

Wildlife Program

Week of October 26 – November 1, 2015

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Huckleberry Next Steps: Supervisor McCanna and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett participated on the next steps process for the Huckleberry wolf packs.

Sheep Count: Supervisor McCanna and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett traveled to the Columbia Basin to confirm the current sheep count for a producer. A letter of support was drafted and sent to Olympia.

WDFW verifying sheep numbers for a Stevens County producer's damage claim

Radio Activated Guard (RAG) Box Maintenance and Assembly: Wildlife

Conflict Specialist Bennett worked on making new speakers and a telemetry receiver work for a previously incomplete RAG box. This RAG box will be deployed within the coming weeks to a producer in the Huckleberry Wolf Territory.



Huckleberry Packs Next Steps Conference Call and Chronology Update: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett and three other WDFW discussed next steps in addressing future depredations in the Huckleberry wolf territories. Additional work on a final draft should be completed soon. The Huckleberry Chronology was also updated regarding recent interactions with producers.

Wolf Monitoring: Natural Resource Technician Bendixen toured road systems in the Smackout pack territory with Natural Resource Technician Weatherman to become familiar with the area for monitoring purposes. Bendixen spent one night monitoring wolf and livestock activity in the Smackout territory.

District 1 Wolf Meeting: Natural Resource Worker Weatherman attended District 1 Wolf Management Meeting.

Producer Contacts: Biologist Shepherd and Natural Resource Worker Weatherman contacted producers in the Smackout area concerning recent wolf activity. Biologist Shepherd, Natural Resource Worker Weatherman, and a contract range rider contacted producers in other state and federal grazing allotments in Stevens and Pend Oreille counties, including the LeClerc, Tiger

Hill, and Chewelah Creek allotments. The discussions centered on the number of cattle and their location remaining on the grazing allotments.

Wolf Territory Monitoring: Natural Resource Worker Weatherman and Conflict Technician Bendixen conducted nightly patrols in U.S. Forest Service grazing allotments and on private property within the Smackout Wolf Pack home range in Stevens County.

Range Rider Contacts: Range riders were present in the LeClerc, Wedge, Tiger Hill and other US Forest Service (USFS) allotment areas. Biologist Shepherd and Natural Resource Worker Weatherman contacted range riders working in these allotments.

Monthly Wolf Updates: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett compiled the monthly wolf update for producers in the Huckleberry Wolf packs area (Table 1) and for District 2 (Lincoln, Spokane, and Whitman counties). Information was provided to producers about reported wolf sightings (unconfirmed and general collar locations), current camera work, and all reported livestock depredations (including all determinations).

Table 1: Monthly report summary of gray wolf sightings, collar information, camera work, and reported depredations for the Huckleberry area in Stevens County

How reported	Location	Sightings	Camera Work	Depredations
GPS collar	<u>Huckleberry North</u> Mtn. range between Addy-Cedonia and Springdale-Hunters Rds. (Same as last month with most activity on the north end of territory, but more movement after the containment of the Carpenter Road fire).	No reports in this area for this period.	No reports in this area for this period.	No depredations reported in this area for this period.
	<u>Huckleberry South</u> Spending time north of and on the Spokane Tribal Reservation.			
WDFW Public Sightings webpage		No reports in this area for this period.	No reports in this area for this period.	
WDFW Staff		No reports in this area for this period.	One camera deployed 1. Springdale, November check by Wolf Biologist 1	

Table 2: Monthly report summary of gray wolf sightings, camera work, and reported depredations for WDFW District Two in Lincoln, Spokane, and Whitman counties

County	Sightings (webpage and contact)	Camera, WCS Bennett and Population/Monitoring	Depredations
Lincoln	<u>One reported</u> 1. Sprague – 10/13/2015, unconfirmed One grey adults reported	No cameras out during this period.	<u>One reported</u> 1. Davenport – 10/23/2015 (?) horse, Determination: Structural.
Spokane	<u>Five reported</u> 1. Spokane – 10/03/2015, unconfirmed One adult reported 2. Spokane Valley – 10/15/2015, unconfirmed One animal reported howling 3. Medical Lake – 10/16/2015, unconfirmed One animal reported 4. Valleyford – 10/18/2015, unconfirmed Six animals reported 5. Medical Lake – 10/21/2015, unconfirmed Two animals reported	<u>One camera out</u> 1. Elk (1) – November check and retrieval	<u>Three reported</u> 1. Spokane – 10/04/2015 domestic dog, Determination: Non-wolf (possible cougar). 2. Mead – 10/12/2015 goose, Determination: Non-Wolf (possible cougar) 3. Newman Lake – 10/19/2015 domestic dog, Determination: Non-wolf (cougar)
Whitman	<u>One reported</u> 1. Benge – 10/2015, unconfirmed One adult reported	<u>One camera out</u> 1. Ewan - November check and retrieval	No depredations reported to WDFW for this period.

Bi-Weekly Legislative Conference Call Regarding Eastern Washington Gray Wolf

Activity: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett and other WDFW staff provided updates and answered questions from several legislators and county commissioners regarding wolves. Topics of discussion included Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) meetings and activities, Damage

Prevention Cooperative Agreement for Livestock (DPCA-L), and current wolf-livestock damage claims.

Wolf Observed in Western Walla Walla County: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Rasley received a call from an employee from Martin Archery who stated that while driving to Pasco on Highway 12, he saw a large grey wolf trying to cross the highway. The caller said “the wolf did not have a collar on it as well”. He said “the wolf was heading northwest towards the Tri-Cities and the Snake River.”

Region 2 Wolf Activities

Okanogan Wolves: Specialist Heilhecker spoke to the range rider. All the cows are off the public grazing allotment and back on private land. He will mail a final report with his observations and recommendations to Specialist Heilhecker.

Region 3 Wolf Activities

Wolves: Biologist Bernatowicz received a trail camera picture of a potential wolf from the upper Little Naches. The person had posted the picture on social media. Wolf Specialist Becker was also contacted. Bernatowicz is trying to contact the person who posted the picture. Single wolves are known to be dispersing and traveling long distances. On average, there are over 2000 elk hunters in the Little Naches Game Management Unit (GMU). If a pack is present, more reports should be received. Depending on reports and conditions (tracking snow), someone may travel to the area to investigate.

Region 5 Wolf Activities

Wolf: A Klickitat County Cattle Rancher involved in the WDFW Range Rider program reported a possible wolf attack on his cattle. The rancher reported his cattle had destroyed a corral, breaking the gate and fence in multiple locations on the night of October 17. The rancher photographed tracks from the area and collected hair samples from the barbed wire near the tracks. Conflict Specialist Peterson met with the rancher and examined the area. It was not immediately evident what had attacked the cattle but the tracks did not appear to indicate a wolf attack. A game camera was placed near the corral and will be monitored regularly.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Sage Grouse Statewide Working Group: Biologist Atamian worked on and presented the Region 1 update for the meeting. Atamian is also currently the working group lead, so he worked on logistics and ran the meeting. There were about 40 people at the meeting from the following agencies/organizations: Audubon, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), US Fish and

Wildlife Service (USFWS), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Washington State University (WSU), Yakima Training Center, Whitworth University, Foster Creek Conservation District, University of Washington, Douglas PUD, Yakama Indian Nation, the Game Management Advisory Council (GMAC), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

Bighorn Sheep: Biologists Wik and Vekasy conducted ground captures up Asotin Creek one day this week for disease sampling. We were able to capture a ewe that had a GPS collar that failed soon after deployment last year. We replaced the collar, which will be returned to the manufacturer for reimbursement. We also darted an unmarked ewe, but it appeared the dart failed to perform correctly and the animal did not become sedated. District Biologist Wik received 10 new GPS collars courtesy of the Washington Wild Sheep Foundation that will be placed on 10 ewes being transplanted from Oregon into the Tucannon herd range this winter. District Biologist Wik spent time learning their functions.



