

# Wildlife Program

Week of October 27-November 2, 2014

## **WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION**

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

**Large Landscape Conservation:** Section Manager Wilkerson attended the National Workshop on Large Landscape Conservation from October 23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> in Washington D.C. The conference featured over 600 attendees from around the country and beyond that are working on large landscape conservation. The plenaries focused on integrating national, regional, and local efforts, urban landscape conservation, and relevant efforts of states, federal agencies, communities, and non-profits. Wilkerson co-presented with Habitat staff Charity Davidson on the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan in an invited session hosted by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), highlighting work in states that were featured in the recent National Fish, Wildlife and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy Action Progress Report. Wilkerson also attended in-depth sessions on Pennsylvania's Conservation Landscapes and Landscape Conservation Design.

**Sage Grouse:** The sage grouse Candidate Conservation with Assurances (CCAA) team (co-lead by Sections Manager Wilkerson and Becker and constructed by Lands Division staff Gorrell and Stinson) delivered a draft CCAA for Greater Sage Grouse to multiple regional and statewide DFW staff for review. The CCAA is intended to cover WDFW lands and provide a Programmatic vehicle for other state and private lands to receive an Enhancement of Survival Permit (EOS) that would signify that the actions being taken by the permittee meet a bar of recovery should the species be listed under the federal Endangered Species Act. The permits would ensure that landowners could continue their land-use practices (according to the CCAA provisions) in the event of such listing.

**Priority Landscapes:** Section Manager Wilkerson hosted the first meeting of the Statewide Priority Landscapes Leadership Team. Leadership from Enforcement, Fish Program, Habitat Program, Wildlife Program (including Division Manager Gardner), the Director's Office, and Public Affairs all participated. The meeting included an orientation to the concept of Priority Landscapes and the direction and role of the team. Next steps include the collection of each program's values and needs as it pertains to Priority Landscapes, a decision on which areas best reflect the need and opportunity to apply an integrated, landscape-level conservation approach to meet those values and needs, as well as discussion about how to operationalize the landscape conservation approach within those Statewide Priority Landscapes. On a parallel track, the Wildlife Program will work to identify district priority actions related to landscape conservation.

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

**eBird Northwest Portal:** Eric Gardner, Wendy Connally, Bill Tweit, and John Pierce had a productive meeting with John Alexander (Klamath Bird Observatory, KBO) to plan the **eBird NW portal launch for 17 November 2014**. They discussed content (assigned pre-launch tasks),

committees (Steering, Content, Citizen Science, IT), communication structure (Committees and Coordinators), and future potential partnerships for engagement and funding. The WDFW – KBO contract was signed this week.

***GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE.***

**Climate Smart Training:** Section Manager Wilkerson attended a 3-day National Conservation Training Center free training in Olympia on Climate-Smart Conservation. The training was offered for free by the North Pacific Landscape Conservation Cooperative and featured a thorough orientation and hands-on application of a step-by-step process to integrate climate adaptation into planning and implementation actions.

**Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration Workshop:** Division Manager Eric Gardner attended a Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration (WSFR) workshop in Seattle that involved US Fish and Wildlife Service and several western states federal aid coordinators. The USFWS's WSFR office manages federal funds such as Pittman-Robinson (excise tax on firearms and ammunition), Dingell-Johnson (excise tax on fishing equipment), and State Wildlife Grants. The workshop was designed to share information related to state application for, use of, and reporting out on those grants. Training on the new Wildlife TRACS geospatial database was provided on the final day.

**REGION 1**

***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

**Wildlife Areas**

**Asotin Creek WA – 4-O Autrey Field Controlled Burn:** Biologist Woodall, along with the assistance of Manager Dice and Technician Meisner, burned the 80 acre Autrey Field. This field is inundated with weedy Ventenata and Jointed Goat Grass. 4-O Ranch Staff had cut a fire line around the field the previous week, and they plan to reseed this field with alfalfa in the spring. High humidity and ground moisture with little to no wind made burning conditions difficult. By afternoon time fuels had dried enough to burn but little to no wind made it difficult to carry the flames. Bio Woodall noticed fresh elk sign in the field. They were taking advantage of any green grasses that were exposed under dead weed growth.



