

Wildlife Program

Week of June 29 – July 5, 2015

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Predator Survey on a Private Timber Grazing Allotment: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett, Assistant District Biologist Lowe, and a producer canvased an area where sheep may be grazed for the remainder of the summer. Several predator signs were discovered throughout the allotment including bear, cougar, and coyote. While looking for wildlife sign, several locations were checked for grazing and water. Due to the lack of water and open areas to graze, the producer may not be grazing in this location.

Wolf Conflict Presentation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett worked with a local rotary club to prepare for a presentation regarding wolves of Washington, including conflict mitigation.

Monthly Wolf Update for Producers: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett compiled wolf sightings, camera work, depredation investigations, and collar information for the Spokane County Cattlemen and producers within the Huckleberry Territory.

Damage Claim Timelines: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett continued to work with two producers that filed a damage claim for livestock losses. An internal conference call to discuss next steps on the claims was relayed to the producers. Also, a final Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement was submitted for payment.

Region 2 Wolf Activities

Okanogan Wolves: Specialist Heilhecker tried contacting the rancher regarding wolf locations and to discuss the range rider's departure. The ranger rider called Specialist Heilhecker last Friday to let her know he was leaving for a couple of months. His broken foot is not healing and using an ATV is not allowed in the forest. Specialist Heilhecker left a message for the technician working on the WSU project. She wants to reiterate the need for improving communication with WDFW personnel, the rancher, and any range riders contacted in the field.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Grizzly Bear Survey: Wildlife Biologists Annemarie Prince and Dana Base removed one hair-snagging corral and moved another corral in the Selkirk Ecosystem. A sow grizzly bear with two young cubs was detected at one corral. Hair samples were collected from the barbed wire at the corral for submittal to the USFWS. Hair corrals are barbed wire stretched around four or

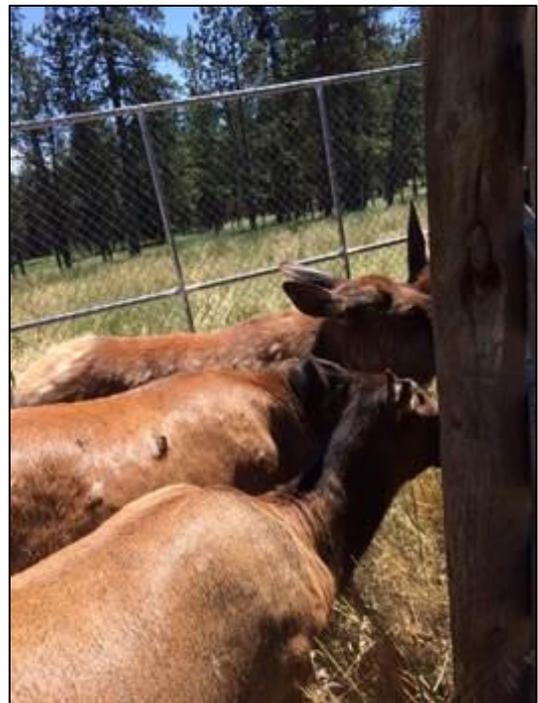
more trees, forming a corral with lure (typically fish oil and cow's blood) placed in the center. The objective is to get the bear to cross the barbed wire and leave a hair sample. There is a self-activated (trail) camera placed at the corral for initial bear species identification.

Sow grizzly bear (with two young cubs) that was photographed at a DNA hair-snare corral with a self-activated camera in the Washington Selkirk Mountains on 6/21/2015



Blue Mountains Elk Initiative: District Biologist Wik and Assistant District Biologist Vekasy attended the 25th celebration for the Blue Mountains Elk Initiative with Elk Specialist Hoenes, Regional Director Pozzanghera, Regional Wildlife Program Manager Robinette, Assistant Director Pamplin, and Director Unsworth. The celebration included a tour of the Starkey Experiment Station and a gathering of elk related professionals from the Blue Mountains.

Hand-reared, now 22 year-old elk at the Starkey Experimental Forest



Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites

SCWA Yard Sanctuary: With the recent hot weather, the small white-tailed buck in the photo below has been spending a lot of time in the yard at the Sherman Creek WLA headquarters. On this particular day he was joined by a pair of turkeys.



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

Wildlife Management

Volunteer Lek Survey Project: Atamian completed the final field staff report for the 2013-2015 ALEA project. Thirty-seven volunteers put in over 2700 hours completing 59 sharp-tailed grouse lek surveys, assisting in translocating sage grouse, monitoring radio marked grouse, and giving three community presentations on grouse and shrub-steppe conservation.

Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites

Asotin Creek Wildlife Area – Ayers Gulch Wildfire: Wildlife Area Manager Bob Dice and Debby Flynn responded to a report of a wildfire burning at the Halsey Unit near Ayers Gulch on Wednesday morning. Dice and Flynn worked with neighbors to drag the department's helicopter dip tank out of the Halsey shop for aerial suppression efforts. The tank was set up and filled with water trucks, allowing rapid turn-around for helicopters, which really made a difference in rapidly suppressing this fire. Two aircraft used the tank. Additionally, fire crews from Blue Mountains Fire District, DNR, Wheatland Fire District, and USFS worked on the fire. The fire size was 390 acres on WDFW and adjacent private land. The fire burned about 50 acres of wheat on WDFW land under lease by LMA farms in addition to grass and shrub-steppe habitat in the canyon. David Woodall hauled 2,000 gallons of water to the fire using our military surplus five-ton truck and tank. Greg Heimgartner was also on scene to give Debby a ride back to Clarkston. During mop up, fire crews discovered a crashed small helicopter in the bottom of Ayers Gulch with two badly burned bodies. Last word we received was the crash site is on the wildlife area. The crashed helicopter was not associated with fire suppression efforts. Cause of the crash is still under investigation by Investigators from NTSB, and the Asotin County Sheriff's Office. Identities of the deceased individuals have not been released yet, nor have details of the crash. Though the crash is suspicious, we do not have an official explanation as to the cause of the fire. A fire investigator from DNR is also looking into the cause of the fire. On

Thursday afternoon, Dice drained the dip tank and winched it onto a trailer for the next wildfire event. The trailer and tank is locked in the Halsey shop and available to any of our neighbors who need it.



