

# Wildlife Program

Week of November 2 – November 8, 2015

## **WOLF ACTIVITIES**

### **Region 1 Wolf Activities**

**District 1 Wolf Meeting:** Biologist Shepherd and Natural Resource Worker Weatherman attended the District 1 Wolf Management Meeting.

**Wolf Territory Monitoring and Producer Contacts:** Biologist Shepherd and Natural Resource Worker Weatherman contacted producers in the Smackout area concerning recent wolf activity. Natural Resource Worker Weatherman, Conflict Technician Bendixen, and Biologist Shepherd conducted nightly patrols in US Forest Service (USFS) grazing allotments and on private property within the Smackout Wolf Pack home range in Stevens County.

**Wolf Advisory Group:** Biologist Shepherd participated in a field trip planning conference call for the upcoming Wolf Advisory Group field trip in the Cascades. Biologist Shepherd also participated in a Wolf Advisory Group conference call concerning Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements for Livestock including their utility and distribution.

**Range Rider Contacts:** Range riders were present on USFS allotments in the Wedge and Tiger Hill areas. Biologist Shepherd contacted range riders working in these allotments.

**Reported Llama Depredation in Spokane County:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett received a call regarding the death of a 19 ½ year old llama near Mount Spokane. After responding, and as Bennett and Officer Beauchene went to investigate, a cougar was seen on the carcass. A local houndsman was called and successfully removed the offending cougar.

*Hounds and Officer Beauchene beginning the search for a cougar that depredated on a llama*



### **Lamb Disappearance in Whitman**

**County:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett met with a landowner near Colfax that had recently lost two 40 pound lambs in recent days to an unknown cause. A full search of the property and examination of a piece of hide was conducted. Only signs of guardian dogs and coyotes were observed. Additional information was given in the event that any more lambs go missing.



***Remaining lambs in Whitman County***

**Sighting Reported:** Biologist Earl talked to hunters on the Smoothing Iron this week who reported seeing a large, black wolf with a smaller “coyote colored” wolf on Cook Ridge. The collar for the Tucannon pack has stopped sending points so Earl was unable to verify the pack’s location on that day. Earl also talked to a different group that stated they heard of another sighting of a white wolf also in the area. Earl entered the sightings onto the website.

**Wolves Heard in Columbia County:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Rasley received a call from an elk hunter who reported several

wolves howling in Big Turkey Tail and Green Ridge in the Tucannon Wilderness.

**REGION 1**

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Bighorn Sheep:** Biologists Wik and Vekasy conducted ground captures up Asotin Creek one day this week for disease sampling. We successfully captured one yearling ewe on Friday and samples were delivered to WSU. District Biologist Wik spent another day attempting to capture bighorn sheep with Idaho Fish and Game Research Biologist Cassirer without success, but we were able to work on an outline for a research paper being presented next spring.

District Biologist Wik met with one of the bighorn sheep hunting guides for the bighorn raffle permit hunter. A sample kit was delivered for when the ram is harvested.

**Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites**

**SCWA Rx Burning:** The prescribed burning portion of the habitat improvement project at Sherman Creek Wildlife Area is planned to continue in 2016-2017. Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Palmer and Fire Management Specialist Tom Leuschen spent a day on the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area prioritizing burn units, checking existing fire lines for needed work next spring, hanging unit





boundary ribbons, and photographing fuels in several units. Palmer and Leuschen identified about 18 small slash piles within one burn unit that Palmer plans to burn this winter under DNR rules that won't require a burn permit. This will make the broadcast burn of the unit much more efficient. Leuschen will spend time this winter updating existing burn plans for the highest priority units and writing new burn plans for additional units.

*Tom Leuschen marking a unit boundary*

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

### **Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites**

**Blue Mountains Wildlife Area Complex – Heller Bar RCO project:** Wildlife Area Manager Bob Dice, Greg Heimgartner, Ethan Crawford, and Engineer John Hansen met at Heller Bar to discuss the placement of the new ramp on Monday morning. After looking at a few locations, it was concluded that the only viable option is to place the new ramp next to the existing ramp. River current, water depth, and bank use by fisherman were all factors considered. John will be meeting with the RCO to ensure placement of the new ramp next to the existing ramp is permissible.

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

### **Private Lands/Wildlife Conflict**

**Injured Juvenile Bald Eagle Recovery:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett and Assistant District Biologist Lowe met with a landowner near Peone Prairie that saw an injured juvenile bald eagle near a two lane road. The eagle was collected and delivered to a local veterinarian for care. After an examination it was determined that the eagle had several small bone fractures, but it should make a full recovery.

*An injured juvenile bald eagle after being captured in Spokane*



## **REGION 2**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Natural Resource Conservation Service Field Trip and Training:** Biologist Gallie, along with several other Region 2 staff (Schroeder, Braaten, Cotton, Dougherty), participated in a day-long field trip and training for local Natural Resource Conservation Service and Conservation District staff members, focusing on sage grouse habitat features. WDFW took the group to various areas occupied by sage grouse, provided good examples of suitable seasonal ranges, and fielded numerous questions on sage grouse biology. These Natural Resource Conservation Service staff will be assisting landowners with writing and implementing farm plans with conservation measures to benefit grouse and improve habitat on each site. Gallie participated in a webex conference call with regional and Olympia staff, going over changes and improvements to the grouse database, survey forms, and data entry interface.

**Mule Deer:** Biologist Gallie began conducting post season mule deer counts. With 4 of the 6 areas surveyed, a total of 1,254 mule deer were observed, with a buck/doe ratio of 20 and fawn/doe ratio of 59. Additional assessment will be presented after surveys are complete next week.



*Douglas County buck* – Photo by J. Gallie



*Douglas County is not all wheat country, it's also prime mule deer range* – Photo by J. Gallie

#### **Wildlife Areas**

**Feral Pigs:** Biologists Finger and O. Duvuvuei continued monitoring for reported feral pigs along the Winchester Wasteway. Thus far, at least two pigs (one nursing sow and a sub-adult) have been lethally removed thanks to Officer Varyvoda. Duvuvuei checked the game camera at the bait station. No pigs were captured on video and the bait did not appear to be touched by pigs. Additionally, no new reports of pigs were received in the past week.