*Burning the Autrey Field*



*Burning the Autrey field on the 4-O WLA*

### **Private Lands/Access**

**Whitman County Habitat Restoration:** Biologist Lewis completed two habitat restoration plantings.

Lewis completed seeding a 50 acre forb/wildflower planting at a Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) register to hunt site. The site is also a partnership project with Pheasants Forever. The forb seeding completes the scheduled seeding practices on the site.

Lewis also completed a 30 acre native grass seeding at the Packer Creek Bureau of Land Management (BLM) property. This site is a project that is in a partnership with WDFW, BLM, and Pheasants Forever. The site will be managed through next summer to control broadleaf weeds, and native forbs will be seeded in the fall of 2015.

Lewis also spent time loading, moving, and cleaning seeding equipment.



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

### **Wildlife Management**

**Clarkston Cougar:** Biologist Earl checked the trail camera at a private residence in Asotin County where a horse was attacked by a cougar. Earl talked to the landowner and they both

agreed that the cat was not in the area at this point in time. The WDFW camera was removed and the owner was going to keep monitoring everything with his own camera.

**Profanity Peak wolf pack:** Specialist Shepherd and Natural Resource Tech Weatherman investigated areas within the suspected Profanity Peak wolf pack area of use and discussed issues with area ranchers and residents.

**Elk Tangled in Fence:** Conflict Specialist Rasley received a call from a farmer in eastern Columbia County regarding a large bull elk that was caught in his fence. Rasley reports: “When I got on scene there were at least 20 people on site and they all had their own opinion on what I should do to free the bull elk. The farmer and I agreed to just simply cutting the rope end freeing the elk from the fence. I ruled out immobilizing the elk due to his current condition and the fact that elk season was in full swing. While keeping the fence between me and the very lively bull I was able to cut the rope and free the elk. The farmer called me a few days later and said the bull has been seen several times chasing cow elk and appears to be doing just fine.”



***6x6 Bull Elk Tangled in a Rope***

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**SCWA Tractor Surplus:** Surplus of the old tractor at Sherman Creek WLA was finalized this week with the buyer picking up the tractor.



## **REGION 2**

**WOLVES:** Nothing to report.

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Northern Leopard Frogs:** Biologist E. Duvuvuei selected samples in preparation for analysis according to contract requirements. 50 of the 92 disease swabs and 300 of the 329 genetic samples will be processed. The disease samples were selected by greatest snout to vent length (SVL) and greatest sample distribution; larger frogs will have more keratinized tissue, and chytrids fungus colonizes this tissue. The genetic samples were selected in the same process. Since larger frogs have a greater chance of movement away from their larval ponds, we hope to avoid an entire pond's worth of frogs from the same cohort. Biologist Duvuvuei completed the NLF SWAP assignment.

**Bighorn Sheep Management:** Due to a hunter reporting hearing coughing coming from Bighorn sheep within the Mount Hull herd, biologist Heinlen spent two different observation periods monitoring them. Coughing may indicate a potential pneumonia outbreak in the herd. Biologist Heinlen observed 128 sheep during the first observation and 50-60 sheep during the second observation. All sheep observed were found to be acting normally. No coughing, lethargic animals, or carcasses were found during this monitoring effort. Biologist Heinlen will continue to closely monitor this herd.



***Mount Hull Bighorn sheep herd*** – Photo by J. Heinlen

**Bighorn Sheep Disease Testing:** Biologist Volsen and Gallie coordinated with Section Manager Harris and Post Doc Heinse to disease test domestic goats on a small farm within the range of the Chelan Butte bighorn herd. Technician Hastings, Biologists Gallie, Volsen, and Heinse, along with the owner, took samples from six animals. The owner mentioned seeing up to 13 bighorn sheep fairly often in his fields and in close contact with the domestic goats. The owner also indicated that the domestics were escaping their fenced pasture and climbing the hills into areas inhabited by native bighorns. One of the goats was reported to have been missing for three or more days before returning and being placed back into the pasture. Post Doc Heinse is surveying owners of small domestic sheep and goat herds in Chelan County to gauge their awareness of disease transmission issues with native bighorns and their willingness to work with WSU or WDFW in testing flocks and creating separation. Heinse's work is focused primarily on awareness and providing information, and her association with WSU, and the shared interest by the WSU vet school, has allowed her to interact with a wide variety of small flock owners, such

as 4H groups, meat goat suppliers, and even pet owners. Preliminary results from this year's field work indicate that there is considerable risk in Chelan County, but that continued interaction with flock owners in problem areas has the probability of mutually acceptable resolutions. In addition to surveys, informational awareness, and disease testing, Henise is exploring separation solutions such as cost share fencing with potential involvement from outside groups.