Ayers Gulch on fire



Dipping water out of the tank, with Debby Flynn nearby



Trucks lined up to keep the dip tank full



Burned wheat on WDFW land that was due to be harvested next week

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

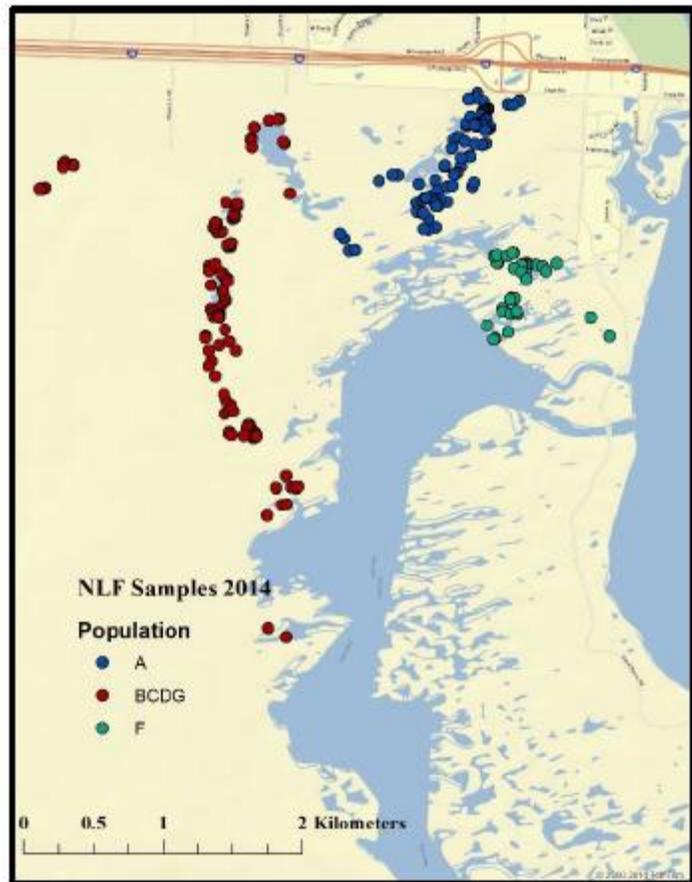
Wildlife Management

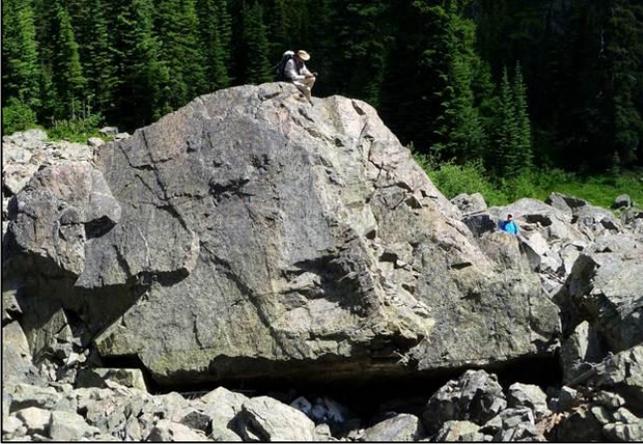
Northern Leopard Frog: WSU researchers submitted the results of the population analysis for the Northern Leopard Frog Management Area. In summary, three distinct subpopulations ('subunit A', 'subunit F', and 'subunits BCDG') exist within the Northern Leopard Frog Management Area. The subpopulations 'subunit A' and 'subunits BCDG' are relatively robust and would be capable of sustaining metamorph removal for reintroduction. The subpopulation 'subunit F' is smaller and less diverse, and although benefits would be achieved by translocating a portion of these individuals, numbers should be minimized to reduce risk to the existing subpopulation. Based on WSU's population models, the success of reintroductions would be significantly improved if metamorph survival could be increased through captive rearing prior to release at reintroduction sites.

The three distinct Northern Leopard Frog subpopulations as described by WSU, based on the genetic analysis of 2014 tissue samples (Seaborn & Goldberg, 2015)

North Cascades Wolverine Research

Project: Biologist Fitkin and USFS staff hiked into the site we identified from the air as Mallory's likely natal den site back in April. With the help of a scat sniffing dog, we located several putative wolverine scats in a probable latrine site and other more scattered scats in the probable den vicinity. With luck, DNA analysis should confirm the site as Mallory's den and may also identify the presence of kits. This is the third natal den site we have located and described as part of this long-running study. We hope to make an attempt to locate Sasha's likely natal den site at the end of the month, again with the help of a scat sniffing dog. Many thanks to Conservation Canines (specifically Pip and handler Heath) for donating their services for this trial attempt with this technique. Their skills proved invaluable; we never would have located all those scats in the many cracks and crevices of the vast cirque boulder field we were working in.