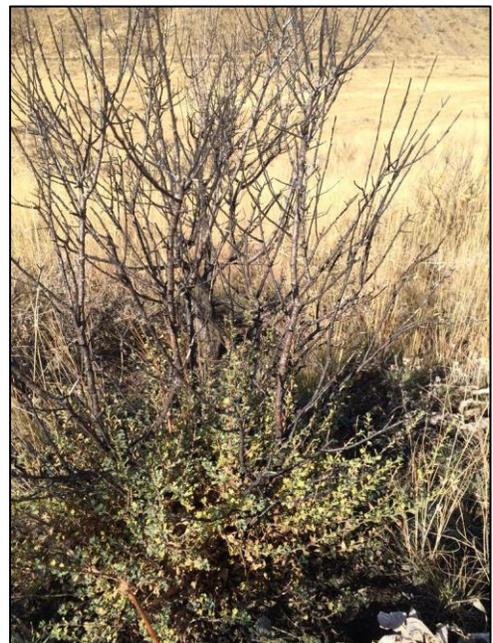
**Nesting Islands:** Biologist Finger planted great basin wildrye plugs on the Spud Field islands with assistance from Access Program Workers Harmon and Graves. Approximately 300 plugs were planted to provide nesting cover and hunter concealment. Water conditions are looking good on the Spud Field and the newly repaired water control structure appears to be sound. An additional 250 plugs were planted within an enhancement area of Mansfield Pond with assistance from Technician Satterwhite.

**Chelan Butte Field Restoration:** All staff have been focused on seeding old agriculture fields on Chelan Butte for the last two weeks. All fields were harrowed by Natural Resource Technician Zabreznik to prepare for seeding. Natural Resource Technicians Zabreznik and Vallance have completed 25 acres of forb/shrub seeding on two fields that were seeded to grass in 2014. Work then began on the 336 acres of native grass seeding on six fields. Using seed that was in storage, three fields totaling 101 acres were completed in the last two weeks. Seeding efforts halted this week while we wait for a new order of seed that has been bogged down in a new and very cumbersome native seed procurement process that has left Wildlife Area Manager Fox very frustrated.

*Bighorn Sheep in Chelan Butte field recently seeded with forbs and shrubs*

**Mule Deer Foundation-Bitterbrush Planting:** Manager Furnari spent three hours helping to plant a bitterbrush/grass seed mixture with Scotch Creek Wildlife Area Manager Olson, Assistant Manager Dupont, and two Mule Deer Foundation volunteers at the Pipestone Canyon area on the Methow. Unfortunately, the tractor and seed drill wasn't very effective with hidden rocks. Afterwards, Manager Furnari installed three photo point monitoring stations in the project area to document any changes in this Carlton Complex Wildfire affected site. Once she receives a final planted area perimeter and bitterbrush amounts from Manager Olson, she will complete the cultural resource form and submit it to Archaeologist Kelly.

*Pipestone Canyon - one of the larger bitterbrush plants noted resprouting after last year's wildfire* – Photo by Sherry Furnari



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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Sprague Lake Interpretive Trail:** Access Managers Harmon and Graves finished prepping the interpretive signs for the Sprague Lake trail and got a few installed. A little more shop time will be required to get the other 12 signs installed. Installation will be completed in the next few weeks.



*Sprague Lake 3-sided reader board* – Photo by Josh Harmon



*Harmon experiencing the mud buddy boat in action* – Photo by R. Finger



*View through the scope of collared bird J72*  
– Photo by E. Duvuvuei



*Methow mule deer looking fat and sassy going into winter* – Photo by Scott Fitkin



*Evening sky over Badger Mountain in Douglas County, making for a perfect upland bird hunt* – Photo by J. Gallie



*Volunteers Alissa Carlson, Okanogan Conservation District* – Photo by Jim Olson and Jay Kehne, WDFW commissioner



*New post and sign at Bridge 1*

### **REGION 3**

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

##### **Wildlife Areas**

**Oak Creek Wildlife Area:** Forester Mackey conducted contract administration work on the Oak Creek Thinning Project. Haul should commence the week of November 8 after a brief shutdown during modern elk season.

**Non-commercial Thinning:** Forester Mackey submitted the RMEF PAC grant proposal to implement non-commercial thinning in the Rock Creek Unit and southern Oak Creek Unit.

**Colockum Wildlife Area:** Manager Lopushinsky worked with a neighboring landowner on access issues, including complaints of inappropriate road use during the elk season. Manager Lopushinsky posted new “no vehicle” signs on the wildlife area boundary gate involved in this incident.

## **Wildlife Management**

**Status Assessments:** District Biologist Fidorra completed status assessments for sagebrush sparrow and sage thrasher.

**USFWS Rattlesnake Mountain Comment Period:** District Biologist Fidorra drafted comments for the USFWS comment period related to public access to Rattlesnake Mountain. Regional staff is reviewing and will discuss options to proceed.

**Wood Duck Nest Box Program:** District Biologist Fidorra worked with WDFW staff to resolve permit questions regarding the Richland Rod and Gun Club's Wood Duck Nest Box Program. In the future, Fidorra will be providing training and assistance to the club in an effort to improve the value and quantity of banding data.

**GIS Landowner Data:** District Biologist Fidorra met with Private Lands Biologist Stutzman to discuss existing GIS landowner data for District 4, and preparation for Ferruginous Hawk surveys.

**Flight Training:** District Biologist Fidorra completed WDFW flight training in Moses Lake.

**Conflict Section Conference Call:** District Biologist Fidorra participated in the monthly Conflict Section conference call.

**Educational Display Permit:** District Biologist Fidorra worked with Permit Coordinator Thompson to provide information to a home school co-op wishing to obtain an educational display permit for two non-game bird specimens.