***Disease testing one of the goats of a small domestic flock located near the Chelan Butte bighorn sheep population***



**Highway 97A Mortality:** An 8.5 year-old Swakane bighorn ram was killed along State Highway 97A last week when it jumped off one the cliff faces above the highway in front of an oncoming truck. The ram was one of two that had found a way through the fence during rut activity. In most instances when sheep are killed on the highway following construction of the Highway 97A wildlife fence, it involves rams pursuing ewes during the rut. However, in this instance no ewes were reported being present. The head, and possibly cape, will be auctioned by one of the State's sportsman's organization to generate money for fence repairs.

**Wildlife Areas**

**Emergency Pasture Fence:** On Monday the Prescribed Burn Crew traveled to the Methow Wildlife Area. The team worked with the WCC crew on the Big Valley emergency grazing fence line all day. On Tuesday the crew continued working on the fence line, creating several H-braces, walkthroughs, and gates. The team continued work on Big Valley on Wednesday and finished the fence line early in the day. They then worked on miscellaneous small projects at headquarters.

**Fraser Creek Irrigation Diversion Cleanout:** On Thursday, the crew worked on cleaning out an irrigation diversion from which 80% of a water right for WDFW owned agricultural lands on the Fraser property. It was packed with mud after the floods. The crew then headed back to the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area.



*Kyle W., Joe A., and Delcie P. working on creating an H-Brace – Photo by Tiffany Mitchell*



*Kyle W. and Delcie P. beginning the process of cleaning out the diversion, what a mess! – Photo by Tiffany Mitchell*



*Kyle W. on his “raft,” trying not to sink into the mud while scooping it out with a shovel – Photo by Tiffany Mitchell*



*One of the few clear moments up on the Colocum WLA during elk season*

**Employee Injured in Non-job Related Accident:** Brandon Boulger, Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Natural Resource Tech 2, was severely injured in a 2-vehicle collision Thursday evening. Brandon was northbound on SR 97 when a vehicle pulled out in front of him at the south Riverside Exit (Kendall Road). Brandon suffered numerous fractures and a dislocated hip plus burns over 15% of his body. He is at Harborview Hospital. Notes, cards, and non-latex balloons (NO flowers) can be sent to him at:



Harborview Medical Center  
BICU  
325 9<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Seattle, WA 98104

### **REGION 3**

#### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

##### **Wildlife Areas**

**Sunnyside Wildlife Area:** Manager Bjornstrom worked with Mike Erickson of Ringold Hatchery to coordinate the habitat restoration project slated to begin this fall. The project was designed after a controlled burn lost containment during high winds and burnt an upland area adjacent to the Ringold Hatchery. There will be a 1-2 acre shrub plot planted, 9-10 acre upland seeding, and a small cottonwood gallery planted in the burned area.

**Colockum Wildlife Area:** Assistant Hagan seeded the headquarters fields to a mix of native grasses. These fields have been planted to grain crops for years but continued issues with erosion and weeds convinced us to go to permanent vegetation.

Colockum staff assisted Biologist Will Moore with elk body condition sampling work this week. Staff visited elk camps and collected heart and kidney samples from successful cow permit hunters.

## Wildlife Management

**Burrowing Owls:** Biologist Gregory received and began working on the application forms required for a \$10,000 Challenge Cost Share Grant. The application will be completed in coordination with BLM Biologist Lowe. The funds will be used to support burrowing owl surveys and population assessment in District 4.

After a period of absence from the WDFW [webcam](#) a lone burrowing owl has recently returned to the burrow. This bird is most likely a male as their migration distances are more limited than females who travel south to climates with more winter food resources this time of year.