We darted sheep from this group

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

Wildlife Management

Deer Hunter Check Stations: Working with other regional staff and agency volunteers, District Wildlife Biologist Dana Base and Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Annemarie Prince operated deer hunter check stations within District 1 on Sunday, October 25. This was the second of four dates scheduled for the modern firearm deer season. Staff worked with Wildlife Veterinarian Dr. Kristin Mansfield in implementing an experimental procedure for monitoring the incidence of the Bluetongue virus in hunter harvested deer. Total hunters and harvested deer checked at both Deer Park (Highway 395) and Chattaroy (Highway 2) check stations combined were 161 and 35 respectively. The last two hunter check station dates scheduled for this year will be on Saturday, November 14, and Sunday, November 15.



White-tail (left) and mule deer (right) bucks brought through the Highway 395 hunter check station on October 25, 2015



Dayton Unit Bull: Dave Lee of Snohomish County harvested this bull on a special permit this weekend in the Blue Mountains.

Private Lands/Wildlife Conflict

Pheasant Release: Biologist Lewis coordinated with volunteers to complete a Whitman County pheasant release. Lewis also delivered birds to Jeff Wade for the Asotin and Garfield releases.



Biologist Thorne Hadley contacted and coordinated schedules with several volunteers to release 310 pheasants throughout Columbia and Walla Walla counties



Access: Biologist Thorne Hadley assisted several hunters on the telephone, by email, and in person at the Walla Walla office regarding access locations for hunting.

A successful hunter utilizing one of many Feel Free to Hunt sites in Walla Walla County

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

Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites

4-O Ranch WA –Plato Spring Water

Development: Technician Steveson and Meisner worked the majority of the week together installing a spring box, water line, aluminum trough, and trough supports at Plato Spring. The recently constructed fence will keep the cows from mucking up the spring and pond while providing drinking water. Emerging weeds were sprayed in the fenced area and native grass seed was spread over the disturbed soil.





Installation of a spring box, water line, and trough at Plato Spring is nearly complete

Private Lands/Wildlife Conflict

Turkey Concerns in Spokane County: Wildlife Conflict Specialist (WCS) Bennett worked on two separate turkey concerns on the Spokane City South Hill and another in a small gated community in north Spokane County. On the South Hill it appears that the wild turkeys have returned to three different neighborhoods this year. Contact was made with landowners for winter placement of walk-in traps and an update was provided on this past summer's activities. In north Spokane County, a landowner was provided Damage Permits to address the large rafter of wild turkey. Harvested turkeys will primarily be donated to a local zoological park.



Wild turkeys have returned to their winter range in neighborhoods of the Spokane South Hill

Deer Damage to Pumpkins: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Rasley gave a deer damage presentation and tour to Liberty Christian students and staff north of Walla Walla. The kindergarten thru eighth grade kids all assisted with filling trucks and bins with pumpkins. In return for their hard work, the kids all got to pick out one of the pumpkins to take home. The pumpkins were sold and all the profits went to the Ronald McDonald House in Seattle and Spokane.



Students Gathering Pumpkins

CRP-SAFE: Lewis completed a site visit to assess the success of a 13 year old rabbit brush planting to see if it would work for new SAFE projects. The rabbit brush in the established areas has prospered well and is providing quality habitat.



CRP rabbitbrush planting

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

Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites

Williams Lake Rehab: Access Manager Dziekan assisted Fisheries Biologist Randall Osborne with the application of Rotenone into Williams Lake. His primary

duties were to dispose of the empty pesticide containers after they were triple rinsed. He also assisted with loading the barrels onto the boats and cleaning and dismantling the containers after they were empty. During the rehab one of the pumps used to apply the pesticide broke. The exhaust had a crack in it that grew and eventually broke completely through. Dziekan was tasked with repairing the pump to get it out in the field for the Monday rehab at Badger Lake.



Biologists ready with a full load of powdered Rotenone



Application of liquid pesticide around the docks and shoreline



Empty Rotenone barrels ready to be smashed and transported to the dump



Exhaust off one of the pumps, sheared completely off



Exhaust welded together with an extra piece of metal for added support

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Chelan County Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Gallie conducted surveys on Swakane and Chelan Butte herds (assisted by Biologist Oyster for CB). Both herds are continuing to grow at about a 10% rate a year with good lamb production and survival. Both herds also contain a growing mature (6+ years old and $\geq 3/4$ curl) age class of rams.

Swakane: 156 total, 71 ewes, 38 lambs, and 47 rams (28 are mature)

Chelan Butte: 191 total, 91 ewes, 42 lambs, and 58 rams (42 are mature)

The Chelan Butte herd had about a quarter of its range, including all of the northern portions, burned during the Chelan Complex fire. No sheep were observed in these areas during surveys. These are also areas occupied by farms with domestics, and while the burned conditions (no food!) currently will provide a brief reprieve of contact risk, as the area greens up next spring, bighorns could come into close contact with domestics. The contact risk could be compounded by damage to existing fence lines that provided some separation.



Swakane rams jockeying for position with ewe (head down). Maybe it does not bother them, but this situation looks just a bit awkward and uncomfortable to me – Photo by J. Gallie



Mature Swakane ram with impressive battle scars – Photo by J. Gallie



Chelan Butte rams in the rut – Photo by J. Gallie

Mule Deer Hoof Issue: Private Lands Biologist Braaten received a call from hunters who harvested two deer in Douglas County with apparent hoof issues. Private Lands Biologist Braaten forwarded pictures to Jon Gallie and instructed the hunters to freeze the legs until further instructions could be obtained.



Hoof deformities from harvested mule deer



Pygmy Rabbit Recovery: There were two trapping events this week. On Wednesday the team trapped at the Sagebrush Flat enclosure using a combination of the funnel trap method described in previous reports and the traditional box trap method. They were able to capture 17 rabbits, including 12 kits (10 new, two recap) and five adults (one new, four recap). Two new kits, one recap kit, and two recap adults

were retained in the enclosure for breeding, and the remaining 12 rabbits were released to the wild in the Beezley Hills Recovery Emphasis Area.

Pygmy Rabbit Husbandry Activities: Technician Gibbs designed and constructed a raised feeding platform which is currently being tested at the Beezley Hills breeding enclosure. The raised station should assist with the control of exposure to coccidia by keeping the pellets isolated from the rabbits at the feeding stations where multiple rabbits concentrate. Observations to date indicate that the rabbits are having no issues with this design.



Wildlife Areas

Yakama Nation Fisheries: Manager Furnari went out with WDFW Habitat staff to review two project areas: Two Channels (annual evaluation) and Fender Mill (construction completed).

YNF & WDFW staff at Fender Mill project – Photo by Sherry Furnari

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



Wildlife Management

Columbia Basin Waterfowl: It appears a surge of small Canada geese has arrived at the Stratford Lake area, with about 9,000 counted on Thursday by Biologist E. Duvuvuei. However, we have not observed the large numbers (ca. 20,000) that typically stage on this lake. It is believed that the supplemental feed activities have altered their ability to roost along the shoreline and we suspect at least some of these geese are displaced to other areas around Moses Lake. Conditions at regulated access areas are summarized below:

Winchester RAA – Good water levels in the northern portion of the project area. Good open water areas exist due to mowing efforts.

Frenchmen RAA – Full throughout the majority of the project. Good open water areas exist due to mowing efforts. Expect good hunting conditions with good moist soil production, associated ditches, and other areas holding moisture longer in the growing season.