**Public Callers:** District Biologist Fidorra received and resolved many calls from the public related to hunting, wildlife, and regulatory inquiries. Feedback from the Pheasant Release program from the past few weeks has been positive, with some hunters calling back after having successful hunts at the Hope Valley site, while another requested that we return to stocking the Toothaker site in the future.

**Mowing:** Private Lands Biologist Stutzman measured and flagged an area to be mowed for a small shrub planting south of Kennewick. Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Buser completed the mowing with Stutzman's assistance on Friday.

**Field Border Plan Modification:** Stutzman spoke with a Benton County landowner and FSA about modifying the landowner's field border plan to delay the seeding of forbs until fall 2016. Stutzman also provided technical advice to Natural Resource Conservation Service staff regarding the Sage Grouse Initiative and an EQIP project in Yakima County.

**Mule Deer Study:** Biologist Bernatowicz ground tracked two deer in the Wenas that stopped reporting via the GPS/satellite system. One was found alive, the other was not heard. Later in the week, two more deer from the Wenas failed to report in a six day period. A receiver was

programmed and Captain Mann listened while patrolling the area the last day of elk season. No signals were heard. It is very unusual for so many collars to fail in one small, geographic area.

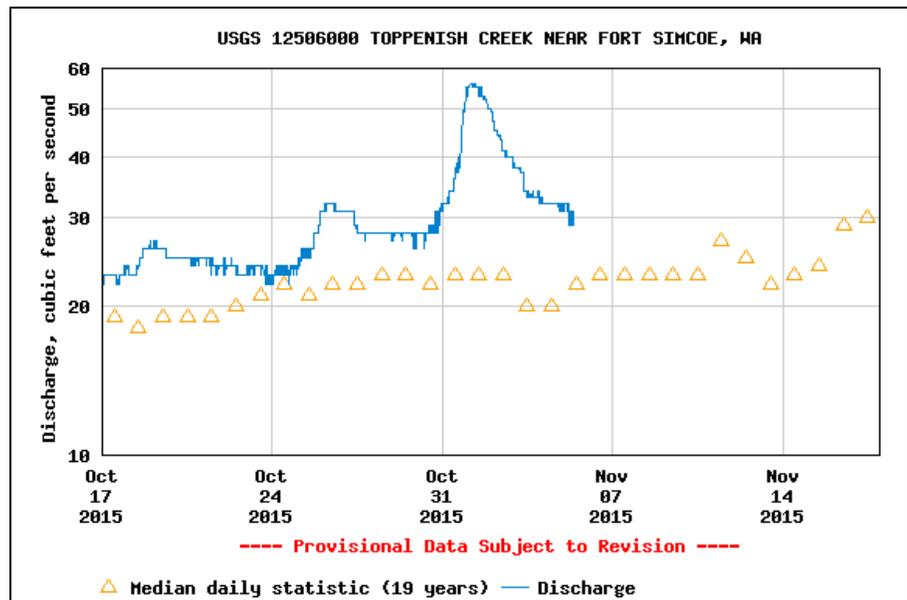
**Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge (TNWR) Hunting:** Biologist Bernatowicz took a look at refuge wetlands. Three years ago Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge staff proposed closing the Robbins Unit and opening wetlands to the west around the Pumphouse Unit. The Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge was purchased to provide waterfowl hunting opportunity. Water is available for the Robbins Unit via irrigation water and Toppenish Creek (when flows exceed 30 cfs). Water for the proposed area is dependent on side channels of Toppenish Creek. In 2013 and 2014, most of the channels remained low into early November, leaving most of the proposed new hunt area dry. This year, there is no water in the side channels. If the proposed changes were made, there would be no hunting opportunity to date.

***“Wetlands” on the Pumphouse Unit of Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge***



**Toppenish Creek Flow Data:** USGS flow data for Toppenish Creek indicates 2015 flows are above the 19 year average. October rainfall was above average and somewhat heavy amounts fell at the end of the month. There was a quick spike in flows that didn't fill the side channels. It is unknown if the Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge is still going forward with the proposal.

***Flow data for Toppenish Creek***



**Bighorn Sheep:** Biologist Bernatowicz delivered sampling kits to two late season Clemans Mountain permit holders. Apparently only two of the 11 late season permit holders harvested sheep during the week and collected samples. Those two samples were collected from the hunters and processed.

Results from the second ram found in the canyon came back positive for the Bluetongue virus. That makes three positive tests for Bluetongue in early fall.

**Disease Management Options:** Bernatowicz reviewed sampling data and took part in an email discussion regarding disease management options. There isn't any agreement as to what direction to go at this time. Very few adult animals have been found to be actively carrying the *Mycoplasma ovipneumonia* bacteria, yet there has been heavy lamb mortality three years running.

Bernatowicz also discussed test results and options for dealing with domestics near bighorns with Dr. Besser (WSU) and Section Manager Harris.

**Wildlife Program 2015-17 Program Plan Initiative:** Biologist Bernatowicz reviewed and drafted new language for district bighorn sheep herds in the Wildlife Program 2015-17 Program Plan Initiative to review the impact of predators by the ends of 2015. Telemetry data on most bighorn sheep herds indicates high adult survival and very low predation mortality. The exception is Quilomene, but data is limited for the herd.

**Ferruginous Hawk Surveys:** Biologist Bernatowicz reviewed the protocols for next year's surveys, reviewed data on possible new nests in the district located by consultants (one was a known territory), and retrieved paper files and boxed for Biologist Fidorra.

**Colockum Elk Body Condition Sampling:** Moore worked the 2015 Colockum antlerless elk permit season to collect organ samples for an evaluation of the herd's body condition. Overall, it seemed that hunters were extremely successful and numerous samples were collected. However, it is still unknown how many of those samples were complete. We still have youth, senior, and disabled hunter permits out until November 15, so hopefully we can continue to increase our sample size. Special thanks to WDFW staff Wetzel, Leuck, Hagan, Hill and volunteer John Erickson for assisting during this effort.