*A burrowing owl frequently spotted on the WDFW webcam*

**Waterfowl:** Biologist Gregory compiled GIS data for Waterfowl Specialist Wilson in anticipation of upcoming survey flights.



**Colockum Cow Elk Body Condition Sampling:** Biologist Moore finished all sampling preparations early in the week with the help of Colockum Science Tech Ryan Faust. Moore scheduled multiple WDFW staff and volunteers to be in the field during the hunt to assist in collecting complete samples. Hunting conditions were poor during the first few days of the antlerless season with consistent rain and fog, but samples were still coming in. The weekend weather cleared up, although the hunting population had dropped off dramatically. Overall, approximately 25 complete and 15 incomplete samples were collected. Also, numerous contacts were made in the field and overall discussions were positive with hunters excited about having plenty of antlerless tags in the Colockum.

*Hunting weather on Friday, 10/31*



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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Oak Creek Wildlife Area:** Assistant Manager Berry coordinated with ADA coordinator Noyes and the Forest Service about a Forester Service Road that has damage making it unsafe for hunter access. Noyes approved moving the hunters to a road on the Rock Creek Unit. Berry switched out the ADA combo lock with a Forester Service lock to allow ADA hunters onto the road.

**Wildlife Management**

Stutzman received another commitment from a farmer with corn stubble near Basin City, WA, which will hopefully be a good duck hunting opportunity. Stutzman purchased materials and built four registration boxes for the corn stubble sites that will be installed at the parking areas this week.

Access Technician Kaelber was in Benton County looking for pronghorns. He was able to snap a few photos of a group of five near Kennewick.



***A group of pronghorn originally released on the Yakama Reservation near Kennewick***

**Regional Access Program**

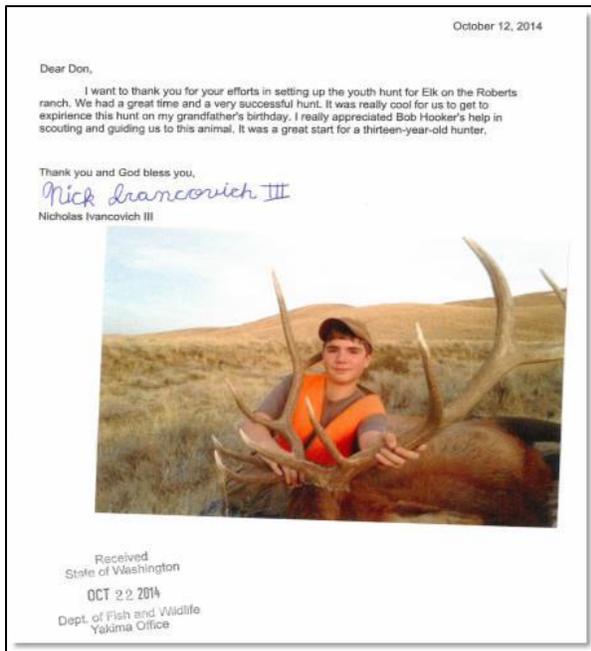
Access Manager Garcia and NRW Barbosa serviced the following access areas: Hyde, Whitstran, Snively, Duportail, Ringold, Vernita, Woodhouse, Lavender Lake, Bell, Teanaway junction, King horn Slough,

Mattoon, Fio Rito, Thrall, MP8-10, Rowe, Tim's Pond, Oak Cr, Mellis Rd, Fitzsimmons, pond 4 & 5, Buena, and Zillah Bridge.

***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 Conflict Specialist Hand received a letter of appreciation from a youth hunter that hunted on a Silver Dollar LHP permit this year.



### *A thank you note from a young hunter*

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

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Sunnyside Wildlife Area:** Manager Bjornstrom began working with Rusty Gigstead of CAMP on the shop addition at the Sunnyside HQ unit. Rusty and Manager Bjornstrom discussed building design, budgets, and time constraints. Rusty will be working with Manager Bjornstrom to facilitate the public bid

process in order to replace the shop destroyed by the wildfire this past spring.