Biologist Fitkin on wolverine den boulder (likely den underneath) – Photo by USFS



Pip the wonder dog – Photo by Scott Fitkin

Wildlife Areas

Chesaw Elk: Bryan has spotted groups of elk on and near the Chesaw Wildlife Area the past couple weeks. One large group had four bulls, 15 cows, and three calves. One day they were spotted in the prescribed burn area that we treated in May this year, near the ponds where green up has produced good forage. The burn was funded with a grant from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

Chesaw Elk – Photo by Bryan Dupont



Private Lands/Access

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE): Biologist Comstock visited Grant County SAFE fields with Supervisor Cotton. There are site prep problems with a number of these tracts and we will need to meet with the landowner to determine a plan for his SAFE fields. Biologist Comstock contacted the FSA to discuss the issues. She also created conservation notes for all the tracts to ensure we have good records of communications with the landowner. Private Lands Biologist Braaten looked at a few SAFE fields for compliance this week. Private Lands Biologist Braaten continues to check on which fields need extra attention in the way of weed control, mowing, and/or reseeding.

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

Wildlife Management

Gun Range: Manager Furnari corresponded with her manager and Lands Division staff to find out what factors are used to determine when to close down a gun range (without creating public backlash). POL 6012 and an example PAM form were provided. We thought there would be an SOP as well. The nearby USFS Winthrop office had contacted the office to find out if we were going to be shutting down the gun range, since another one further south had and Wenatchee was on fire. She attempted to look through past managers' digital folders to locate historical information related to wildfires caused by the target shooters as part of a closure justification. She is attempting to balance the wants/needs of hunters/shooters with public safety and fire weather warnings (noted at bottom of report). Perceptively, if shooters don't have a place to target practice within the confines of a managed gun range, they will illegally shoot at targets somewhere else. Typically, this can happen out of the nearby, watchful eyes of passers-by, and potentially cause a wildfire in the depths of a remote, forested area. She will continue to assess environmental conditions to determine when to seasonally close the gun range, if program staff haven't come to that decision prior to that time. The gun range is located 0.5 miles from the PLSP, two miles from Methow HQ, three miles from the nearest fire station, and four miles from USFS Winthrop Ranger Station. Maintenance Mechanic Wottlin has mitigated the area by mowing, rototilling, disking, and weed-whacking the perimeter boundary as well as in-between the backstop ranges of 100, 200, & 300 yards.



Condition of gun range before work –
Photo taken 6/26 by Sherry Furnari

Wildlife Areas

Okanogan Conservation District Board of Supervisors Monthly Meeting: Manager Swedberg attended the monthly Okanogan Conservation District Board of Supervisors monthly meeting. The Conservation District did not get a capital budget request that would have been used in part to help with irrigation infrastructure damaged by post-fire debris flows and flooding in the Methow. It appears that the Miracci irrigation pipe, which provides irrigation to DFW agriculture lands in the Methow, will be replaced with larger pipe to permit the maximum use of water rights. The original pipe installed was undersized and the Okanogan Conservation District has been working on getting funding to correct the problem.



*Sharp-tailed grouse hen
watching over brood* – Photo by
Eric Braaten



Western Painted Turtles and Yellowlegs at the lake –
Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW



Columbine – Photo by Scott Fitkin



High country beauty – Photo by Scott Fitkin

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Buser met with Archeologist Kelly at the Mesa Lake Unit for a site visit regarding the pipe trenching portion of a wetland project. A cultural resource review will be completed soon, then the water diversion will be installed and the design phase of the Artesian Ponds will begin.

I-82 Ponds Unit Fire Call: Assistant Manager Buser responded to a fire call on the I-82 Ponds Unit. Yakima County Fire District 5 responded for fire control with aid from the Yakama Nation. The cause of the fire is being investigated. The fire area is estimated at 11 acres.

An area burned by errant fireworks on the I-82 Ponds Unit

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Following early morning thunderstorms and new lightning caused fires to the north and south of the wildlife area, Manager Huffman spent several hours patrolling the wildlife area looking for new fire starts. None were located and the area received additional rain from more storms.



Rock Creek Unit: Manager Huffman used the Polaris Ranger to access Section 9 of the Rock Creek Unit and begin spraying Canada thistle in a sub-alpine meadow. The beautiful meadow is full of wildflowers in the spring, but is being overrun by thistle that grows less than a foot tall. Huffman began spot spraying, but only covered a small area before running out of herbicide. Huffman and Assistant Manager Berry will return this coming week with the truck and backpacks to continue spot spraying to treat the weeds and minimize damage to native plants. It was a beautiful day on Bald Mountain, with Mt. Rainier and Mt. Adams visible in the distance.

Mt. Rainier viewed from Bald Mountain on the Rock Creek Unit of the Oak Creek Wildlife Area



Wood Replenishment Harvest: Forester Mackey and Project Forester Dahlgreen met with John Marvin from Yakama Nation Fisheries to go over wood replenishment harvest to occur this fall for the Oak Creek and SF Cowiche restoration projects.

Wildlife Management

Dove Banding: District Biologist Fidorra initiated dove banding at the Ringold Fish Hatchery and banded 31 doves, most of which were hatch-year birds. Hatchery Specialist Roberts is assisting with baiting efforts. Dove banding will continue through August 15.

Bat Monitoring Project: District Biologist Fidorra retrieved two bat detectors for the WDFW Bat Monitoring project near Ephrata and Ritzville to conclude the first of three rounds of monitoring that will occur during the summer of 2015.

Mink: District Biologist Fidorra retrieved a freshly killed mink from a citizen who suggested it be used for taxidermy/education. The specimen is in very good condition and may be used at a display at the Oak Creek Wildlife Area.

Roadkill Pronghorn: District Biologist Fidorra investigated a report of a roadkill pronghorn on I-82 to see if any tags or markers were present on the animal. No carcass could be located.