North Potholes RAA – Status of Ponds 1, 2, and 4 is unknown but they likely are holding adequate water for hunting. Ponds 3 and 5 are dry and will likely remain dry until late-November or December. This project area is completely dependent upon Potholes Reservoir operations for filling.

Though not the ideal candidate for a duck hunt, even pointing breeds can enjoy the early-season, fair-weather pursuit of waterfowl! Just be sure to give them a cozy spot and cover them with your coat – Photo by R. Finger



Wildlife Areas

Big Bend Wildlife Area – Hunting: Private Lands Biologist Braaten spent time visiting with deer hunters on the Big Bend Wildlife Area and adjacent private lands. Several successful hunters were contacted and many were pleased with the experience.

Successful youth hunter with a mule deer doe - his first deer taken on new Big Bend Wildlife Area – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW



Private Lands/Access

Access Management: Access Manager Grave began the administration work for the Winchester boat launch proposal. Access Manager Graves observed heavy public use at some of the more popular hunting Access Sites this time of year.

Dodson Road Winchester Wasteway, duck hunters/campers – Photo by Joe Graves



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

Wildlife Management

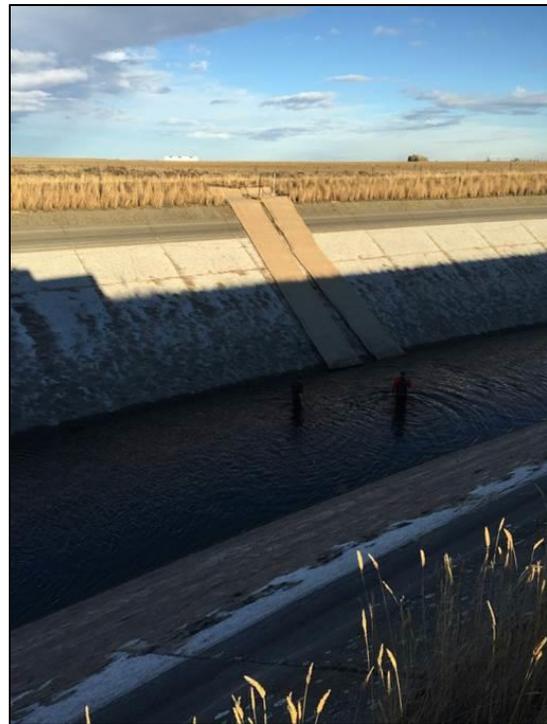
Douglas County Multi Species General Conservation Plan (MSGCP) signing ceremony: Private Lands Biologist Braaten attended Douglas County MSGCP signing ceremony in Waterville. Great efforts were made by local farmers, ranchers, county, state, and federal agencies that will protect sage grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, pygmy rabbit and Washington ground squirrel. In attendance were many landowners and professionals who were recognized for 18 years of efforts and sacrifices in working towards the final MSGCP.

At the MSGCP signing ceremony – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW



Deer Rescue: Biologists Finger, O. Duvuvuei, and Dougherty, with the assistance of Wildlife Area Manager Cole and Technicians Satterwhite and Gaston, deployed the portable deer ramp to assist with removing a deer stranded in the canal. Many deer are trapped in Columbia Basin Irrigation Canals each year. When canals are mostly drained, deer have a better chance of surviving, but oftentimes (such as this instance) escape ramps are miles away and conditions (ice, deep water) don't allow for herding a long distance. This was the first time biologists were able to deploy the ramps after they were constructed in 2013. Although the deer was hesitant to use the ramp, it eventually tried and made its way out of the canal. Biologists are hopeful that this technique can be improved and eventually be handed over to local volunteers to respond. The ramp is a simple design involving a wire fencing base covered with burlap. It is very easy to deploy and remove. However, given the hesitation to start up the ramp, it is clear that the bottom will require a more natural appearance. Once the deer was on the ramp it moved deliberately, suggesting little to no modification is needed for the upper half.

Deer herders at the base of the improvised escape ramp – Photo by R. Finger



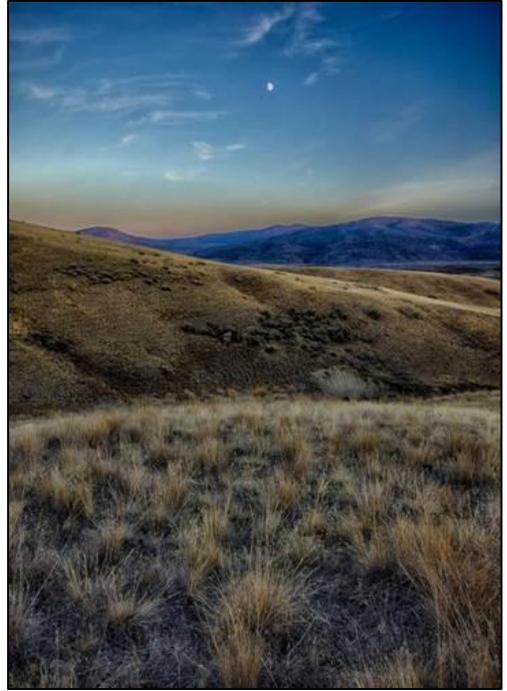
Wildlife Areas

Sinlahekin Field Tour w/ Conservation

Northwest: Manager Haug and Okanogan Lands Operations Manager Swedberg toured areas within the Okanogan Complex Fire with Conservation Northwest Forester George Wooten. The tour looked at recent fuels reduction and prescribed burning units within the fire perimeter and how those units fared during the wildfire. The group also toured areas where WDFW would like to remove standing dead timber in order to reduce fuels for future fires. The tour went well, with many examples of successful fuels reduction efforts slowing the consumption of the wildlife within the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area.



Wild turkeys – Photo by Scott Fitkin



Moon above the Okanogan Valley from the Horse Spring Coulee Wildlife Area during hunting season, a Coopers hawk sits on a fence post near McLoughlin Falls Wildlife Area, a fall reflection on a stormy day on the Chopaka-Similkameen Wildlife Area, and a snowy top to Chopaka Mountain with the Cutchie Homestead pond-side on the Chopaka-Similkameen Wildlife Area – Photos by Justin Haug



REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman submitted one of the RMEF PAC grants to Olympia. Huffman worked with Elk Specialist Hoenes to create maps for the project. Huffman also reviewed a PAC grant being completed by Forester Mackey for pre-commercial thinning work on forested sections of the wildlife area.

Colockum Wildlife Area: Wildlife Area staff Hagan closed and locked the gate at West Bar. The gate is secured every fall, one week prior to the elk opener for modern fire arm. The gate remains closed until next spring to reduce disturbance to wintering elk. Hagan also acquired padlocks from the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). The locks will be used to keep unauthorized personnel from accessing a BPA service road. The service road is a non-green dot road that is mutually shared by both WDFW and the BPA for administrative purposes.

Spot Seeding: Hagan spot seeded the Colockum Headquarters field with a native grass seed mix as a follow up to last fall's seeding. The reclaimed field is progressing nicely although nightly visits from nearby elk have resulted in new seedlings being pulled out.

Wildlife Management

Sagebrush Sparrow Status Assessment: District Biologist Fidorra worked on the sagebrush sparrow status assessment.

Badger Hair Samples: District Biologist Fidorra retrieved hair snares from burrows in Benton County to collect badger samples for genetic sampling. No hair collected.

Cougar Harvest: District Biologist Fidorra tagged and collected samples from a cougar harvested from the Blue Mountains.

Sage-grouse Working Group Meeting: District Biologist Fidorra participated in the two day sage-grouse working group meeting in Moses Lake. Fidorra will continue to coordinate with Yakama Nation and training center biologists who hope to conduct cross state relocations of sage-grouse early this spring.