**Wenas Wildlife Area:** Manager Confer Morris spoke with neighbor Lyle Schneider regarding a section of elk fence that was down. It turned out it was a section of the Kelley fence that we were aware of and was part of the priority one rebuild, which contractor Lucky Acres Fencing just completed work on.

Lucky Acres Fencing completed rebuilding the priority one section (Kelley corner – BelTel) and will be moving into Mellotte (priority two) in the coming week.

***Rebuild completed on one mile stretch from Kelley Hollow to BelTel***



## **REGION 4**

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Wolf Workshop:** Biologist DeBruyn attended a workshop at the University of Washington about wolf management. Scientists from around the country presented findings on the effect of lethal control on wolf populations.

**Wildlife Management Consultation/Permitting Requests; Municipal, Private Utilities, other:** Biologist Anderson continued work and review for requests of assistance regarding species or habitat management consultation for urban wildlife given construction or land-use alteration work, per local municipal code requirements to work with WDFW. Most involve eagle nest location/activity status, osprey nest removal, heron management, biodiversity areas and corridors, and big game use areas adjacent to the rural/exurban fringe of King County. More on WDFW Priority Habitat and Species Recommendations and how WDFW provides assistance at the local and broader planning levels can be found here:

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/phs/>.

#### **Wildlife Areas**

**Fir Island Farm Water Quality Monitoring:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw requested price quotes and warranty information from manufacturers of water quality monitoring equipment. WDFW is considering replacing the equipment that is currently on the site, depending on cost, warranty, and ability of grant funds to cover the additional expense.



#### ***Fir Island Snow Geese***

**Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Ducks Unlimited worked together on a progress report that was submitted to the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). The RCO administers one of the grants that pay for the design and alternatives analysis work on this project.

**Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP):** Projects Coordinator Brokaw prepared materials for a Public Open House that is scheduled for November 5<sup>th</sup> from 5:00-8:00 pm at Burlington City Hall. A public comment period associated with National Environmental Policy Act requirements is currently open and will close on November

24<sup>th</sup>. More information on this process, the documents under review, and how to comment is available at: <http://pugetsoundnearshore.org/outreach.html>.

**Terrell Creek Stream Flow:** Manager Kessler coordinated with the Whatcom Conservation District and the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association on stream flows in Terrell Creek. Due to the low water level in Lake Terrell, there is very little water flowing out of the lake and down Terrell Creek. Manager Kessler checked the Lake Terrell dam for beaver made obstructions and found no blockages. If the recent rains do not increase the water flows, Kessler will open the release valve at the dam to let more water out and into the creek.

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

### **Wildlife Management**

**Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) pelt sealing service:** Biologist Anderson sealed a cougar pelt, per WA state game harvest requirements and per international agreements: <http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/what.php>

**Three Year Package Cougar Workshop:** District Biologists participated in a video conference in order to attend and represent R4 in regards to the cougar three year package meeting covering ongoing efforts, proposals, and overall management needs of this game species.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Samish Unit Enhancement Project:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw provided information requested by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in addition to the permit materials submitted last month. The Corps is currently reviewing the project prior to issuing permits to complete the enhancement, which involves installing water control devices and completing maintenance on drainage ditches on the site.

**ESA Restoration and Waterfowl Management Strategy:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Wildlife Area Manager Rotton worked on completing the document that outlines WDFW's strategy for continuing to provide upland waterfowl hunting and farmed forage while also supporting estuary restoration projects on WDFW lands.

**Pheasant Hunting Season:** Manager Kessler and volunteers released a total of 410 pheasants throughout the week. Volunteers performed the releases on the Lake Terrell and Intalco release sites, while Manager Kessler performed the releases on the British Petroleum unit using an ATV. The ATV helped limit the ruts in the weather station road due to the wet conditions. Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated the pheasant release program with the help of six volunteers this past week. Parking lots are heavily used by hunters with an increase in activity due to waterfowl being open. Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Natural Resource Tech Cosgrove assisted with pheasant delivery on Friday at Headquarters.

***Leque Island Pheasant Hunter***

**Samish Unit:** Natural Resource Specialist Meis collected user survey cards and checked field and water conditions at the Samish Unit.