*A successful cow hunter dropping off his samples at the Ellensburg District Office*



**Muckleshoot Tribe (MIT) Mule Deer Study:** Biologist Moore investigated a collared deer sending a mortality signal in the Wenas Valley. Moore arrived at the scene to find that the deer was obviously taken by a cougar. Samples were collected and the collar was retrieved.

*Collared mule deer doe that was taken by a cougar in the Wenas Valley*



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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Oak Creek Wildlife Area:** Manager Huffman checked in with the Wildlife Education Corp (WEC) volunteers at the visitor’s center. Huffman received information about a hunter who had stopped by twice to mention hearing a wolf but said he would not report it. Huffman passed the vague information onto Conflict Specialist Wetzel.

**Dumpster Maintenance:** Manager Huffman contacted Yakima Waste about emptying the dumpsters that had been set up for hunters. They were overflowing mid-week when they should have been emptied on Tuesday. They were able to get out on Thursday and empty them. However, they were filled again by Saturday. They will be emptied again on Tuesday and removed.



*Overflowing dumpsters in the Oak Creek parking lot filled with hunter trash. With all the camps moving out on Sunday, they received a lot of use.*

**Concerned Caller:** Over the weekend, Assistant Manager Berry responded to call from a private landowner adjacent to the Cowiche Unit stating two silver colored pickups were behind a locked gate in the creek bottom field east of the Stinson hay barn. Upon arrival, Berry found two Fish & Wildlife Police vehicles, gold in color, to be the trucks reported behind the gate. Officers were waiting for trigger happy party hunters to return with their ill-gotten goods.

***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 received multiple calls Thursday from a very agitated landowner in Park Creek who was having problems with elk hunters trespassing repeatedly on his property. The landowner found a gut pile in his horse pasture and two additional cow elk dead on his property. Winegeart passed the information on to Enforcement.

**Beaver Damage:** Technician Hill revisited the Johnson Drain out in Badger Pocket and found that another beaver has already taken up residence and rebuilt both dams that Wildlife Area staff removed last week. Assistant Manager Hunt contacted a local trapper to remove the current culprits. Manager Winegeart contacted Volunteer Coordinator Aaron Garcia, who was able to find two Master Hunters willing to visit the site weekly and remove any dam debris.

**Wildlife Management**

**Injured Elk Call:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand responded to an injured elk call near Horn Rapids along Highway 240 within the Richland City limits. A large bull elk was located in a corn field that had been recently harvested. The bull had severe injuries and had to be euthanized. Coordination with the Richland Rod and Gun Club was made and almost 200 pounds of meat was salvaged and donated to the Union Gospel Mission.

**Deer Damage Prevention Permits:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand prepared and delivered several Damage Prevention Permits to landowners in the Kahlotus area to reduce deer damage impacts to winter wheat crops. Heavy deer use was observed in multiple fields during the visit to the area.

***Heavy deer use in winter wheat***

**Disabled Hunt:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand assisted with the coordination of a disabled hunter harvesting a doe deer within an area receiving heavy deer damage.





***Disabled Hunter with a doe deer***

**Elk Callers:** Conflict Specialist Wetzel took several calls from landowners in the High Ranches area about elk, wounded elk, and elk hunters. The area is closed to hunting and elk stay in the area.

**Elk Hazing/Hunting Pressure:** Several landowners in Park Creek reported large groups of over 100 elk below the KR Ditch. Some hazing and harvests moved elk out of the area, but hunting pressure moved them back.

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**LT Murray Wildlife Area:** Assistant Manager Hunt submitted all updated Form A's, maps, and the 2015 Annual RMAP Report to DNR as required. He and Richard Tveten have also updated and are close to finalizing the T18N, R15E Gnat Flat acquisition. Tveten will be seeking RMAP funding for one major culvert removal and abandonment project in that area.

**REGION 4**

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Aquatic Invasive Species Region 4 Efforts:** Biologists Milner, Cyra, and Anderson, when available to provide a team of two from Wildlife, deployed a “megatrap” to assist in the capture of wildlife to meet sampling needs. This type of trap can be left for a longer period with no harm to animals. This reduces staff time and increases capture efficiency (one hopes). Cyra and Anderson assisted with deployment and gaining familiarity early in the week. Milner and Anderson checked the trap later in the week and redeployed.

***Biologists Milner and Anderson checked a sampling trap placed in a local wetland to assess the presence of exotic fish and amphibians***



*Decontaminating after working in an urban wetland*

**Whatcom Wildlife Advisory**

**Committee:** Biologist Yarborough attended the first meeting of the Whatcom Wildlife Advisory Committee. This committee will advise the Whatcom Planning and Development Services Department staff and the Whatcom County Council on the value of wildlife and habitat management issues as they relate to the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan, with the goal of integrating wildlife management and protection into the community planning process.



**Protected Wildlife Management:** Biologist Anderson provided state consultation for Endangered, Threatened, Sensitive and Protected species, including various Priority or Species of Concern needs – most often nest take authorization and/or habitat consideration recommendations. Anderson continues to work with Habitat, local governments, and landowners to provide for documentation and management where appropriate. Current items from this past week include osprey nest destruction requests, city of Seattle applicant consultation for wildlife code needs, and Seattle Dept. Planning and Development discussion regarding where wildlife code updates were in the draft and review process. In discussion with Senior Land Use Planner Glowacki, Anderson briefed the realities of local occurrence data, survey needs, and how to perhaps collaborate with Seattle and other partners to provide for these needs in more “real-time”. Anderson also provided state consultation statements regarding wildlife for two HUD funded projects with King County Housing Authority.

One can assist WDFW with documenting wildlife via reporting at our Wildlife Observation Website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/viewing/observations/>

One can find department management recommendations for Priority Habitats and Species at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/phs/>

**East-West Bear Project:** Biologist Smith spent time contacting three landowners in District 12. GPS collars worn by black bears had transmitted a last known location on these properties. None of the three bears could be located or the collars recovered for re-use.