Dump Site: District Biologist Fidorra located a dump site of leaky used motor oil containers on DNR property in Benton County. Fidorra retrieved the containers and contacted the Washington Department of Transportation (WDOT), who was able to recycle the remaining oil. Fidorra met with DNR staff to provide them site coordinates.



Waste oil from dump site on DNR tract in Benton County

Sage-grouse Working Group Meeting: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman attended one day of the sage-grouse working group meeting in Moses Lake. Staff from various agencies gave updates on the status of their work on sage-grouse.

Shrub Planting: Stutzman visited the site of a conservation district funded shrub planting and discussed the preparations with Natural Resource Specialist Buser, who is assisting with the project. The plants will be installed in the coming weeks.

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Bernatowicz retrieved and shipped samples from the second known dead bighorn ram in the Yakima River Canyon. The first was tested positive for the Bluetongue virus. Bernatowicz also coordinated sampling of a road killed bighorn ewe in the Yakima River Canyon with Biologist Moore. The ewe tested positive for the Bluetongue virus. Further tests are pending to determine if the virus was actually causing bluetongue disease.

Sample Collection: Bernatowicz continued to coordinate sample collection late season permit holders in Selah Butte and Clemans Mountain. Sampling kits and directions were shipped to hunters.

Domestic Goats: Bernatowicz sampled domestic goats for *Mycoplasma ovipneumonia* that are penned near bighorn sheep. The landowner was very cooperative and asked a lot of good questions. The goat pen is well constructed and electrified. The landowner also has dogs.

Depending on test results, additional measures of reducing possible contact with bighorns may be considered.

Yakima Canyon Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Moore ran a necropsy and collected samples from a ewe that WDOT removed from State Route 821. The ewe was obviously hit and killed by an automobile, but WDFW was interested in sampling for pneumonia and bluetongue. Bluetongue was discovered in the canyon approximately one week earlier from a ram sampled by Biologist Bernatowicz. Moore collected all necessary samples and sent them off to Washington State University’s Animal Disease Diagnostic Lab. Initial results were returned quickly and this ewe tested positive for bluetongue, but more investigation will be needed to determine if the virus was active. More information on bluetongue can be found at:

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/ehd/>.

Colockum Elk Body Condition Sampling: Biologist Moore completed all of the final preparations for sampling hearts and kidneys from harvested antlerless elk in the Colockum. Barrels were placed in the field loaded with sampling supplies and Moore discussed the sampling with numerous hunters who were already out getting ready for the 2015 elk season.



Supply and sample collection barrel located at the Coleman Canyon entrance

Colockum Bull Study: Biologist Moore began preparations to schedule the final bull capture in the Colockum. WDFW hopes to collar approximately 12 more bulls during the winter.

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

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Technicians Hill and Leuck installed a new Green Dot reader board at Tamarack Springs.

New Tamarack Spring reader board



Wenas Wildlife Area: Access Manager Garcia and Natural Resource Worker 2 Barbosa spent two days at Vernita Bridge picking up trash that was scattered throughout the access site. They also built two reader boards for the Highway 10 access site and painted the barrier sign at the Teanaway property.



New reader board



Barrier sign at Teanaway Property

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Berry had numerous hunter info contacts throughout the week as a plethora of hunters poured into the area. Bull permit hunters and hunters on the general season opener seem to be showing much success.

Opening day of volunteers staffing the Oak Creek Visitors Center for the duration of modern elk season



Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Sak talked with the pheasant vendor that delivered our pheasants a week early. His sheet showed October 23 for delivery and ours showed October 30. It worked out fine and a few hunters were happy with the opener.

Phone Messages: Assistant Manager Sak responded to phone messages about hunting opportunities on the wildlife area along with a few drop-ins looking for info on where to hunt.

Wildlife Management

PSE's Wildhorse Windfarms Hunters Breakfast: Biologist Moore along with Officer Scherzinger, Conflict Specialist Wetzell, and Education and Volunteer Coordinator Garcia attended a breakfast on Friday morning that was hosted by Puget Sound Energy and Kittitas County Field & Stream. Overall, the event was a great success with over 150 hunters attending.

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: All LT Murray staff spent Monday morning working to clear beaver dams and debris from the Johnson Drain ditch in Badger Pocket after live trapping got the critter. This portion of the drain is on one of our old Upland Restoration plots, and it has been a recurring unfunded problem well off the Wildlife Area. Surrounding agriculture operations are impacted by the water when the drain is backed up. Normally it drains into the Ellensburg Water Company's irrigation system. We'll continue to monitor it and possibly do a bit more work once the water level finishes dropping and the ground sets up some.



Site of first removed beaver dam



Second notched beaver dam

Wildlife Management

Rattlesnake Mountain Elk Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand coordinated with a crop adjuster to discuss an elk damage claim to a high value apple crop near Rattlesnake Mountain. Multiple strategies such as LP gas cannons, hazing, and removals on damage prevention permits were utilized to reduce damage impacts, and although they were helpful, a crop loss still occurred.

Silver Dollar Area Deer Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received a deer damage complaint from a wine grape producer in the Silver Dollar area. Non-lethal techniques were discussed and will be utilized in an attempt to haze the deer from the area.

Trail Camera: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued to monitor a trail camera set up on a historically heavily used area by elk along Hanford’s southern border. Building numbers of elk have been documented leaving ALE to forage in winter wheat fields.

Modern Firearm Elk Season: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand met with multiple landowners to discuss coordinated efforts and public hunting opportunities for the opening of modern firearm elk season.

Elk Harvest: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand monitored the harvest of DPP permits in Elk Area 3721 & 3722. Two elk were reported harvested this week. Total harvest for the current permit season is 24 antlerless and eight spike bull elk.

Elk Hazing: Conflict Specialist Wetzel continued hazing a large group of elk that resides below the elk fence between Robinson and Manastash Creeks. A landowner in the area called to report a hole had been cut in the fence near Caitlin Canyon. The hole will be located and fixed.

Park Creek Elk Presence: A landowner in Park Creek reported 60 elk below the KRD ditch. Fused rope was issued to this landowner who uses it to good effect.

Injured Deer: A landowner on Wilson Creek Road called to report an injured deer. The deer was immobile and was euthanized. It was donated to Ellensburg FISH food bank.

Elk: A hay grower in Thorp called to report 180 elk in his field. The elk moved to the Yakima River and into another alfalfa field. Six other hay growers and Conflict Specialist Wetzel herded the elk in three separate groups across the Yakima River and toward Lookout Mountain. The daylong process was completed with no injured elk and no lethal removals.



Elk starting to move from an alfalfa field in Thorp



Third and last group of elk moving out of agricultural area and toward Lookout Mountain

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

Wildlife Areas

Wenas Wildlife Area: Staff members fixed the elk fence that had been shot up by a landowner in the Buffalo area. Two posts and the wire were replaced. Staff members tracked their time and expenses and will be requesting reimbursement from the landowner.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Island Marble Butterfly Meeting: Biologist Milner met with the San Juan Islands Island Marble Butterfly team at the Cascadian Prairie Oak Partnership conference held in Tacoma. The team spent two hours updating everyone on various activities that occurred this field season. Plans were made for a follow up meeting in January.



Island Marble Butterfly

Species of Greatest Conservation

Need: District 13 staff members performed habitat surveys for pika. Areas surrounding the known lowland pika locations are being surveyed to determine if surrounding areas might contain potential habitat that connects to more traditional pika habitat.



