by beavers. A



chain link enclosure was installed to keep the beavers from plugging it up again.

Manager Kessler and Natural resource Tech Deyo worked to clean out a water control on the Intalco Unit that had been plugged up by beavers.

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

Wildlife Management

Puget Sound Bird Observatory Meeting: Biologist Milner met with a Board member from PSBO to discuss potential partnerships and project ideas. The meeting was very productive with several ideas articulated for exploration in the coming months and years.

Wildlife Areas

Island Unit: Skagit Wildlife Area staff mowed grass and cattail areas in preparation for tilling later this summer. Cosgrove disked areas in 3 fields for weed control and vegetation management. Cosgrove assisted with coordinating and ferrying equipment on and off the Island. A corn sprayer was transported to Island and all corn has now been sprayed. Staff coordinated and worked on logistics for herbicide treatment of 25 acres of corn and spot treatment of barley.

Samish Unit: Sharecrop farmer planted oats this week. Skagit Wildlife Area staff are monitoring the treatment of the barley by contractor just planted oat fields and mowing of the site by our staff and the lessee.

Leque Island: Skagit Wildlife Area staff coordinated and worked on logistics of planting another 25 acres of barley on Leque Island.



Samish Unit: Skagit Wildlife Area staff mowed areas on the Samish Unit, including cattails in ponds. Cosgrove has been mowing these ponds for the last several years to try to combat cattail and has seen great progress this year.

Cattail treatment area on Samish Unit of the Skagit Wildlife Area after repeated mowing. Foreground shows untreated area.

Samish River Unit (Welts) Access Grant: Projects Coordinator Brokaw submitted a grant application to the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to build a parking lot, a pad for a portable toilet, and a fence at the Samish River Unit property. If the grant application is successful, the proposed facilities on this unit in the Skagit Wildlife Area will allow wildlife viewers, fishermen, waterfowl hunters, and other recreators to more safely and conveniently enjoy the property.

Samish Unit Wetland Enhancement Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Ducks Unlimited staff completed draft Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA) and State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) permit applications for the project. Once internal reviews are completed, these applications will be submitted to regulatory agencies to request permits to complete the work.

Lake Terrell Bass Tournament: The Washington Bass Association held a weekend bass tournament on Lake Terrell.

Lake Terrell Game Reserve Markers: Manager Kessler and Natural Resource Tech Deyo replaced all the floating markers on Lake Terrell that mark the game reserve boundary. The north half of Lake Terrell is a game reserve to allow waterfowl a protected place to rest during the hunting season.

Nooksack River Dike Top Trail Maintenance: Manager Kessler mowed the dike top trail on the Nooksack Unit. During the mowing, the Ford 9N tractor broke down and needed to be towed back to the parking area. Natural Resource Tech Deyo finished the dike top trail mowing using the John Deere tractor, and also mowed hunting paths on the interior of the unit.

Lake Terrell Hunting Blinds Maintenance: Natural Resource Tech Deyo repaired many of the waterfowl hunting blinds on the Lake Terrell Unit, including the ADA Accessible blind.

Lake Terrell Archery Range Mowing: Natural Resource Tech Deyo mowed fields and paths on the Archery Range on the Intalco unit.

Tennant Lake Skins & Skulls Exhibit: Manager Kessler worked with the Friends of Tennant Lake and Hovander Park to put on a Wildlife Skins and Skulls exhibit at the Tennant Lake Interpretive Center. The event was well attended with over 50 people checking out the skins and skulls.

Private Lands Habitat Management: Technician Otto performed habitat management operation on invasive plant species at several quality hunt sites in Skagit and Whatcom counties



Staff performed a routine checkup and maintenance at the Whidbey Island Diversity Site. 45 visitors had signed into the registration log.