**Wildlife Conflict Management**

**Injured Wildlife:** Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman, District Biologist Yarborough, Private Lands Biologist Wingard, and Law Enforcement Officer Ludwig coordinated, strategized, and responded to the Alger area of Whatcom County to assist with the immobilization of a black tail deer that had fencing material entangled in its

antlers. The fencing material had become tightly wound around the male deer's neck and was cutting into the throat of the animal. The deer was successfully immobilized and the fencing material was removed. All neck/throat wounds were treated with antibiotics in order to decrease the chance of infections. The operation was completed in 25 minutes, from the deer being darted to the deer being back on his feet. Local residents were very pleased with the outcome of this operation and expressed their gratitude to WDFW staff.



*Before: Black-tailed Deer with electric fencing materials caught in its antlers and around its throat*



*After: WDFW staff performing routine health and safety procedures after removing all fencing debris from the deer. Overall, the deer was in excellent physical shape and recovered well from the procedure.*

## **Wildlife Areas**

**Lake Terrell Water Level and Dam Monitoring:** Manager Kessler monitored the water level of Lake Terrell. Due to the recent rains, the water level of the lake is slowly rising. Kessler checked the Lake Terrell dam and made sure the gate valve was closed and ready for the rising water. We are still a ways from water flowing down the creek. The beavers have also once again built a dam across Terrell Creek upstream of the dam. Manager Kessler coordinated with managers from the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association to schedule volunteers to help remove the dam when the water level gets high enough.

**Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP):** Projects Coordinator Brokaw participated in a teleconference with PSNERP staff to discuss and plan for upcoming steps in the PSNERP process, including meetings with Snohomish County, Skagit County, local tribes, and stakeholders.

**North Fork Skagit Dike Setback Meeting:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Habitat Planner Friebel, and Regional Director Everitt met with Skagit County staff to discuss the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP). The group focused on the project proposed by PSNERP that is on the North Fork of Skagit River and discussed future outreach needs as well as the county's experiences working through a similar process with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Per a suggestion from county staff, PSNERP staff will give a presentation on the project to the County Board of Commissioners.

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

**Wildlife Management**

**BLM National Monument Planning:** Biologist Milner participated in a conference call discussing special species issues for the inter-agency cooperators committee that is assisting the Bureau of Land Management in writing a plan for the San Juan Islands National Monument.

**Stilly Outdoor Roundtable:** Milner attended the quarterly meeting for this group that focuses on enhancing outdoor recreation activities in the Stillaguamish Valley, especially along Highway 530 from Arlington to Darrington. Special guest Congresswoman Susan DelBene shared ideas and answered questions from the group.



***A special guest at a recent meeting of the Stilly Outdoor Roundtable was Congresswoman Susan DelBene***

**Waterfowl Projects:** Biologist DeBruyn took waterfowl specialist Mat Wilson around to sites in Whatcom County. They visited Wisner and Judson Lakes and many quality waterfowl hunting sites, as well as the Whatcom Wildlife Area.

**Swinomish Waterfowl Closure:** Biologist DeBruyn and Technician Deyo posted the Swinomish Spit to reflect recent changes in the RCWs. DeBruyn also made a poster to clarify rules around the closure.

**2015 Hunting Seasons:** Staff members continue to provide guidance and information to hunters and land managers calling to inquire regarding specific hunt information, guidance, and how to hunt the district. Calls are concerning how to take animals, cougar and bear hunt methods given other seasons, where to bring bear specimens, scheduling CITES pelt seal needs, GMU boundaries, landowner reference information, and other general questions. Biologist Smith rode along with Enforcement Detachment 10 during opening day for deer/elk in GMU 485. Several permit holders were contacted and some great advice and tips were given by Enforcement officers.

Anderson received a few similar calls this week concerning the ability to use crossbows (a modern firearm by definition) during the modern general season. The current pamphlet can be found on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/>

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw provided review and contributed information to Pacific Northwest National Laboratories on a presentation they will make at the Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation Conference regarding the Leque Island project. The focus of the presentation is how hydrodynamic modeling contributed data that was used to aid in project decision-making.

**Farm Bill Coordination Meeting:** Regional Wildlife and Habitat program staff met with the new WDFW Farm Bill Coordinator to discuss Farm Bill Programs and funding needs for projects. The group discussed several ongoing and upcoming projects that need funding and identified potential funding sources through the Farm Bill.

**Waterfowl Season:** Cosgrove and Cosgrove monitored water levels on the Island Unit throughout the week. Water levels increased since last week, but many ponded areas are hidden under millet. Areas will open up to more open water as ducks feed in the millet and barley. Cosgrove and Meis monitored water levels and waterfowl use on the Samish Unit. Some water has begun to appear in fields and ponds. Cosgrove visited the area Wednesday evening and saw tens of thousands of ducks coming into the area to feed, but was unable to get good video of the night flight. Meis constructed new signs for the Island Unit displaying the different agricultural crop and moist soil plant locations. Wildlife Area staff members are utilizing the signage to educate about the diversity of waterfowl forage that the unit provides throughout the fall/winter season.

**Region 4 Pheasant Release:** Manager Kessler received 420 pheasants from the game farm and released them into the pheasant pens at Lake Terrell. He worked with volunteers to release pheasants on all three sites, including Lake Terrell, Intalco, and British Petroleum. Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continues to release over 500 pheasant a week at the four pheasant release units. Cosgrove and Meis monitored pheasant feeders and waterers throughout the week and assisted with the delivery of pheasants on Friday.



*Manager Kessler worked with volunteers to release pheasants on all three sites, including Lake Terrell, Intalco, and British Petroleum*

### **Private Lands/Access Management**

**Waterfowl Quality Hunt Units:** Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo continued with the set-up of duck blinds on harvested hunt units in Whatcom and Skagit counties. Otto and Deyo were able to have all but one waterfowl quality hunt

unit open for the fourth weekend of the waterfowl season. Unit signage was anchored due to the potential flooding in certain areas.

**Whidbey Island Diversity Site:** Natural Resource Technician Deyo closed the Whidbey Island Diversity site for the winter due to hazardous trail conditions and to prevent erosion. Once again, many recreational users signed in at the notebook and expressed their satisfaction with this opportunity. Diversity sites represent an opportunity for WDFW to interact with a different audience and type of recreationist than sites that focus on consumptive recreation.