Pika

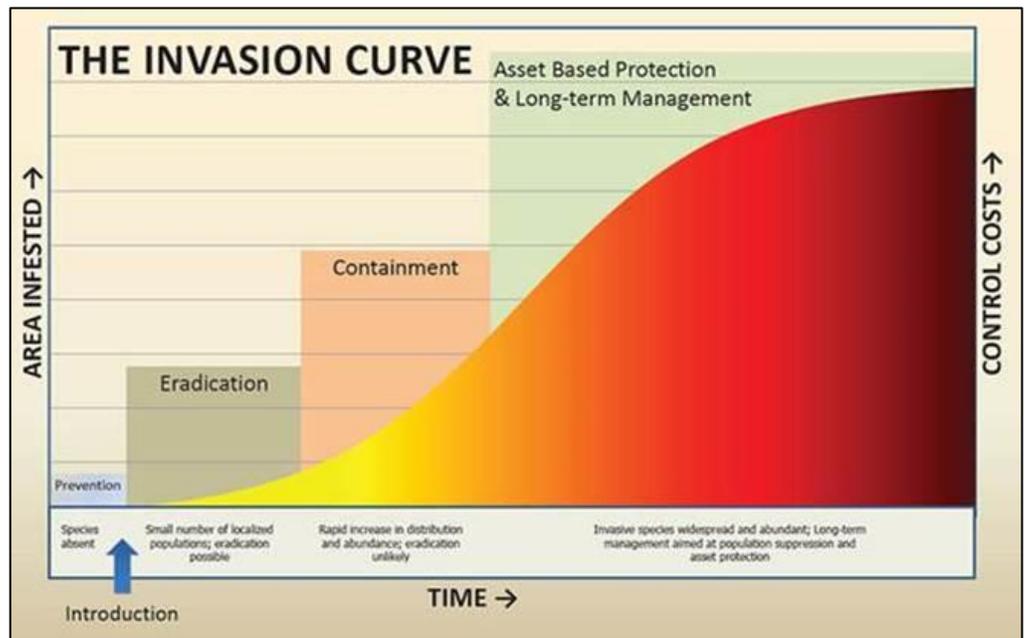
Mountains to Sound Greenway Technical Advisory Committee (TAC): Biologist Anderson represented WDFW at the annual TAC meeting. The meeting discussed current issues and happenings in the Greenway (acquisitions, legislative efforts, etc.). Breakout groups involved group thoughts on how to balance increasing populations and recreation in the Greenway with environmental integrity in ecological patterns and processes. More information can be found here: <http://mtsgreenway.org/about/technical-advisory-council>

Federal Aviation Administration wildlife consultation: Biologist Anderson has been approached by area airports and the FAA proper regarding past survey of streaked-horned lark in King County. Anderson also consulted with SeaTac biologist Osmek regarding recent surveys there as well as collaborative planning efforts. WDFW has developed a population survey as well as a basic occupancy survey for this state Endangered and federally Threatened species. Since it has been 16 years since the last survey in King County and northward, discussions have taken place with the Olympia Diversity Program about likely occupancy survey and habitat examination in King County in the future. More on this species can be found here: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/endangered/lists/search.php?searchby=simple&search=streaked+horned+lark&orderby=AnimalType%2CCommonName>

Aquatic Invasive Species – Fish, Wildlife, Habitat Program Meeting: Biologists Milner and Anderson represented Wildlife Program in an update and next steps meeting among all three management programs. Fish is the lead via the Aquatic Invasive Species Unit. Efforts to document and devise management steps were discussed, along with current field needs and past effort, field time, funding expenditures and needs, etc. Anderson followed up with affected landowners via an update and WDFW next steps. With invasive exotics, rapid response is often necessary when populations start to exhibit an ability to survive and breed within a given ecosystem. Below is

a graph illustrating the patterns noted that often trend along the process outlined:

Invasive species potential establishment curve. Given stage observed there is an increased likelihood of a given species gaining ground within a localized to more widespread situation.



Wildlinks: Biologist DeBruyn and Yarborough attended the Wildlinks Conference in Manning Park, BC. This annual conference put on by Conservation Northwest brings together researchers, conservationists, land managers, agency officials, tribal and First Nations leaders, and other experts from Washington and British Columbia. Objectives of the meeting included:

- Sharing information on current and planned adaptation related efforts in the transboundary region to increase coordination and involvement, while providing opportunities to further such efforts;
- Providing local context and expertise for North Pacific and Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperatives' regional planning efforts;
- Providing updates on, and increase coordination of, transboundary science planning for conservation targets selected last year by the Cascadia Partner Forum as priority issues: Salmon, Grizzly Bear, and Ecological connectivity and recent investments in access management planning in Cascadia's geographic priority areas;
- Contributing a "Made in Cascadia" perspective to LCC regional science planning for two new priority conservation targets for 2015-2016: Canada lynx and bull trout;
- Identifying spatial priority areas in Cascadia that are vital for species and ecosystem resilience to climate related changes and broad criteria for building on those priority geographies;
- Continuing to build a network of practitioners whose work includes climate related adaptation and resilience in the Cascadia region.

Protected Wildlife Management: Biologist Anderson continues to provide 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 a handful of osprey nest destruction requests and consultation for forthcoming requests. One can assist WDFW with documenting wildlife via reporting at our Wildlife Observation Website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/viewing/observations/>. One can find department management recommendations for Priority Habitats and Species here: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/phs/>

Bald Eagle Nest: Biologist DeBruyn and Yarborough worked with Skagit County Public Works and WSDOT to verify a bald eagle nest near La Conner near a planned roadway improvement.

Wildlife Areas

Terrell Creek Salmon Enhancement Planting Project: The Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association held a volunteer work project on Terrell Creek on the British Petroleum Unit. Trees and shrubs were planted to enhance the habitat. Manager Kessler coordinated with the project managers and posted signs to warn hunters of the project site. He also stayed onsite during the project to make sure there were no conflicts.

The Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association held a volunteer work project on Terrell Creek on the British Petroleum Unit



Wildlife Areas

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP):

Projects Coordinator Brokaw participated in a debrief meeting with PSNERP staff regarding the previous week's meeting with the Lummi Tribe, Whatcom County, and Nooksack Tribe. He also set up a meeting with Snohomish County staff to discuss future restoration concepts at Spencer Island in the Snohomish River delta.

Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Restoration Planning: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton participated in a call with HCP Manager Janet Gorrell to provide information related to the Region 4 Restoration Pathway. HCP Manager Gorrell is collecting information on processes used on WDFW to make decisions regarding habitat restoration projects.

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

Wildlife Management

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 districts. 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. There have been many calls this season for some reason or another. The current pamphlet can be found here: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/>

Sharp-tailed Snake Citizen Science Project: Biologist Milner toured the site on San Juan Island where a citizen collected a cat-killed sharp-tailed snake. Milner retrieved the specimen for donation to a natural history museum and provided advice on the placement of cover objects. We hope to find more snakes in this area, which matches the habitat descriptions of snakes found in the Canadian Gulf Islands.

Wildlife Areas

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, 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. Volunteers are conducting most of the work and Manager Boehm fills in where necessary. Feedback from hunters in the field reflects a high percentage of support and appreciation for all of the improvements that have occurred over the past few years.

Pheasant hunting family

British Petroleum Environmental Monitoring & Weed Control:

Environmental workers with British Petroleum finished performing monitoring and weed control on wetland mitigation plots on the British Petroleum Unit. Manager Kessler made up and posted the warning signs to inform hunters of the work and managed a partial closure of the unit while the work was being performed.

USGS Nooksack River Water Level Gage

Installation: Manager Kessler coordinated with the USGS on a river flood level gage that was installed adjacent to the Nooksack River on the Tennant Lake Unit. The gage will be in this location for about one year.

USGS Nooksack River Flood Water Level Gage Installation on the Tennant Lake Unit of the Whatcom Wildlife Area

Waterfowl Season: Cosgrove and Meis installed the stop-logs on the two water control structures on the Island Unit on Monday and monitored water levels throughout the week. Fields have yet to pond up, but rain and high river levels in the coming days should begin to put sheet water into the fields. Cosgrove monitored public use at the Samish Unit early in the week.