**Waterfowl Program:** Natural Resource Tech Cosgrove monitored water levels, waterfowl use, and hunter use on the Samish, Island, Johnson/Debay's Slough, and Headquarters units. Steady

rains have begun to pond water in lower areas on most units. Manager Rotton observed night feeding flight on the Samish Unit after shooting hours on Saturday evening.



**Private Lands/Access Management**

**Waterfowl Quality Hunt Site Preparation and Establishment:** Technicians Otto, Deyo, and Biologist Caldwell built, staged, and set up hunting blinds at sites across Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties. They also posted parking lot posts/signs/survey boxes and surveyed all enrolled sites in Whatcom, Snohomish, and Skagit Counties for access/harvest conditions. Biologist Caldwell also submitted several Waterfowl Quality Hunt applications.

***Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo spotted this Mandarin Duck foraging with a pair of Wood Ducks and a Mallard pair in Skagit County. It is unknown whether this rare sighting is the result of migration or local breeding efforts.***



**Volunteer Coordination and Use:** Biologist Caldwell contacted and coordinated volunteer schedules



for November Waterfowl Use Surveys. Biologist Caldwell met with one volunteer on Saturday to conduct a survey and go over established protocols and information data.

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Interviews/Outreach – Vashon-Maury Beachcomber:** Biologist Anderson provided information for a piece on hunting Vashon Island. Anderson mostly provided information for navigating our hunter harvest website and discussed thoughts on hunter access on the island: <http://www.vashonbeachcomber.com/news/280699142.html>

**Museum Specimens:** Biologist DeBruyn organized and transported bird and mammal specimens from the La Conner office to the Burke Museum at the University of Washington.

**Region 4 Ungulate Damage:** Biologist Smith responded to calls regarding deer and elk damage in Whatcom and Skagit counties. Non-lethal measures to deter deer and elk from entering properties were discussed, including fencing options. In addition, Smith constructed a temporary electric fence to exclude elk from damaging hay bales in Skagit County. Smith also monitored temporary fences protecting crops from elk damage in areas of Skagit and King Counties.

**Region 4 2014 Hunts:** Biologists continued to respond to multiple members of the hunting community inquiring about prospective hunting areas, regulations, GoHunt interactive mapping, and prospects for the upcoming hunting seasons. Answers to many common hunt questions are found at the WDFW Hunting website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/>

**Wildlife Areas**

**Snoqualmie Wildlife Area 2014 Hunts:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm responded to a number of phone calls and email messages from local hunters. Most of the calls were messages from hunters expressing the great hunting conditions at each of the pheasant release sites. An abundance of mowed grass, grain, and corn for forage and cover, as well as well-maintained access roads provide the ability for hunters to reach most portions of the units. Other callers expressed their frustration with the continued low number of pheasant that are released each week. Manager Boehm explained to them that we are actually receiving about 10 more birds per week compared to last year, but it will take time and funding to return the pheasant numbers to the levels of the past.

**Island Unit:** Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove met with Regional Director Bob Everett, Regional Wildlife Program Manager Russell Link, and volunteer Curt Tronsdal to discuss the development of the 2015 Farm Plan for the Island unit and other necessary agreements for use of equipment and volunteer commitment. Manager Rotton met with HPA Biologist Wendy Cole to tour the Island Ditch maintenance project and discuss fish exclusion requirements and process. Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove replaced the

plywood floor in a popular blind in the Ole Thompson field on the Island unit. The old plywood floor had rotted and nails were exposed. Cosgrove monitored water levels, and took some measurements of barn tidegate on the Island unit.

**Skagit Headquarters:** Manager Rotton performed administrative duties including lease renewal planning, updated budget tracking and planning, vendor payment, and monthly administrative reports. Natural Resource Specialist Meis met with the Dike District #22 Commissioner about replacing a sheer log at the Headquarters unit and purchased materials for this project. Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove removed a downed tree on the spur dike trail at the Headquarters unit.

**DeBay Slough:** Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove located and took GPS points for Game Reserve boundary signs on the south west portion of the Johnson/Debay's Slough Unit.