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

### **Wildlife Conflict Management**

**Wildlife Conflict Management:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman attended a meeting with co-managers and answered questions about the WDFW Conflict Specialists' role in facilitating upcoming elk fencing projects. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal met with a crop adjuster to assist in the documentation of an elk damage claim on a Jerusalem artichoke crop in Skagit County. Witman and Cogdal responded to Concrete in Skagit County to address landowner concerns regarding elk that had been damaging his fence. Additional fence material and fladry were installed above the exiting fence to increase the visibility. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman responded to a call of an injured deer in the Alger area of Whatcom County. Maintenance workers discovered a deer with what appeared to be a fractured leg. After a closer examination, it was discovered that the deer had contacted a foreign object which became incased in its lower leg. Due to the degeneration of the leg, the deer was euthanized and donated to tribal entities. Natural Resource Technician Cogdal moved and applied heavy equipment to the Day Creek area of Skagit County. This equipment was used to assist staff members with installing wood posts to protect crops. Thirty-nine total posts were installed at the property. Coordination efforts are underway with other landowners to move forward with the project.

**Elk and Deer Damage:** Biologist Smith responded to calls regarding elk and deer damage. Damage occurred to a variety of crops and infrastructure (fences). Non-lethal measures to deter elk from entering properties were discussed. Smith also monitored a remote camera documenting elk use of crops in an area.



***Freshly flagged elk exclusionary fence in the Concrete area of Region 4***

**Master Hunter Coordination:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman coordinated Master Hunter assignments to address agricultural damage in Elk Area 4941. Natural Resource Technician

Cogdal worked on Phase 2 of the Day Creek fencing project. Fence posts were installed on approximately 240 acres this past week, with assistance from area landowners. Tribal co-managers provided materials and equipment.

**Wildlife Areas**

**Hazard Tree Removal:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with two Master Hunter volunteers to remove hazard trees from the Crescent Lake Unit. One of the volunteers is an arborist and was very skilled in removing the trees.

**Cherry Valley Unit:** Heavy rain in the Snoqualmie Valley caused Cherry Valley to be completely flooded for most of last week. Manager Boehm notified WDFW customer service of the flooded conditions in case of incoming calls from users.

**DeBay's Slough:** Cosgrove visited the Johnson/DeBay's Slough Unit. There were no hunters at the hunt area, and no swans or ducks on the reserve field.

**Milltown Island:** Concerned local waterfowl hunters continue to contact Manager Rotton regarding the potential closure of the Milltown access. Skagit County is reviewing all the documents with their legal staff and will provide a response early next week.

**Skagit Headquarters:** Manager Rotton monitored water levels and pump station operation at Wiley Slough throughout the week and weekend. The pump station is needed to manage drainage water during the tidegate repair project. This was the first larger rain event for this season. Meis created planning maps for the 2016 planting plan and will begin developing associated costs for Samish, Leque, and Island Units.

**Private Lands/Access Management**

**Hunting Season Preparation:** Private Lands Biologist Wingard fielded multiple inquiries about the Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program in Region 4. Private Lands Biologist Wingard continued

editing information for the GoHunt website. All but one site is open and the sites will be online shortly.

**Waterfowl Quality Hunt Surveys:** Private Lands Biologist Wingard reviewed and prepared materials for the Waterfowl Quality Hunt Site use surveys. This preparation included organizing several volunteers who are very excited about the opportunity. Surveys will begin shortly. These surveys are a tool for managers to determine levels of use for each site and to ensure site rules are being followed. These surveys are also an excellent volunteer opportunity. Please contact the WDFW Region 4 office if you are interested in participating.

**Landowner Relations:** Biologist Wingard toured a site and took distance measurements of the blind to nearby structures and livestock. These measures were performed to ensure that livestock and structural safety precautions are maintained in the field. In conclusion of the visit, the location of the blind was determined to provide an ample safety buffer to structures and livestock.

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

**Women's Only Hunter Education Classes Support:** Demand was extremely high for the women only class being held at the Black Diamond Gun Club on Sunday, November 1. Coordinator Dazey worked with the instructor team to help them prepare and also fielded many questions from students who wished to take hunter education in an all-female environment. Demand was so high that the instructor team will hold a second women only class on Sunday, December 6, at the BDGC. In spite of the rain starting to pour five minutes before the field course and stopping five minutes after the field course ended, the entire course was a huge success and, according to evaluations turned in by the students, was much appreciated. The instructor team was interviewed on NPR about why they offered a women only class and were able to articulate the advantages of offering classes targeted to the fastest growing demographic in the shooting sports world. Dazey assisted the instructors to secure a female enforcement officer for the December class. This will be a good opportunity to show some of the opportunities for women at WDFW.





*Demand was extremely high for the women only class being held at the Black Diamond gun club Sunday, November 1*

**Instructor Support:** Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey assisted Instructor Lance Chaar with his class at the Region 4 Mill Creek office. Lance has scheduled an additional three classes through November to help alleviate the student backlog. Coordinator Dazey sent the list of inactive instructors to Olympia so that the Hunter Education Division can send out a last reminder to instructors who have not taught a class in 2015 that the instructor policy requires an instructor teach at least one class a year to remain certified. Dazey received calls from inactive instructors who are looking to assist in 2015 so as to keep their instructor status active. Sometimes it takes the threat of decertification to motivate the instructors. One of the Region 4 hunter education instructors who is also a Chief Range Safety Officer has offered to instruct a Range Safety Officer Course restricted to hunter education volunteer instructors. This course will help the instructors who do live fire at a range that does not have RSOs to comply with instructor policy. Coordinator Dazey assisted to get the word out to all Region 4 instructors about the RSO class. The RSO class was so popular that the class filled immediately and Dazey will be working with the instructor to arrange another RSO class in the spring for the instructors who still desire to be certified as RSOs. Dazey activated two new classes in Region 4 and, because of the large wait lists on existing classes, contacted two Chief Instructors who have agreed to post one class each the first week of December. Coordinator Dazey assisted the instructor on Lopez Island to set up a class. Since there is only one instructor on the island, Dazey assisted in recruiting another instructor to assist.