There were a few hunters out, but mild weather and a lack of water in the fields and ponds has kept waterfowl use low. Saturday morning car counts at the Samish (23 vehicles before shooting hours) and Headquarters units (20 vehicles around 9:00) show good use. Wind and rain were predicted for the area most of this weekend. Duck night feeding flights are beginning on the Samish Unit.



Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Units: Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo continued with the setup of duck blinds on harvested hunt units in Whatcom and Skagit counties. Otto and Deyo checked multiple sites for harvest and consulted with growers about pending harvests. Otto and Deyo prepped supplies for dispersal to hunting units. Otto and Deyo were able to open an additional nine waterfowl quality hunt units for the third weekend of the waterfowl season.

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 followed up with youth, senior, and disabled hunters that participated in Elk Area 4941 hunts and assisted with providing information on tooth submission. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal toured a property in the Concrete area of Skagit County that has been experiencing elk damage to fencing and nursery plants. Fencing options were discussed with the landowner and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal will be constructing maps to present several fencing strategies to the landowner. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal returned to a recently completed Elk Exclusionary Fencing project in the Day Creek area of Skagit County to troubleshoot charging problems to the electric fence. After testing several connections, a defective buried wire was located along with insufficient power output from the charger. The wire and charger were replaced and the fence is now up and running.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and a Tribal Co-Manager representative met with a landowner in the Birdview area of Skagit County to further discuss exclusionary elk fencing that has been proposed to begin on the 80 acre site. Tribal Co-Managers are currently working on the fence estimates, and contract paperwork is being drafted by WDFW. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal checked a recently constructed Elk Exclusion Fence in the Acme area of Whatcom County. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman responded to Whatcom County after receiving a complaint of deer damage to a newly planted raspberry crop. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman observed browsing damage and numerous sets of deer tracks on the property. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman will be completing a Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement with the landowner in an attempt to deter damage.

Biologist Smith responded to a report of deer damage at a nursery on Vashon Island. Although the property is surrounded by a seven and a half foot mesh fence, one particularly persistent doe has been finding her way in. Possible solutions were discussed, including both lethal and non-lethal means. Smith also met with landowners in the Enumclaw and Green Valley areas who have been experiencing damage (fencing and crops) due to elk. Another electrified fladry fence was removed by Smith that had successfully excluded elk from squash crops in the Enumclaw area.



A recently constructed and nearly completed Elk Exclusion Fence in the Acme area of Whatcom County. Once a gate is installed, the fence will be ready for final inspection.



Deer browsing damage to raspberry plants

Wildlife Areas

Committee Recruitment: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm began sending recruitment requests to potential Wildlife Area Advisory Committee candidates this week. Manager Boehm is reaching out to a variety of stakeholders, partners, and natural resource professionals in order to build a more diverse Advisory Committee.

DeBay's Slough: Cosgrove mowed parking and grass areas at the Johnson/DeBay's Slough Unit with the riding mower. Cosgrove removed storm debris piles.

Island Unit: Meis and Cosgrove mapped the planting plan for the Island Unit for 2016.

Milltown Island: Manager Rotton has responded to a number of concerned hunters regarding the posting and potential closure of the road access to the Milltown Island private boat launch. The Skagit County Legal Department is reviewing all the documents and will provide an opinion the second week of November.

Samish Unit: Meis met with a volunteer that is interested in brushing up duck blinds and picking up litter at the Samish Unit.

Skagit Headquarters: Manager Rotton worked with DD#22 personnel and the pump program contractor to get the Wiley Slough pump station operational. Weather reports predicted a two year+ rain event. The pump station is needed to manage drainage water during the Wiley Slough tide gate repair project.

Private Lands/Access Management

Hunting Season Preparation: Biologists Wingard met with several landowners to discuss the hunting opportunities on their properties. These interactions included contract negotiations for

several landowners in both the Snow Goose and Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program. Biologist Wingard fielded multiple inquiries about the Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program in Region 4. Biologist Wingard continued editing information for the GoHunt website. Nearly all the sites will be open and online shortly. Biologist Wingard assisted Otto with delivering and spreading woodchips at hunt site parking areas to make the sites more user friendly.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Surveys: Biologist Wingard reviewed and prepared materials for the Waterfowl Quality Hunt Site use surveys. 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 an excellent volunteer opportunity. Please contact the WDFW Region 4 office if you are interested in participating.

418 Elk Hunt: Biologist Wingard met with a successful 418 spike permit holder who harvested a very tall spike. The hunter was very satisfied with the opportunity and enjoyed the hunt.

Landowner Relations: Biologist Wingard discussed solutions to a conflict Private Lands Access staff had with a neighboring landowner. The landowner was concerned about the placement of the blind and the possibility of hunters shooting toward the sheep in the adjoining field. Biologist Wingard and the landowner discussed possible solutions including moving the blind farther from the property boundary and increasing boundary signage. Biologist Wingard also informed the landowner about the Private Lands Access Program as it relates specifically to this site. The landowner was pleased with the nature and content of the conversation. The landowner and Biologist Wingard agreed the solutions discussed would minimize the potential for future conflicts.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordination

Women's Only Hunter Education Classes Support: Demand was extremely high for the women only class held at the Black Diamond gun club 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's only class Sunday, December 6, at the BDGC.

Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey assisted Instructor Lance Char on 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 that an instructor teach at least one class a year to remain certified. 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. Dazey activated one additional class at the Region 4 office in late November. A retired instructor was recruited to run the class to help alleviate the backlog of students who have waited

till the last minute to take their required hunter education class. Coordinator Dazey assisted the instructor on Lopez Island to set up a class. Since there is only one instructor on the island, Dazey helped recruit another instructor to assist.

Pre-Service Training: Coordinator Dazey held the second session of a pre-service training for six new instructor applicants. The training was held at the Skagit Shooting Range in Burlington. The second session requires the applicants to actually teach a hunter education class under the supervision of the Hunter Education Coordinator and with assistance from certified instructors. The class was a success, with all six new instructor applicants passing the last step in becoming certified hunter education instructors. This class was especially appreciated as the new instructors are all from the northern part of Region 4 and will help us to serve the area better.

Master Hunter: Coordinator Dazey assisted several master hunter applicants to schedule their second attempt to pass the master hunter exam. Dazey was contacted by a master hunter who is also a member of the Safari Club International local chapter about the SCI as a group performing a service project to benefit WDFW. The request was forwarded to the appropriate staff to see if they had a need.

Customer Service: Coordinator Dazey answered questions from first time hunters who needed to take a hunter education class in order to purchase a license. Questions ranged from class availability, deferral, duplicate cards, bow hunting training, and military exemption. Dazey also answered questions.

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

Training: Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell attended and successfully completed Wildlife Handling and Chemical Immobilization for Researchers and Managers at Wolf Haven International.

Westside Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary Program: Biologist Anderson worked with Olympia staff to examine and move forward with fiscal categorization and allotment processes for this program. Anderson also worked on coordination and processing needs for the joint National Wildlife Federation-WDFW certification option for the Backyard Sanctuary. In this joint option, one can certify both nationwide with NWF and locally with WDFW. More information can be found at the BWS website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/backyard/>

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Western Pond Turtle Project: Biologist Anderson conducted a site visit to the Klickitat Wildlife Area Sondino Unit to evaluate the current water levels at our western pond turtle habitat

in the Columbia River Gorge. This year's drought has had significant impacts to wetland habitat critical to western pond turtles. During this week's site visit two of the ponds were completely dried up and two others were extremely low. This is the lowest we have seen the water levels since our involvement in the late 1980s. This week's forecast for rain hopefully will improve conditions as we move into the winter months.