### **Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordination**

**Hunter Education Class Support:** Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey, along with volunteer instructor Casey Green, assisted the instructor at North Whidbey Sportsman Association to conduct a hunter education On-Line Field Skills Evaluation in Oak Harbor. The instructor team in Oak Harbor is new to the Field Skills Evaluation and asked for help to put the new program on. Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey also met with a new instructor prospect in Index and previewed a new teaching facility. The facility at Outdoor Adventures in Index will be an ideal site for hunter education classes. The facility is available for hunter education classes during the busiest time for hunter education, which is late August through November, and the facility owner is excited to be able to start seeing classes there.

**Master Hunter Permit Program Service Hours:** Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey continued to assist Master Hunters to find Department of Fish and Wildlife projects to complete their service hours for the Master Hunter program. With the assistance of Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm, many master hunters have been able to complete their service hour requirements. Coordinator Dazey also assisted master hunters in Region 2 and Region 3 to find projects. The Hunter Education division will be adding a Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator in Region 3 soon and this will further assist master hunters in Eastern Washington to find service hours that benefit DFW. Coordinator Dazey also assisted Biologist Cole Caldwell to answer documentation questions on volunteer travel reimbursement.

**Hunter Education Coordination:** Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey assisted Chief Instructor Char in doubling the number of students that would be able to sign up for two of his upcoming classes. The demand for classes is still high and the doubling of instructor Char's class size helped to reduce the wait list for his area.

**Boy Scout Troop Seeks an Opportunity to Provide Service to DFW:** Volunteer coordinator Dazey assisted a Boy Scout troop that had expressed interest in doing a service project for DFW to find service work that will benefit DFW. Word was put out to department personnel and the troop was presented with two options that fit their abilities and desires.

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Citizen Science Association Conference - Talk Proposal Acceptance:** Biologist Anderson received word from organizers of the 2015 Citizen Science Association Conference that a joint talk Anderson is collaborating on with education staff at Woodland Park Zoo has been accepted. The talk is entitled “Partnering for amphibian monitoring: Involving zoo audiences in collecting data on local wildlife with Katie Remine (Woodland Park Zoo) Jenny Mears (Woodland Park Zoo) and Chris Anderson (Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife)”. This inaugural conference is a pre-conference of the longer established annual American Association for the Advancement of Science Conference. Anderson and WPZ collaborators will continue to work together to prepare for this professional outreach to get the word out on our citizen science efforts locally.

**Wildlife Areas**

**Snoqualmie Wildlife Areas:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continues to coordinate with WDFW Master Hunters and citizen volunteers to provide a pheasant release team. Manager Boehm states that coordinating efforts with Steve Dazey, the Region 4 Hunter Education and Volunteer Coordinator, has been a huge success.

**WDFW Leadership Training:** Staff attended the two day long third module of the WDFW Leadership Training course in Mill Creek.

**Private Lands/Access Management**

**Safety Equipment:** Biologist Caldwell met with a local Department of Transportation (DOT) certified helmet dealer in Skagit County to go over ATV/UTV helmet options for Private Land Access personnel. Arrangements were made for staff to be fitted for helmets next week.

**REGION 5**

***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

**Wildlife Management**

**Black-tailed Deer Research Project:** Please see below for the most current information on the Washougal (GMU 568) and Coweeman (GMU 550) study clusters.

**Washougal:** All four does in the Washougal cluster gave birth this year. Seven fawns (out of 8 biologically possible) were captured from the four Washougal does. Fawns and does are currently being monitored for survival. As of this week, two does and three fawns remain alive. Interestingly, a yearling buck fawn from the 2013 captures was legally harvested during

this past week. This mortality is the first hunter-killed animal from either of the Region 5 deer study clusters. Thanks to the successful hunter who collected the collar and delivered it to WDFW.

**Coweeman:** Six does (out of 7) in the Coweeman cluster gave birth this year. Nine fawns (out of 12 biologically possible) were captured from the six Coweeman does. The does and fawns are currently being monitored for survival. As of this week, seven does and two fawns remain alive, along with one yearling deer from the 2013 fawn captures.

## Wildlife Areas

### Cowlitz Wildlife Area

**Peterman Hill Unit:** The 200 acre commercial thinning has been completed. A total of 1,179,050 board feet of Douglas fir saw logs, 72,150 board feet of red alder, and 3,130.50 tons of pulpwood were transported to local mills. The thinning occurred to maintain forest health and to increase wildlife habitat and forage under the canopy.