Volunteer Coordinator Steven Dazey assisted Biologist Mike Smith in recruiting volunteers from the master hunter ranks to haze elk in the Green Valley area and to assist a farmer in maintaining his elk exclusion electric fence. Dazey also assisted Biologist Cole Caldwell in recruiting volunteers to man gates to private forest lands in the Nooksack area this hunting

season. Coordinator Dazey also assisted Biologist Brian Boehm in finding a possible volunteer (Eagle Scout) to assist in GPS mapping of bridges and plank crossings in the Snoqualmie Wildlife area near Duvall.

Information Booth at Mill Creek Festival: Hunter Education and Volunteer coordinator Steven Dazey recruited volunteers and helped to man an informational booth at the Mill Creek Festival. Over nine volunteers assisted during the two day event not only promoting hunter education but also promoting volunteer opportunities to the festival attendees. The volunteers manned informational tables on the KBD program assisting department personnel, and also manned a table on living with Nutria and Beaver.



Hunter education classes have been scheduled at the Region 4 office to help reduce the backlog of students needing to find a class.

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

Wildlife Management

North Skagit Pheasant parking: Technician Otto met with partner landowner for the pheasant parking on the Bow Hill release area. Otto verified that they are accepting of another year of parking on their property. Otto discussed the timetable for getting the site ready and to let them know we will get another agreement in place for their signatures.

Field spraying: Technician Otto sprayed two waterfowl sites, one in Whatcom and one in Skagit County. Both site totaled close to 10 acres of weed control.

Nooksack Deer Hunt Volunteer Coordination: Biologist Caldwell and Volunteer Coordinator Dazey discussed volunteer needs during the five day Nooksack deer hunt on private lands. From this, two volunteers have been identified. Biologist Caldwell contacted these individuals and will be scheduling their time according to their service hours and private lands access needs.

Western Washington Pheasant Release Program: Biologist Caldwell contacted private landowners and historic volunteer staff to go over land/farming status and access locations to establish goals for the 2014 hunting season.

Spring Bear Hunt Management: Biologist Caldwell summarized spring bear harvest data. Private lands staff is waiting on one last hunter to deliver harvest information. Biologist Caldwell will submit the 2014 spring bear harvest summary report to management after this last report is collected.

Gateway Pacific Terminal EIS Meeting: Biologist DeBruyn attended a meeting with the Washington Department of Ecology, The USFWS, Whatcom County and a private consultant to discuss issues related to terrestrial aspects of the environmental impact statement being prepared regarding a proposed coal export terminal in Whatcom County. While the meeting was informational in nature, DeBruyn was able to advance concepts relating to wildlife connectivity and climate change into the minds of those present. Transportation issues loom large in the EIS and impacts outside of Whatcom County are being addressed.

Master Hunter Advisory Group quarterly meeting: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey attended the Master Hunter Advisory Groups quarterly meeting in Ellensburg. Dazey reported on master hunter service projects and general service projects in region 4. Projects include Pygmy rabbit captures, I-90 elk fence repair, several different elk damage projects, and help at the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area.

10 Year Hunter Ed Instructor: Hunter Education Coordinator Steve Dazey presented volunteer hunter education instructor Gus Dorati his 10 year service certificate and pin. Gus teaches classes in Brier on the west side of the Cascades as well as Manson on the east side of the Cascades where his classes are taught in Spanish.



Hunter Education: Coordinator Dazey assisted two Master Hunters to find service hours one of the master hunters being confined to a wheelchair. Working with Dolores Noyes from the Olympia office, Hunter education coordinator Dazey assisted a hunter education student with a disability to find an appropriate hunter education Field Skills Evaluation and she assisted her in registering for the evaluation.