Drought conditions on western pond turtle wetland habitat in the Klickitat Wildlife Area

Terminally Ill Hunter: A terminally ill hunter who was issued an elk tag in the Toutle GMU was successful this week. Many thanks to Wildlife Program Customer Service for coordinating the permit, Weyerhaeuser for allowing access, and the Master Hunter Program volunteers who assisted in the hunt.



Successful hunter

Treponeme-Associated Hoof Disease

2015 Hoof Collection Effort: In a continued attempt to determine the prevalence of hoof disease in southwest Washington, a new data collection effort is taking place involving hunter harvested elk. Successful special permit, modern firearm elk hunters in GMUs 520, 522, 524, 556, 550, and 673 are being asked to voluntarily score the hooves of harvested elk using a pre-established grading system. Additionally, these hunters are being asked to submit all four hooves and their accompanying scores (data form) to WDFW to determine scoring consistencies among participants. The hunters identified for this effort will be receiving packets in the mail with further instructions on scoring elk hooves, packaging, and where to deliver samples. The department has created an emergency rule change to WAC 232-12-286, which requires hunters to leave hooves on site in GMUs 501-564 and 642-699. The amendment allows hunters- when specifically authorized by the department or when acting as an agent of the department in the limited capacity of cooperating with research or management actions regarding hoof disease- to lawfully transport elk hooves to specified drop off locations for further analysis by the department. Assistance from the hunting public on this effort is greatly appreciated. For additional information on hoof disease in southwest Washington and to learn about additional work that WDFW is conducting to address this challenging situation, please see page 66 of the

2015 Big Game Hunting Seasons and Regulations pamphlet and/or visit the WDFW website at: http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/h hoof_disease/

Dusky Canada Goose Survey: Biologist Stephens conducted a dusky Canada goose survey this week in Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties. Areas surveyed included: Woodland Bottoms, Kalama, Willow Grove, and Puget Island. No dusky geese were observed during this effort. However, a flock of around a thousand cackling geese and several hundred Sandhill cranes were observed in the Woodland bottoms. A coyote was observed trying to figure out a way to catch a cackler for lunch.



Figuring out a way to catch a cackler for lunch

Black-tailed Deer Ecology study:

Biologist Stephens downloaded location data in the field from doe GPS collars as part of an ongoing study of black-tailed deer ecology. This study cluster of deer is in the Coweeman Unit, primarily on Weyerhaeuser land. Around a dozen deer hunters were seen out trying to harvest a deer in the final days of the general modern firearm season.

Shillapoo Wildlife Area

Ag Field Ditch Crossings Installed: Last week, Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Assistant Manager Hand installed culverts in three of the ditches in the corn fields north of the Lakebed at Shillapoo Wildlife Area. The culverts were acquired from the Cowlitz Wildlife Area where Technician Morris helped Assistant Manager Hand with coordination efforts, prep-work, and loading. The Diking and Drainage District also assisted with the installation and dirt work. These culverts will now allow WDFW staff as well as hunters easier access to each agricultural field and more convenience while navigating around Shillapoo.

Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area

Road Maintenance on the Mudflow: Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Sample coordinated a gravel delivery to be placed at two locations of the 3100 Road on the Mudflow Unit of the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area. Pools of standing water occur on these areas and continually get deeper/muddier as vehicles drive through them. A total of about 20 cubic yards was applied to these two low spots. Assistant Manager Sample will use a box scraper attachment to even the gravel out and ensure a uniform depth to cover where needed.

Dump truck dumping gravel onto the 3100 Road of the Mudflow Unit

Cottonwood Tree Cages: Assistant Manager Sample installed 10-15 custom made tree cages onto groups of small cottonwood trees that are growing naturally (not planted) on West Fort Toutle of the Mudflow Unit on Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area. These tree cages will protect the young trees from becoming browsed or trampled by wildlife and will encourage growth, allowing root systems to form and outcompete non-native vegetation.



Cottonwood Tree Cages on West Fort Toutle of the Mudflow Unit on Mt St Helens Wildlife Area

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Forest Management Planning: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven met with District Biologist Anderson and Wildlife Program Manager Jonker to develop an outline of items we would like to incorporate into the Forest Management Plan for the Klickitat Wildlife Area.

Soda Springs Unit Patrol: Technician Davis visited the more popular camping spots to ensure they are clean, and checked for any other issues needing attention. He also finished a segment of fence that he has been working on.

Road Barrier Bypass Issue: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven discovered that someone had driven around a barrier that was constructed to keep people from driving off Highway 142 to a

site on the Mineral Springs Unit where dumping has been an issue. Van Leuven spent about an hour and a half moving boulders to block the new trail.

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

D-9 Wildlife Conflict

Elk: Conflict Specialist Peterson has met with a number of landowners in the Glenwood/BZ Corners area of Klickitat County who are experiencing elk damage. The area landowners have been experiencing a high concentration of elk on their property in the evenings and early dawn. Peterson has been connecting public hunters with the land owners in an attempt to pressure and move the elk off the agricultural fields.

D-10 Wildlife Conflict

Deer: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin responded to a call regarding a tame deer in the Toutle area. She will continue to monitor for now.

Elk: Conflict Specialist Conklin received a call from a land owner in the Toledo area reporting larger numbers of elk on his lands. He is concerned about potential damage in the spring if the 40-plus elk continue to stay on his fields. Conklin will meet with the land owner next week to discuss options. In addition, Conklin observed new elk fencing installed along Falls Road in Randle.



New elk fencing installed along Falls Road in Randle

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE.

Wildlife Areas

New Mount St. Helens Assistant Manager: Please join us in welcoming Anna Sample to the Region 5 Wildlife Program as the new Assistant Manager for the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area. Anna comes back to Vancouver after spending six months in Region 2 as the Assistant Manager on the Methow Wildlife Area in Winthrop. Anna started her new position October 1, and has been spending most of her days back in the Mudflow and Hoffstadt units enhancing elk habitat by mowing, controlling invasive weeds, and maintaining tree plantings.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Fisher Sightings – Sighting 1: Biologist Ament was notified by local Audubon member Bob Boekelheide that on his Wednesday morning (10/28) bird walk at Railroad Bridge Park in Sequim, his group witnessed a fisher kill a great blue heron.

Below is the information provided from Bob:

About 0915, we watched a heron fly along the Dungeness River upstream of RR Bridge. Within a few minutes, all of a sudden the heron was flopping about in the middle of the river, struggling against something that was holding it in the water. Through our binoculars we saw that a fairly-large mustelid appeared to be holding the heron's head in its jaws. The mustelid continued carrying the heron in its jaws while it floated downstream with the current. The mustelid came out onto a log across the river while holding the heron, giving us a good look, and we talked among ourselves about what it looked like. We are quite certain it was a fisher. The fisher tried to pull the struggling, flopping heron out onto a log, but the wet heron appeared too large and cumbersome and it slipped back into the water. The Fisher then pulled the struggling heron onto another log, but it again slipped back into the water. Eventually the heron stopped struggling and the fisher pulled the heron's body through the water between two logs in a log jam. The Fisher then disappeared into the log jam with the heron's body lying face-down in the water.

We are almost certain the predator was a fisher -- all dark brown, size of a house cat, about 30-35 inches long (which includes about a 12 inch tail), with pointy snout and rounded ears. It was definitely not a river otter, which has a very different head shape, or a mink, which we have seen before on the river and is much smaller. It was all dark brown, without the lighter ventral colors of either a pine marten or a river otter. Unfortunately it all happened so quick we didn't get photos. We did not see any tags or markings on the fisher.