Buck Deer in Irrigation Canal: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received a call and responded to a young buck deer stuck in an irrigation canal near Kennewick. With assistance of Habitat Biologist Ritter and Fish Biologist Hone, as well as Kennewick Irrigation employees, we were successful in hazing the deer to a section of the canal where it could gain traction and escape. Our efforts were extremely appreciated by the Kennewick Irrigation District.

Deer Stuck in Irrigation Canal

Yakima County Sage Grouse Survey: Stutzman provided Research Scientist Schroeder with the data from the Yakima County Sage Grouse survey.



Dove Banding: Biologist Bernatowicz trapped doves on the Yakama Nation Reservation in cooperation with Yakama Nation Biologist Blodgett most of the week. Only five doves were banded. More sites were pre-baited and scouted. Only small concentrations of doves were found and most activity was during mid-day when temperatures were high. Blodgett is going to try setting traps mid-day and checking often.

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Bernatowicz responded to a call of a dead bighorn lamb along Highway 410 near Clemans Mountain. The reporting party did not believe it was hit by a

vehicle. Bernatowicz performed a field necropsy and determined it was a road-kill. Samples were collected in case disease testing was desired.

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

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart worked with Environmental Planner Demorest regarding the next steps in the implementation of the Naneum Recreation Plan, specifically implementing the inter-agency stakeholder involved process to move forward on designating a loop road system in the Green Gate Unit.

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

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Manager Lopushinsky kept in contact with the Central Washington University archaeology staff conducting the 2015 archaeology field school on the Colockum. They were concerned about nearby fires and fire precautions.

Central Washington archaeology staff and students working at Colockum Wildlife Area



Wildlife Management

Rattlesnake Mountain Evaluation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand evaluated winter wheat fields on Rattlesnake Mountain for maturity and levels of elk damage. Recent hot weather with no moisture is speeding up the ripening of the wheat, and in some areas shriveling of wheat cornels was observed, which will reduce the quality and yields. Areas of browsing, trailing, and bedding were observed in several fields. Depending on weather, the start of wheat harvest could begin within two weeks.

Pressuring Elk: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand coordinated with landowners and hunt managers on elk locations to pressure them away from valuable crops.

Cost Share Fencing Project in Cold Creek

Area: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand coordinated the final delivery of fence materials to the cost share fencing project in a large wine grape operation in the Cold Creek area. These materials will extend the second phase of the fence construction project by another mile of fence.



Cost Share Fence Materials

Elk Damage Claim: Conflict Specialist Wetzel discussed a damage claim with a hay grower in the Weaver Road area and worked with Olympia staff to begin processing the damage claim. Elk in this area will be targeted heavily for harvest beginning in August.

Elk Use Surveys: Conflict Specialist Wetzel surveyed elk use of the South Branch Ditch area and Badger Pocket this week. Both areas have some elk use at this time. Elk use of the area will depend on where irrigation water use is curtailed this month due to the water shortage.

Elk Fencing Project: Conflict Specialist Wetzel met with an orchard owner in Tampico and looked at an existing and new elk fencing project. Three elk were observed in the orchard area and were hazed out. The orchard owner signed a fencing contract and will begin fence construction soon.

Canada Goose Complaint: Conflict Specialist Wetzel checked on a complaint of Canada geese fouling lawns in an apartment complex in Yakima. Some geese were found at the location and a discussion of actions will follow after consultation with USFWS.



Geese on a lawn commons area



Geese chased off a patio area

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

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: This week Jeremy Adams started on the Colockum as a Natural Resource Worker 2 for a three month appointment. He spent his first day filling out new employee paperwork and becoming familiar with the wildlife area.

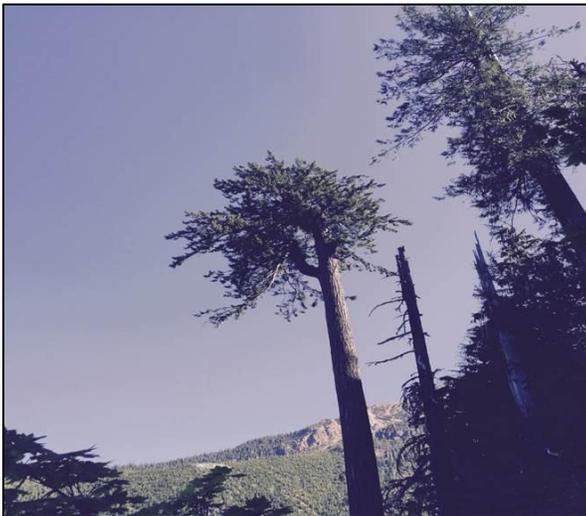
Fencing Repair: Manager Lopushinsky, Assistant Manager Hagan, and Natural Resource Worker 2 Adams spent several days repairing boundary/livestock fencing along the game reserve. So far we have had very few trespass livestock problems this summer.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Golden Eagle Inventory: Biologist DeBruyn visited two golden eagle sites in Whatcom County. One chick was heard calling in the vicinity of a nest in a huge (three meters dbh) Douglas fir snag. No eagles were detected at a second site, which was where a citizen had reported an adult feeding a fledged young.



Golden Eagle Nest in Large Fir Snag



Golden Eagle Habitat in Northern Whatcom County

Avian Influenza Sampling: Biologist DeBruyn sent four bald eagle carcasses to The National Wildlife Health Center in Madison, Wisconsin to test them for High Path Avian Influenza. These were the first in a series of twelve eagles that will be sent for analysis. He also discussed the upcoming waterfowl sampling program with a pathologist from the NWHC.

Northern Puget Sound Surveys: Assistant District 13 Biologist Cyra compiled the remainder of the data from the joint USFWS/WDFW nesting survey and distributed it to cooperators.