Wildlife Areas

Skagit Headquarters: Manager Rotton coordinated with Dike District #22 regarding the dredge spoils removal on the Wiley Slough and access for on the Hall Slough dike for derelict vessel removal from the Skagit Bay. Manager Rotton continues to work on a boundary line clarification for the Bald Eagle Natural Area property with Lands Agent Kye Iris and District Biologist, Chris Danilson. Manager Rotton and Restoration Project Coordinator Loren Brokaw met with Steve Hinton of Skagit River Systems cooperative to discuss the proposed breach work on Milltown Island. Steve provided more details regarding the breach location and timeline. Manager Rotton is coordinating with WDFW staff regarding the Island Unit (Barn field) tide gate repair. Manager Rotton attended the preconstruction meeting for the Highway 532 road widening and Davis Slough Bridge improvement work to begin the end of this month. Utility companies are currently onsite relocating the power poles for the project. Skagit staff are invited to attend the weekly construction meeting and to receive the construction schedule for work and lane closure information.

Samish River Unit: Manager Rotton met with a representative from Economy Fence to get an estimate for a boundary line gate on the dike to resolve trespass issues during the fishing season.

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm, with the assistance of two volunteers constructed a “weed basher” implement to break down weeds in the absence of a tractor and mower. The implement was constructed of lengths of scrap I-beam steel and chains and is towed behind a truck. The heavy weight breaks down stems leaving a walkable path through the 7’ tall weeds.

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

Regional Meeting: Region 4 held an all-hands meeting to distribute annual awards to staff and receive agency updates from Director Anderson and Deputy Director Stohr. After the all-hands meeting, Region 4 Wildlife Program staff met with AD Pamplin and Deputy Director Schirato to discuss Wildlife Program issues. Region 4 staff members gave updates on their activities over the past year.

Snoqualmie Wildlife Areas: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continues to coordinate with WDFW Master Hunters to provide volunteer opportunities for them. With support from Steve Dazey, the WDFW Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator, two Master Hunters and one additional volunteer continue to remove fallen trees, conduct maintenance on the pheasant pens, and tend to nursery needs over the past week. Manager Boehm also met with Nickolas Huffman to finalize the Eagle Scout Project he was working on. Nickolas rebuilt the

failing net pen loading dock and built a new, framed barn door to provide a more secure front entrance.

REGION 5

No report submitted. A double report will be in the July 21st Weekly Report.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Western Snowy Plovers: Biologists Sundstrom, Michaelis, Hahn, and Doorly continued to monitor snowy plovers at Midway Beach, Leadbetter, and Graveyard Spit. Western snowy plovers are a federally threatened and state endangered shorebird that nests along Washington’s coastal beaches. The three locations where snowy plovers actively nest are Leadbetter Point, Midway Beach, and Graveyard Spit. A summary of monitoring efforts at each location is provided below.

Leadbetter - Currently there are 9 active broods at Leadbetter, scattered up and down the beach. Many of these are under two weeks old. Biologists observed 2 new broods where nests had not been found and hypothesized that these broods came from nests at the North Point and in the North HRA. Biologists also located a new nest in the State Park HRA. This week, the greatest numbers of SNPLs were observed on Friday, July 18th with 16 adult individuals (5 females, 10 males and 1 unknown), 9 chicks and 4 fledglings. Of the 4 active nests reported last week, 2 hatched and 2 are still active.



LBNX003 with 1 of the 3 chicks (other 2 are running around foraging). Photo Credit: Steph Doorly

It should also be noted that the below summary table (Table 1.) has been reanalyzed once again, this time concerning the number of fledglings. It was decided to only count broods as fledged if fledgling-age chicks were actually sighted in the brood or chicks had been seen several days before fledging. Broods that were not sighted very close to fledging age have been removed from that total.

Table 1. Summary of total SNPL nests and broods at Leadbetter.

Leadbetter											
# Nests Found	# Nests Currently Active	# Nests Hatched	# Broods Found	# Chicks hatched	# Chicks currently Alive	# Fledglings	# Nests Failed				
							Pred	Sand Burial	Abandoned	Human Caused	Unknown Cause
26	3	15	17	45-47*	17-19**	5			5		3

*This number will be updated next week.

**This number represents pre-fledged chicks currently alive.

Midway Beach - No update this week.