Patti Happe, the lead for the Fisher project from Olympic National Park, was notified about the sighting at the park and planned to have staff set up a monitoring station. In 2013, District 16 biologists and Point No Point Biologist Tim Cullinan had set-up fisher monitoring stations in a designated hex that included Railroad Bridge Park. One station was set-up on private land west of the park. The station was vandalized and had all equipment and even the rotten bait removed. Biologist Ament shared this information with park staff.

Sighting 2: Biologist Ament was contacted on October 30, 2015 by a friend who lives on a large parcel of land above the Dungeness Fish Hatchery. He reported observing what he thinks may have been a fisher in his yard very early that morning. There are many wildlife species that frequent his property. He described this animal as “the size of a large house cat, dark in color with a long bushy tail”. District 16 biologists did set-up a fisher monitoring station adjacent to his property last season but did not get any detections of fishers. Biologist Ament will report the sighting to Patti Happe from ONP and will discuss the potential of setting up another station on

the property. However, there are some concerns that need to be evaluated. The landowner and his wife raise ducks, chickens, and turkeys that frequent the area around the house.

Mazama Pocket Gopher Habitat Modeling: District 11 staff assisted headquarters staff with collecting data on habitat conditions on several training areas of Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM) as part of a research project to refine occupancy models for the Mazama pocket gopher and to develop a standard procedure for evaluating sites for their potential value to Mazama pocket gophers. Collection effort at JBLM is concluded and staff will now begin evaluating habitat at established Mazama pocket gopher protection areas within Pierce and Thurston counties. Some of the habitat components that influence Mazama pocket gopher occupancy include Scots broom, woody shrubs, tree density, soil type, and soil composition. Field sampling and data collection will continue through mid-November.

Mazama Pocket Gopher Set Aside Enhancement Project: Biologists Tirhi and Lutey, along with district staff members, continue to work with jurisdictions within Thurston County to seek access to private lands on which gopher set asides were required in the past. The project provides funding for initial habitat restoration on the site and working with landowners on long-term enhancement for gophers and, secondarily, other prairie species. Tirhi secured access allowance from landowners for the first two sites. Tirhi and staff are currently working on access permission for the remaining 18 sites. District staff members are planning to conduct habitat and species inventories on the first two sites starting this week.

Taylor Checkerspot Butterfly Range 76 Working Group: Biologists Linders and Tirhi met with JBLM and USFWS to continue discussions regarding the management of habitat and checkerspots on Range 76. What started out as a one-time meeting to improve communication and site management of Range 76 for checkerspots has morphed into a working group which is meeting once or twice a month to resolve ongoing issues related to actions potentially impacting the species and working collaboratively on solutions. Topics of this meeting included roads, fire, restoration treatments, JBLM technical working groups for ESA-listed species, survey needs and expectations, and next steps and homework. One outcome of the recent meeting is that meeting location and facilitator will alternate between WDFW and JBLM.

Dusky Goose Closure Compliance: Biologist Sundstrom did not work this duty because there is no goose hunting throughout Area 2B until November 14. Unfortunately, two hunters were not quite as attentive to the regulations as they should have been. These hunters contacted Sundstrom on Saturday afternoon to check their geese...the situation was referred to Enforcement for follow up.

Biologist Sundstrom attended and assisted with a Law Enforcement centric goose identification training in Vancouver, WA. This training session will be duplicated at the Region 6 Montesano office for those officers in the region who were unable to attend the Region 5 training.

Dusky goose survey: Biologist Michaelis conducted the first of two dusky goose surveys for November in Pacific County. Biologist Sundstrom conducted the survey in Grays Harbor County and covered northern portions of Pacific county. A small number of duskies were seen in Grays Harbor County, marking their earliest arrival since surveys were conducted.

Biologist Michaelis observed a marked Aleutian Canada goose that turned out to be a bird observed last year. Within the last two years, numbers of Aleutian Canada geese have increased in this area. Within this group it was estimated that there were 450 birds present.

Marked resident dark geese (wuskys) were observed during the Pacific County survey, although no radio contact was made with six radio-collared birds that are still believed to be alive and transmitting. Fortunately, these resident dark geese appear to be socially segregated from birds known to be captured in Cordova, AK and are not included in the “true” dusky survey.

Not all geese can be ‘classed’ during these surveys, such as the goose in the photo to the right. This goose is listed in the “unknown” column. The bird appears to be a cross/hybrid of at least a Canada goose and perhaps a swan goose, with possibly other wild and/or domestic goose species



Western Pond Turtle: District 11 staff members concluded monitoring western pond turtle activity for 2015. Productivity in 2015 for one of two recovery sites in Puget Sound was as follows: 28 nests located and 186 eggs produced from those 28 nests. Thirteen nests (79 eggs) were excavated within 48 hours of being laid and sent to Woodland Park Zoo for captive rearing. Hatch results of those nests are unknown at this time. The remaining fifteen nests (106 eggs) were left to hatch on their own over the summer. Of those 15 nests, 72 eggs were fertile, 66 baby turtles hatched and 63 survived to join the population. Biologists will continue to monitor the survival, growth, and reproduction of western pond turtles at six recovery sites in western Washington.

Wildlife Areas

Elk Winter Habitat: Olympic Wildlife Area staff members made the long trek to the Anderson Homestead Unit in Forks to spread fertilizer and mow to help with the winter grazing for the elk population in the area. Staff members also brushed the road and parking lot for easier access to the fields.



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

Wildlife Management

Willapa Refuge Antlerless Elk Hunts: Biologist Novack interviewed permittees for the Willapa Refuge Antlerless elk hunts and attempted to contact eight of the nine hunters this year. Five hunters were interviewed. No harvest was reported by any hunters. At least five attempted to hunt. Overall comments indicate that the hunt area is too small and difficult to access. A single hunter expressed having good opportunities to harvest an animal but failed to succeed. Similar comments were obtained in 2014 with zero harvest and generally low satisfaction. A panel was convened to discuss complaints surrounding the Willapa Refuge Antlerless elk permits with Regional Program Manager Calkins, Deer-Elk Section Leader Nelson, Captain Chadwick, and Elk Specialist Hoenes.

Wildlife Areas

Potential Acquisition Sites- Pacific County: Wildlife Area Manager Gerchak and Biologist Michaelis visited three potential sites in the Willapa area for purchasing by WDFW. Photos of the sites were taken and they discussed the potential use and improvements that could be done for long-term wildlife use and recreation opportunities. The site at North River has the most potential, in that it adjoins WDFW's North River Unit, and it would provide public road access to the site as well as water fowl and winter forage enhancement projects. In addition, they



visited the ongoing work being done at the Nemah Access site and the newly constructed site at Cedar Creek Unit off Willapa Bay. They made recommendations to remove trees near Highway 101 on the Nemah site in an effort to reduce vandalism and other unwanted activities from this site.



Access Areas

Snow Creek Gate Installation: The Region 6 Access Team utilized volunteer Master Hunter Wilcox to assist with the installation of a 30 foot gate at Snow Creek Access in Neah Bay.



The first side is concreted in and braced while the crew preps the second side



In total, 40 bags of concrete were mixed and used to anchor the vertical supports



Day two consisted of the removal of bracing from the gate, installing cables and turn-buckles, and placing barrier rocks on both sides of the gate

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

Wildlife Areas

Infrastructure Repairs: During the week, Olympic Wildlife Area staff made repairs to the headquarters' leaking water line. A whole section was replaced, and we're hoping this is the last of the problems.

The large 1986 flatbed was taken out of service, and the radiator/ hood support member rusted out. The parts are not available. We are having a new support member fabricated and the radiator re-cored. The truck is our king pin for moving heavy equipment between the wildlife areas.