Northern Puget Sound SGCN: Assistant District 13 Biologist Cyra surveyed Guemes Island for habitat conducive to Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) sampling.

East-West Bear Project: Biologist Smith assisted Bear and Cougar Specialist Beausoleil and Carnivore Specialist Maletzke with bear captures and collaring over the past ten days. A total of nine bears were collared this session. This represents a successful session for the project, particularly considering the heat levels encountered.



A male black bear collared during the east-west bear project during 2015



Pair of twins encountered during east-west bear project work

Westside Cougar Project: Biologist Smith assisted Research Scientist Kertson and Carnivore Specialist Maletzke with the installation and removal of traps to capture cougars in the Snoqualmie area. One sub-adult female was captured and fitted with a GPS collar.

Sub-adult female cougar fitted with a GPS collar in King County



Species of Greatest Conservation Need Consultation – Great Blue Heron: Biologist Anderson provided management advice to Seattle regarding human disturbance to an active heron colony – resulting in an injured heron due to dogs off leash. Please leash and restrain your domestic pets when outdoors. It benefits them and benefits wildlife. Please pass along the WDFW wildlife viewing ethics and information for education on how to watch wildlife and be around wild animals responsibly:

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/viewing/responsible/>

Fuzzy Fido off-leash, apparently going after grounded fledgling herons as well as waterfowl. A fun time but dogs are to be leashed per Seattle regulations at beaches within the city. This is both for user experience conflicts and for wildlife intrusion concerns – Photo by K. Atkins



A recently fledged young of the year great blue heron with a broken wing from domestic pet/wildlife interactions. Nothing left to do but let nature take its course or euthanize – Photo by K. Atkins

Urban Peregrine Falcon Kamikaze Street Fair: Biologist Anderson received multiple reports of downed peregrine young of year in roads throughout Seattle. One was late Thursday afternoon, just before the major holiday push and in downtown Seattle. The banded individual, which has been monitored by a cadre of falcon enthusiasts and researchers, was found running around Olive and 7th – completely grounded and trying to play dodgeball with traffic. Luckily, some brave citizen decided to put it in a box and call PAWS, who in turn called Seattle Animal Shelter. This female was taken into captivity (for the SECOND time) with a severe case of trichomanosis (frounce)...it succumbed to this over the weekend. It has been a very busy year for urban peregrines refusing to do what comes

naturally – Up in the atmosphere...Up where the air is clear...!!!! Get ‘er done falcons!!!!



A recently fledged young of the year peregrine falcon – Photo by E. Deal

Wildlife Areas

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm began emergency nursery irrigation for the native plants growing at the Cherry Valley facility. Due to lack of precipitation, local water supplies have dried up. Manager Boehm reports many of the plants have entered dormancy and efforts are being made to keep the roots alive.

Lake Terrell Island Area Closed Signs: Manager Kessler and Natural Resource Technician Deyo took down all the island

area closure signs on Lake Terrell. The island areas of Lake Terrell are closed to public access from March 1 to July 1 to protect nesting waterfowl. Due to the lake drawdown, the island areas are almost completely dry. The dry conditions will help kill off unwanted vegetation in these areas, and also help promote growth of desirable vegetation like smartweed that waterfowl feed on.

Lake Terrell Barley Field Spraying: Natural Resource Technician Deyo sprayed herbicides on the last six acres of barley planted at the Lake Terrell Unit. These herbicides kill off weeds and vegetation that is in competition with the planted barley.

Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw was interviewed by a reporter with the Everett Herald to discuss the project. The article that was produced from the interview is available at: <http://www.heraldnet.com/article/20150702/NEWS01/150709846>. Brokaw also answered questions from stakeholders that were generated by the article.

Fir Island Farms Estuary Restoration Project Groundbreaking Ceremony: Region 4 staff assisted Habitat Planner Jenna Friebel in hosting a groundbreaking ceremony for the Fir Island Farms Estuary Restoration Project. Approximately 60 people attended the ceremony, which included speeches from WDFW leaders and the Skagit County Commission, as well as a walking tour of the site.



Fir Island Farms Estuary Restoration Project Groundbreaking Ceremony

Private Lands/Access Management

Migratory Bird Enhancement Projects: Biologist Hans contacted a list of landowners given to her by Supervisory Biologist Caldwell. Landowners were contacted about their willingness to leave corn or barley this fall as part of the migratory forage enhancement project.



Barley growth at one of the migratory bird enhancement forage project sites, three weeks post-planting



Cascade frogs up on Rainier, which is a breeding site now in WDFW data thanks to volunteers – Photo by H. Peters

Urban Purple Martins: Biologist Anderson received word of successful nesting and breeding antics at some of the area colonies local volunteers maintain and monitor. WDFW assists with maintenance for some of these colonies when available to ensure maintenance and safety, due to tidal flux at inaccessible overwater sites.