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

**Monthly Wildlife Conflict Program Conference Call:** Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman, and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Smith participated in a monthly Wildlife Conflict Program conference call with other WDFW staff from around the state. Recent conflict activity and management concerns were addressed.

**Monthly Wolf Management Conference Call:** Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell participated in a monthly Wolf Management Conference call with other WDFW staff from around the state. Recent wolf activity and management concerns were addressed. The next meeting will be held in April 2016.

**Westside Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary Program:** Biologist Anderson continues to work on coordination and processing needs for the joint National Wildlife Federation-WDFW certification option for the Backyard Sanctuary. In this joint option, one can be certified both nationwide with the National Wildlife Federation and locally with WDFW. More can be found at the Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/backyard/>



## **REGION 5**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**The Black-tailed Deer Rut:** Early November marks the peak breeding season, or "rut," for black-tailed deer. During this period, bucks show behaviors not typical of their usual routine. The bucks cover large geographic areas, travel during daylight hours, often don't respond to human presence, and generally use huge amounts of energy in pursuit of



females. During recent field activities unrelated to deer management, Biologists George and Holman encountered a dead buck on Interstate 5, a buck near pavement, battling a maple tree in broad-daylight, and a buck in pursuit of a doe within a few feet of a busy road as vehicles sped by. Please use caution while driving in areas inhabited by black-tailed deer during the first-half of November.

#### ***Black-tailed Deer***

**Hoof Disease:** Wildlife Program Manager Jonker was invited as a featured speaker at

the 2015 Weed Conference in Wenatchee. Jonker gave a presentation on Hoof Disease in southwest Washington. There was a lot of interest in the topic, with many good questions following the presentation.

#### **Klickitat Wildlife Area**

**Seasonal Road Closures:** Four road gates on the Soda Springs Unit were closed this week to implement seasonal road closures. The gates are located on Old Headquarters Road, Anderson Road, South Breaks Road, and Sheep Canyon Road. These closures protect primitive roads from damage while soil conditions are soft, help limit disturbance to wildlife during the winter, and promote better public safety by restricting vehicle access to very steep, often icy-surfaced roads. Three of the gates will be re-opened April 14, 2016. One gate will be opened when soil in that area has firmed up in spring 2016.

**Temporary Grazing Permit:** Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven worked with Range Ecologist Burnham to draft a temporary grazing permit. This permit is intended to provide replacement pasture for an area rancher who lost large portions of his customary range during the 2015 fire season.

## **Cowlitz Wildlife Area**

**Spears Unit:** Cowlitz Wildlife Area staff will finish seeding and spreading straw on a fill and grade permit for erosion control on the Spears Unit. The permit from the county is allowing WDFW to accept fill from the county and the Department of Transportation to fill in some of the old concrete structures left over by the footprint from the mill site. Staff will plant those areas to permanent grasses this spring and allow the cottonwoods to naturally reseed the site.

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

## **Wildlife Management**

**2015 Hunting Seasons:** Regional Wildlife Biologists and Customer Service staff members fielded many contacts from the hunting public related to the start of elk hunting seasons. Specifics on where and how to hunt, questions about regulations, confusion over access to private industrial forestlands, etc., were all common topics of conversations over the past week. Hunters are reminded to review the Hunting Prospects located at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/prospects/> on the WDFW website. The prospects detail information about game species populations, access information, changes to regulations, and more.

**Elk Opening Day:** Biologist Bergh accompanied Sergeant Wickersham on patrol on opening day of modern firearm elk season. After spending the morning dealing with a poacher, the pair headed into the Gifford Pinchot National Forest and contacted a total of 31 hunters. Only one successful hunter was checked and that happened to be a very happy youth hunter with his first elk. Generally, hunters were not reporting much sign or many sightings, but were looking forward to the temperature and snow level dropping in hopes that the elk would start moving around more.

### ***Successful youth hunter with his first elk***

In addition, Biologist Stephens also went out on patrol with Sergeant Weaver but did not check any elk. It was very rainy and hunting activity was pretty slow.



## Access

**Vancouver Lake:** Access staff Spangler and Rhodes worked with a Clark County work crew picking up litter and hauled away a half burned mattress as well as five bags of 350 pounds.



**Langsdorf Landing:** Access Staff Spangler and Rhodes reattached the railing that became loose on the dock.

### *Dock repair*

**Duncan Creek:** Access Manager Spangler repaired the damaged gate at Duncan creek.

### *Gate repair*



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

## D-9 Wildlife Conflict

**Range Rider Program:** Conflict Specialist Peterson met with Klickitat County cattle ranchers to discuss changes

to the WDFW Range Rider Program. The ranchers were interested in the details of the new program and gave valuable input and suggestions for next season's program.

**Deer:** Conflict Specialist Peterson responded to numerous damage calls around Glenwood due to high numbers of deer. Many of the properties are small and in close proximity to neighboring houses, making it hard to effectively hunt and pressure the deer. Peterson will continue working with the landowners to find alternative solutions to mitigate deer damage.

## D-10 Wildlife Conflict

**Elk:** Conflict Specialist Conklin fielded numerous phone calls from hunters seeking information on hunting access, hunting areas, and the Grays River hunt area. Conklin received a call from a very upset land owner in the Grays River area that had approximately one thousand feet of New Zealand Fencing destroyed by elk. Conklin was already working with this land owner and issued him permits, as well as some patch fencing for fence repair. In addition, Conklin met with a landowner in Lewis County reporting damage to winter wheat. A Damage Cooperative Agreement will be signed and the land owner agreed to allow public hunting opportunities on his fields.

**Bear:** Conflict Specialist Conklin responded to a call regarding a bear getting into apple trees in the Cathlamet area. Conklin gave the concerned caller basic advise.