Graveyard Spit - To date, biologists have located a total of 7 nests; 4 have hatched, 2 were abandoned and 1 is active. Of the 4 successful hatchings, 11 chicks have been produced. Five fledglings/juveniles can be confirmed fledged and 3 chicks are due to fledge this weekend and the other 3 by the end of this coming week. Once again Graveyard Spit is in the forefront of success!

Fisher Monitoring: Biologist Michaelis installed three camera stations in an area along the Wynoochee River drainage. Camera stations will be monitored for 60 days in an effort to detect transient or resident fishers. Fishers were released by Olympic National Park a few years ago and the monitoring will identify the extent animals have moved outside ONP.

Oregon Spotted Frogs: Biologist Tirhi, Lisa Hallock, and USFWS Marian Bailey monitored Oregon spotted frogs as part of the non-breeding season movement study. Tirhi spent the



WDFW Biologist Hallock and USFWS Biologist Bailey attaching radio transmitter belt to Oregon spotted frog research animal.

day as a mortality. There are currently 4 frogs on the air.

Oregon spotted frog radio attachment belt with radio antenna showing.

afternoon attempting to capture more study frogs by net while the other two checked location of frogs currently on radio transmitter. Interestingly, few frogs are using the largest of the wetland complex at this time of year. More frogs were seen the creek and associated agricultural ditch. The latter has hydrologic connection to Black River which might explain the frogs association at this time of year. While some study frogs are making significant weekly movements, others are staying fairly constant often in rather small sections of the ditch with little water. Tirhi was able to capture a fairly large female which was fitted with a transmitter, thus replacing another study frog that was picked up by the team that



Mazama Pocket Gopher Reserve Design: Biologist Tirhi and Linders participated in the second reserve design meeting. The majority of the meeting was consumed discussing assumptions of the reserve design. Designing reserves is always a difficult process and takes a lot of discussion to get results. Topics discussed included what gopher population targets we were attempting, what habitat protection targets we were attempting, how to define populations vs

sub-populations, when do genetics come into play, what role large acreage vs small acreage parcels would play, etc. It's likely that such discussions will need to continue over several meetings before the participants are comfortable putting together the process. WDFW is pleased to working cooperatively with USFWS on gopher management (reserve designs, surveys and site assessment, HCP).

Taylor's checkerspot captive propagation: Nearly all checkerspot larvae at both captive rearing facilities are now in diapause. Rearing conditions at the Mission Creek facility remain somewhat warmer than is desired. Modifications to the greenhouse are being evaluated that are consistent with the original design, which called for screen panels in the sides with sliding windows that could be opened. The engineer that approved the original design felt these were unnecessary and eliminated them.

Taylor's reintroduction and monitoring: Biologist Randolph began transcribing voice data from the distance sampling surveys in preparation for annual reporting due at the end of August. Biologist Linders is working on compiling other summary data and writing the annual report.

Taylor's checkerspot Rapid Habitat Assessment: Data collection for the Rapid Habitat Assessment is complete with a total of eight sites surveyed in 2014 (four ACUB sites and four JBLM sites) consisting of 1,546 grids (25x25-m) covering 239 acres. Biologist Randolph completed QAQC on the database and produced map layouts for the majority of variables on each site. Mapping on a few areas was compromised by localized mowing/brush-cutting. Additional assistance will be needed on this project in 2015 to insure data collection is complete before the end of June.

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

Wildlife Management

Band Tailed Pigeon: Biologist Tirhi completed the annual band-tailed pigeon survey at Mud Bay, near Olympia. One hundred and thirty six birds were counted entering the site over the six hour survey. Only one juvenile was positively confirmed although others may have been hidden. Counts at Mud Bay have remained fairly constant over the years (2013=113, 2012=124).

Mud Bay Band-tailed Pigeon survey location.



District 15 staff completed the pigeon surveys at the Hood Canal sites of Lilliwaup and Potlatch. Numbers were down slightly from the past few years with 174 at Lilliwaup and 254 at Potlatch. No juveniles were detected at either site, but would be expected if the survey window occurred several weeks later.