Perhaps this seaweed will provide a nice homemade “swamp cooler” for these hot day – Photo by K. Stark

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

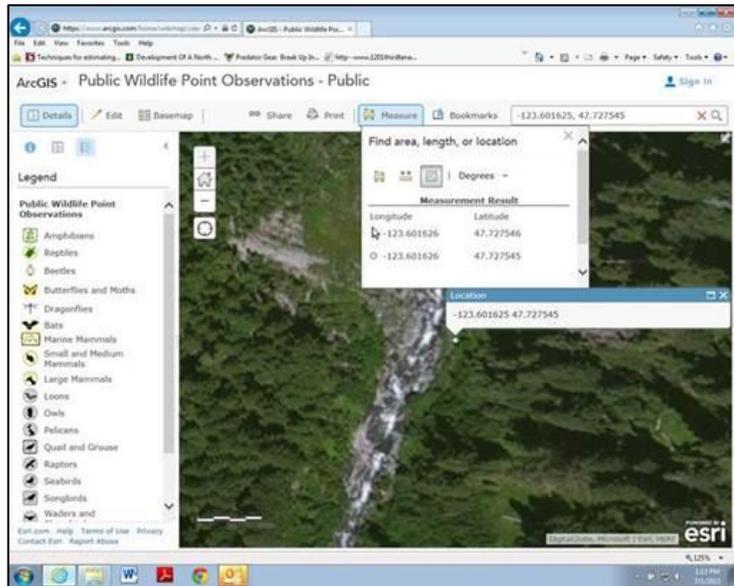
Wildlife Management

Volunteer Wildlife Observation Mapping Assistance – Amphibian Findings: Biologist Anderson corresponded with a previous volunteer regarding how to use the WDFW Public Wildlife Observation Point Mapping System. The volunteer was interested in using coordinates to locate and document animals. This is not as straightforward as one would think. Mission accomplished and a happy user that now knows how to do what they want to do with our mapping system. Wildlife that you may see can be documented at our mapping website – please do – we appreciate and need it! <http://wdfw.wa.gov/viewing/observations/sgcn/>

Entering amphibian occurrences via coordinates – use the search engine to locate your coordinates and go from there as usual. Thanks for data!!!

Wildlife Areas

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that seasonal mowing continues at the unit. The parking lot and the dog training area received first priority. Manager Boehm also continues to coordinate the dike breach repair project with the Drainage District. The project is planned to begin construction in July.



Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that the free truckloads of wood mulch continue to roll in. Volunteer Mark Ryder is coordinating the effort. The mulch will be used to improve the interior trail system in the unit. Manager Boehm also met with a Boy Scout to advance an Eagle Scout project that will provide interior trail signage for the unit.

Island Unit: Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove disked areas in five fields on the Island Unit that haven't been farmed for many years due to drainage issues and encroachment by reed canary grass and other aggressive plants. Cosgrove chisel plowed a ten-acre portion of Lorenzen field that has been dominated by reed canary grass.

Samish Unit: Meis and Cosgrove mowed weeds at the Samish Unit to decrease seed production and promote grass growth. Weeds targeted include Canada and bull thistle, as well as mustard.

Leque Island Unit: Meis mowed and sprayed poison hemlock areas, field edges, and walking paths at the Leque Unit. Hemlock continues to germinate and flower throughout much of the growing season and can be found distributed throughout the site.

Skagit Headquarters: Cosgrove mowed grass in native plant restoration areas at the Headquarters Unit.

DeBay's Slough Unit: Meis monitored and sprayed grass planting areas at DeBay's Unit for noxious weeds.

Whatcom Wildlife Area Fire Prevention: Manager Kessler closely monitored public use at the Lake Terrell & Intalco units before and during the July 4 holiday to prevent any fires. Overall, public use was down on the fourth, and no fires were seen or reported. Kessler also coordinated with the Whatcom County Parks Manager on public access at Pine & Cedar lakes. The county placed fire prevention signs at all of the county park entrances before the fourth.

Skagit ESA Restoration and Waterfowl Management: Regional Director Everitt sent an email to stakeholders to release the Region 4 WDFW Replacement Lands Initiative and a plan to secure additional waterfowl forage, hunting, and recreation land in the Skagit and Samish deltas. These documents are intended to allow WDFW to continue to support hunting and recreation activities and provide waterfowl forage while also supporting estuary restoration projects on WDFW lands. For copies of these documents, please contact Loren.Brokaw@dfw.wa.gov.

Samish River Unit Wetland Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw picked up the Fill and Grade and Floodplain Development permits required for the project from Skagit County. He also contacted the Department of Ecology to inquire on the status of the Stormwater Construction Permit, which will be issued this week.

Samish Unit Enhancement Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Skagit WLA Manager Rotton attended a pre-bid site visit with Ducks Unlimited to provide information on the site to potential bidders for construction. Ducks Unlimited submitted all necessary permit applications to Skagit County. The Department of Ecology issued the required Stormwater Construction Permit. The Skagit Valley Herald released an article about the project available at: http://www.goskagit.com/all_access/drainage-project-to-improve-popular-duck-hunt-destination/article_bf8feb54-a069-579b-bfe7-5b21c126870a.html.

Stillwater Unit and Ebey Island Unit Grant Applications: Projects Coordinator Brokaw continued work with Ducks Unlimited to support a grant application that will include funding to replace non-native blackberries at the Stillwater Unit with native plants, and to develop a long-term plan for WDFW management at Ebey Island.

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program (WQHP): Biologist Hans continued working on contracts for the 2015 waterfowl season. She will process these contracts for landowner signature upon

budget approval. Biologist Hans and Natural Resource Technician Otto began contacting landowners regarding enrollment for 2015.

418 Elk Hunt: Biologist Hans began preparing for the upcoming elk hunt. She contacted the Sierra Pacific Industries representative to coordinate a key exchange, began creating materials for the hunter packets, reviewed Biologist Yarborough's letter to the hunters, and familiarized herself with hunting dates, types, and regulations via the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's Big Game packet.