**Deer:** Conflict Specialist Conklin responded to a report of deer damaging grape vines.

## **REGION 6**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Satsop/Mason Deer Project:** In 2009, WDFW initiated a study of the effects of forest management practices on black-tailed deer reproduction. Two of eight study sites are represented in District 15: Mason and Satsop. An objective of this study involves determining sources of mortality among all radio-collared deer. The radio-collars in the Mason cluster have remote monitoring capabilities and text messages are sent when certain events occur, although periodic field checks are recommended. The Satsop collars require field monitoring to determine status. Biologist Murphie reports that no mortalities have occurred recently. One separation event was investigated, but was not associated with mortality.

**Mazama Pocket Gopher Working Group and Action Planning:** Biologist Tirhi represented WDFW Region 6 at the annual working group meeting comprised of federal, state, county, city, land conservancy, non-governmental interests, and private citizens. Research focused on gopher recovery actions. Habitat enhancement continues to increase annually as reflected in the many presentations at this year's meeting. Much interest centered on the results of gopher subspecies genetics work being done by WDFW (and still in progress). Most impressive was the USFWS-Thurston County land use permit review process begun two years ago as an interim process while the county completes its HCP. The two agencies were able to site visit and survey for gophers on over 200 properties during the 2015 season, which allowed them to approve for continuation all but 13 properties (on which further review is needed as gophers might be impacted). This process was more comprehensive and efficient compared to processes used in the past by WDFW and the jurisdictions. Tirhi also participated in the half day action planning workshop to update the gopher action plan, which identifies surveys, management, and research needed for recovery of Mazama pocket gophers over the next 3-5 years.

**Citizen Science Elk Monitoring Survey:** Biologist Tirhi partnered with NW Trek (MetroParks Tacoma) to train over 20 volunteers this weekend to assist with elk surveys in the Buckley/Enumclaw area. This is a driving survey for which citizen scientists will drive and stop at predetermined observation points and record all elk seen by sex and age. The survey is designed to be done a minimum of once per month across the year. The information is needed to help Tirhi and Conflict Specialist Blankenship manage both the herd and damage complaints to private property in the area. WDFW does not traditionally conduct surveys in this area (lower priority) and limited survey information is provided by the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and local agricultural producers. Tirhi hopes to augment that data with data collected by citizen scientists. The volunteers participated in a one hour in-house training that focused on elk

biology, habitat, identification by sex and age, data collection protocol, and data collection forms. The group then loaded onto viewing trams and were taken on a driving tour of this wildlife viewing park (which includes elk) and asked to conduct the elk survey by viewing and completing the data form. This was an ideal training center for this purpose. The group really enjoyed the day and said they felt confident about doing the survey on their own and helping WDFW modify as needed. For the next steps, NW Trek partners will confirm section(s) of the survey each volunteer wants to do, will provide data forms, and will QA data before sending it to Tirhi for compilation. This is the fifth citizen science program Tirhi has launched to assist with district data collection and management (the others being purple martin, amphibians, bats, and great blue heron).

***Volunteers of the Citizen Science Elk Monitoring Program (District 11) viewing elk and completing data forms***

**Dusky Goose Management – Enforcement**

**Training:** Biologist Novack and Sundstrom provided training to local district enforcement officers on the new regulations regarding dusky goose management and the new procedures by which the Wildlife Program will try to monitor harvest. Biologist Sundstrom provided hands-on training for distinguishing dusky geese from the other subspecies. Biologist Novack and Sundstrom developed a laminated note-card that summarized the information enforcement officers needed when field checking geese. Additional supplies (calipers, Munsell chart) were also provided.



Biologists Novack, Sundstrom, and Michaelis coordinated their schedules to ensure that wildlife staff members were on duty during the majority of the upcoming goose season.

**Elk Hoof Disease Monitoring:** On Saturday, Biologist Michaelis and a volunteer contacted hunters in the Williams Creek Game Management Unit (GMU 673). Several hunters were contacted and two hunting parties were contacted harvesting two branched antlered bulls. Hoof samples from these two bulls will be collected later. In addition, they also placed two hoof collection barrels for collection of hooves harvested from antlerless permit holders within the Willapa elk herd. On Sunday, Biologist Michaelis contacted hunters in Grays Harbor County. Seven bulls were known to be harvested and samples from two bulls harvested in the Quinault Valley will be tested for the presence of elk hoof disease.

**Willapa Bay Waterfowl Aerial survey:** Biologists Michaelis and Sundstrom conducted the first flight in Willapa Bay for estimating waterfowl numbers and concentration areas. Data has not yet been transcribed, but numbers appear to be higher than numbers collected during the same period last year.

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

**Bobcat Sealing:** Biologist Ament met with a hunter on November 6, 2015 to seal two bobcat pelts. The hunter was deer hunting in GMU 602 when a bobcat was observed and killed on the logging road. Apparently, a young kitten then came out of the nearby bushes. He did not think the kitten would survive without the mother so he elected to shoot the kitten as well. No other kittens were observed at the site. All required information was collected from the hunter and seals were placed on each frozen bobcat. Biologist Ament did take the opportunity to educate the hunter on making an effort to be more observant in the future. (She did observe two live bobcats later in the day when working on the deer project).

**Cougar Sealing:** Biologist Ament coordinated a meeting in Quilcene on November 3, 2015 with a hunter who needed a cougar pelt sealed. The 150 pound male adult cougar was killed at the south end of the Coyle Peninsula in Jefferson County. All required information was collected. A tooth was pulled and a tissue sample was taken. The collection envelop has been sent to Olympia.

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Hunting Questions:** Biologist Novack answered about a dozen calls from hunters and the general public. Many questions about hunting regulations and where to hunt were received. Other questions about problem bears were also fielded.

**Conflict Response:** Biologist Sundstrom assisted the conflict section with the installation of Turbo-fladry fence to deter elk from agricultural ground in the Satsop area.

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Aircraft Safety Training:** Biologist Murphie attended aircraft safety training last week. He reports that Biologist Myers did an outstanding job presenting course materials.