### *Peterman Hill Unit commercial thinning*

**Spears and Swofford Pond Units:** Wildlife Area staff have completed brushing roads and pond dikes with the hydraulic arm-brushing machine. This is done at least twice a year to maintain vehicle and equipment accessibility onto the property. Weather permitting, staff will continue to brush roads on the 50 plus miles of logging roads on the Peterman Hill unit.



### *Road brushing*

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Southwest Washington Management Area 2A Goose Hunt**

The 2014-2015 Southwest Washington goose hunting season will open Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup>. This complicated season involves quota limits and zone closures based on the harvest of the dusky Canada goose. It also requires hunters to be very skilled in the identification of the Canada geese subspecies found in this area. Hunters interested in participating in this season can refer to pages 3, 6-7, and 10 of the Migratory Waterfowl Pamphlet for further details regarding requirements for participation. As a reminder for those planning on participating, Management Area 2A hunts take place on Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. To participate, all hunters must have a small game license, a state migratory bird permit, a federal migratory bird stamp, and a migratory bird authorization with a Goose Management Area 2A/2B Canada goose harvest card. The season will extend from November 8<sup>th</sup> through November 30<sup>th</sup> and December 10<sup>th</sup> through January 25<sup>th</sup>. Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge differs in season lengths and the authorized hunt days and will also require a reservation to participate. Please refer to the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge website [www.fws.gov/ridgefieldrefuges/ridgefield/recreation/huntinghomepage.html](http://www.fws.gov/ridgefieldrefuges/ridgefield/recreation/huntinghomepage.html) for further information regarding hunting on the Refuge.

For the 2014-2015 season, hunters will have a daily bag limit of four geese, not to include more than one dusky Canada goose. The possession limit is twelve geese, not to include more than one dusky goose. The bag of one dusky goose is a season limit and hunters who harvest a dusky goose or do not comply with hunt requirements will have their authorization to hunt geese invalidated for the remainder of the season. This season's dusky quota has been raised from last season's quota of forty to eighty dusksies. This total of eighty dusksies will be distributed amongst 5 zones in Management Area 2A and 2B. Zones may closed to hunting geese if dusky quotas are exceeded.

One notable change this season regards restricted limits of cackling Canada geese. These restrictions have been lifted, and hunters may take cackling geese as long as they do not surpass the daily and possession limits of total geese outlined on page 7 of the Waterfowl Pamphlet. Hunters should record their harvest on harvest cards in the field, and bring all geese, fully feathered and intact, to a check station between the hours of 10:00 am and 6:00 pm. Check station locations can be found on page 9 of the Waterfowl Pamphlet.

The Department is aware of the difficulties associated with this season and is grateful to hunters for their continued cooperation while we attempt to recover a declining subspecies. Thank you and good luck during the upcoming season.

**2014 Hunting Seasons:** Regional Wildlife Biologists, Wildlife Area Managers, Hunting Access Staff, and Customer Service Staff fielded dozens of contacts from the hunting public this week regarding access questions, management questions, directions, etc. Changes in access policy by

Industrial Forest Landowners have significantly changed the availability of areas suitable for hunting. Please see the hunting prospects located at: <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/prospects/> for detailed information about hunting access, populations, etc. Additionally hunters are encouraged to use the WDFW Go Hunt feature located at: <http://apps.wdfw.wa.gov/gohunt/> to learn about prospective areas, find public lands, find private lands accessible to the public, etc.

**Media Outlets:** Regional Wildlife Program Manager Jonker along with District Wildlife Biologists Holman and Anderson fielded contacts from multiple media outlets related to 2014 elk hunting in Region 5. Changes to access policy, hoof disease, and population numbers were popular topics among the interviewers. Articles are forthcoming in several venues.

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

**Wildlife Conflict:**

**Access to Hunt:** Conflict Specialist Conklin provided land owner information to hunters seeking access to property to hunt elk for the general season, Boistfort, and Grays River hunts. In addition, Conklin is working with a Wahkiakum County land owner who is interested in the hunt by written permission program.

**REGION 6**

NO REPORT SUBMITTED