Spring Bear Hunt: Biologist Hans entered data from several of the hunter surveys she received. Using the compiled data from the last couple of months, she created a brief summary for District Biologists Milner and Yarborough. She began creating a season summary for the involved stakeholders and a separate summary for the Private Lands Access Program team.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey assisted an 11 year old with enrolling in a hunter education class. The young student and his mother came to the Mill Creek office to find out what was required for the young man to get a license and what types of classes were offered. Both youth and mother were very appreciative of the help offered and the youngster is now looking forward to being able to join his grandfather in hunt camp this year. Dazey worked on a news release with Division Manager Whipple on the upcoming hunter education jamboree at Camp Pigott near Lake Roesiger. From 160 to 200 students are expected to be certified at the jamboree on August 29, and it is hoped that this will alleviate some of the backlog that occurs each year as hunting season approaches.

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 Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman contacted a dairy farmer in the Sedro Woolley area of Skagit County who has elk utilizing grass, hay, and a corn field. The landowner is concerned about crop depredation in conjunction with the current drought conditions. Specialist Witman went into the neighboring forest area where the elk have been bedding and hazed the elk out. Specialist Witman will continue to monitor the elk activity in the area. Specialist Witman continues to monitor a deer that has been utilizing a grass area between I-5 and industrial buildings in Mount Vernon. The deer has currently been in the area the past week. Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician (NRT) Cogdal met with a landowner in Skagit County that has been experiencing deer depredation to an orchard. The landowner has purchased fencing materials and construction will begin next week. Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal will be assisting the landowner with the project.

Volunteers maintaining 40 acres of electric fence to keep elk out of nearby crops

Special Permit Elk Hunts: Biologist Yarborough sent a letter to all hunters that got selected for the GMU 418 elk hunt. This special permit hunt requires a pre hunt coordination meeting to discuss hunt boundaries, access to Sierra Pacific lands, and other important logistics.

Region 4 Ungulate Damage: Biologist Smith responded to calls regarding elk damage from residents of King County. Damage occurred to a variety of

crops and infrastructure (fences). Non-lethal measures to deter elk from entering properties were discussed. Smith provided temporary electric fencing for loan to protect crops in the Carnation area. The landowner constructed the fence and will continue to maintain it during the growing season. Smith also deployed electronic devices (as a test) to deter elk from entering a crop in the Fall City area. Smith is working to renew several DPCAs in King County.



Wildlife Take Authorization: Biologist Anderson was contacted by Bellevue citizens corresponding with the city in regards to a Red-tailed Hawk nest (active) that may be slated for being cut down. Anderson explained state regulations regarding Protected Wildlife and asked they give the city contacts to follow-up with WDFW.

Wildlife Areas

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reported a small dumping at the unit, as well as evidence of homeless campers living on the unit, to WDFW Enforcement. This ongoing problem has caused numerous calls to the area, which has resulted in issued citations and arrests for outstanding warrants.

Private Lands/Access

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program (WQHP): Biologist Hans collected signed contracts for the 2015 waterfowl season and mailed these contracts to the appropriate person in Olympia for final review and signature. Biologist Hans mailed required paperwork to new landowners who will be enrolled in the WQHP this season.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey advised the Chief Instructors in Region 4 of new changes in the HE system. Notice included information on HE instructor shirt availability and also the new Kalkomey completion system. When an instructor

closes a class all students who are shown as passing will receive an email with a link to print their hunter safety card. This addition will mean that the instructors will no longer need to print completions for the students in their class who wish to purchase a license sooner than the mail service can deliver their cards from Olympia (usually seven to ten days). This becomes more prevalent around the opening of the hunting seasons as many students wait till the last minute to take a hunter safety class. The cards will also still be mailed. Dazey activated four new classes, with all four being traditional style classes located on Whidbey Island. Dazey, along with Program Manager Dave Whipple, discussed a recent issue in a class in Issaquah. The student's father felt that the instructors had failed to follow the guidelines in failing his eight year old son. Upon investigation and receiving the course documents from the chief instructor, it appears that the eight year old was failed do to his inability to keep from sweeping the other participants and instructors with the muzzle of his firearm during the field exercise. Hunter education instructor policy clearly states that failure to control the muzzle is a one and done situation. The young student was advised to continue to practice and to sign up again for another class after working on his muzzle control.

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

Wildlife Management

New Hire: Newly hired Natural Resource Technician 2 Rob Cogdal reported for work. Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician (NRT) Cogdal spent time completing paperwork and orientation to the project expectations for 2015-2016. NRT Cogdal returns to work after previously completing six months seasonal employment. Rob will work for WDFW through the fall and winter while attending Skagit Valley College where he will be completing his degree in wildlife science. Rob's main responsibility will be to assist the conflict program with ongoing projects.

***Newly re-hired Natural Resource Technician
Rob Cogdal***



REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Resident Dark Goose Capture Effort: WDFW staff members Holman, Stephens, George, Doorly, Bergh, Hand, Anderson, Bahrenburg, Kraege, and Wilson cooperated with partners from ODFW and USFWS, as well as several volunteers, to conduct an annual capture of resident dark geese in the Lower Columbia River. The geese are molting this time of year so the flightless birds were slowly driven into a net catch pot by a helicopter. A total of 212 resident dark and western Canada geese were captured and banded this year. Adult dark geese were collared with white neck bands with a unique alphanumeric code. A total of 83 birds were collared during the effort. The collars serve two purposes. The first is to allow managers to generate a population estimate of the local dark geese by using a mark-resight method. The second is to assist hunters in distinguishing these large dark geese, which are not a conservation concern, from the dusky Canada geese which have tighter harvest restriction due to population level concerns. Many thanks to the helicopter pilot, Pete Emerson, with JL Aviation, and our partners at ODFW and USFWS and the volunteers who made this day a success.



Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area

Mount St. Helens Roadwork: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald had gravel placed along about 450 yards of the 3100 road on the Mudflow Unit of the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area this past week. Several sections of the three mile roadway through the area are degraded and needed gravel to help with access in the wet and rainy seasons, when there is often standing water on the road from runoff. Only the worst areas received gravel due to a limited budget at the end of the biennium, but staff will work on additional sections of the road later this year to help with drainage, standing water issues, and roadbed degradation.



Roadway in the winter time



Gravel delivery

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Fuels Reduction Project Phase 3 and 4: The Wildlife Area Manager and Technician Davis completed 2.5 acres of work on Phase 4 before time ran out for completion of this project. The segment that was finished connects from a corner of the Phase II corridor to a natural clearing. In addition, Van Leuven took photos at established points to document the work on Phase III.

Livestock Trespass: Technician Davis discovered that about a dozen cows with calves are present at the north end of the Soda Springs Unit. They have been there for some time judging from the impacts to the vegetation and soil erosion. The owner has been contacted and WDFW Enforcement has been advised of the situation.

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

D-10 Wildlife Conflict

Deer: Conflict Specialist Conklin responded to a land owner experiencing deer damage to her gardens. Conklin recommended the product plant Skyd to spray on the vegetation. If this doesn't deter the deer Conklin will lend her a critter gitter. The land owner is anxious to try out the equipment. In addition, Conflict Specialist Conklin handled a call from a reporting party in Centralia that was concerned that a deer in the neighborhood was going to injure children after she observed the deer jumping the fences in between residences.

Cougar: Conflict Specialist Conklin received information about a cougar being sighted on a regular basis in a remote neighborhood in Kalama. Conklin responded and performed outreach to the neighborhood by providing advice, handing out Living with Wildlife Cougar brochures, and providing her business card. Conklin is also working with WDFW Enforcement, who also responded. Conflict Specialist Conklin received a request from Enforcement to do some outreach with a resident in a remote area of Longview who had heard about the cougar sightings

in Kalama. The resident stated she was afraid to leave her home or go outside. Conklin called her and educated her on Cougar behavior and what to do if she encounters a cat. The resident said she felt much better after she knew the facts.

Goats: Conflict Specialist Conklin responded to a farm in the Kelso area that has lost two goats recently. The land owner was looking for some advice on how to protect his livestock. The farm is surrounded by blackberries and trees, making it perfect cover for predators. Conklin installed a trail camera to detect what may be coming in and taking the goats. Conklin is coordinating with WDFW Enforcement on appropriate levels of response if another depredation occurs.



Goat keeping watch on the farm

Porcupine: Conflict Specialist Conklin received a report of a porcupine that had made its way into a window well of a house in downtown Longview. Conklin responded and found the porcupine, which had no interest in leaving his new lair. Conklin used a fishing dip net and scooped the porcupine out of the window well and placed it into a large trash container. The porcupine was transferred to a more hospitable location in Cowlitz County.



Maybe if I hide my head she can't see me



Porcupine moving on

Barn Owl: Conflict Specialist Conklin was asked to assist with a barn owl that had been trapped in a metal building at a business in Kalama. Officer Schroeder arrived first and was able to get the owl to leave on its own. Thanks to Enforcement for the assistance.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Taylor’s Checkerspot Captive Rearing and Release: The Oregon Zoo has a total of 2,465 larvae in diapause, with an additional 113 third and fourth instar larvae still feeding from the second batch of wild females. About 250 larvae from that batch died following a feeding on June 19 that left many larvae sick. Food samples have been submitted to a local lab to test for toxins; all larval samples sent to Mississippi State for disease testing have come back negative. Mission Creek has a total of 2,867 larvae, most of which are in diapause. They also have two adult butterflies (one male and one female) that resulted from this year’s larvae.

Snowy Plover

Midway Beach: Biologist Sundstrom did a pre-4th of July nest and brood search/check. One new nest was discovered, bringing the total number of pre-4th active nests to six. Four chicks have been confirmed as reaching fully fledged status. A snowy plover chick is considered “fledged” when it reaches its 28th day post-hatch; the “chick” should be able to fly at least short distances by this time and is now termed to be a “juvenile”. The presence of the four juveniles, still with their respective tending adult males, represents two broods, which means two nests were successful. Sundstrom also observed three young broods and suspects the presence of up to three additional broods at Midway Beach. One nest was in the process of hatching; it included one egg, one newly hatched chick, and one “older” hatched chick running away from the nest cup. All three stages of hatching are represented in the picture below.

The three stages of a hatching nest: not yet hatched, just hatched, and hatched earlier (inset picture)



Leadbetter: Biologists Sundstrom and Michaelis, Science Technician Raby, Natural Resource Scientist Pfleeger, and Refuge Biologist Ritchie were able to conduct the third and final adult breeding survey at Long Beach. This is the tenth year of conducting these structured surveys and this particular survey was the longest ever recorded: it took nearly nine hours to complete, all on

foot. Although the final data has not been tallied, at least 14 separate broods and four fledged juveniles were observed, and two new nests were found.

Technician Raby conducted a walking survey of the Seashore Conservation Area and State Park lands, as well as brood searching and nest checks. There are currently eight active nests, four of which were discovered this week. Three of the active nests are located on the outer beach, three are in the HRA, one is in the hummock and swale, and one is on the outer beach in the SCA. There are currently about fifteen broods of varying ages, one of which is located in the SCA. No nests have been determined to be abandoned or predated at this time.

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

Private Lands /Conflict

Grayland Cranberries: Remote cameras scored again. A small group of elk were on their way to the bogs in the late evening when they were detected by the remote camera. Biologist Harris was first on the scene and was able to catch the group holding in the timber waiting for dusk. He was able to change their minds and sent them back up to the industrial forest.

A spike elk eyeing the cranberry bogs

